

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Dec 26, 2015

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on, Saturday December 26, at 7:30 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by Santa Claus and [Grizzly Outfitters](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Over the past 24 hours the mountains south of Bozeman picked up 1-2 inches of new snow. This morning mountain temperatures are in the single digits above or below zero and winds are blowing 10-20 mph out of the W-NW. Today, a northwest flow will keep temperatures cold and highs will struggle to climb into the double digits above zero F. Skies will remain partly cloudy and winds will continue to blow 10-20 mph out of the W-NW. No new snow is expected over the next 24 hours.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Madison Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

The snowpack continues to show signs of instability. Yesterday, skiers up Dudley Creek in the northern Madison Range observed multiple natural avalanches. These slides appear to have occurred a few days ago and failed on facets near the ground ([photo](#)). Other natural avalanches were observed on the west side of the Bridger Range yesterday ([photo](#)) as well as on Mt. Blackmore this past Thursday ([photo](#), [photo](#)). Natural avalanches are clear indicator the snowpack is unstable. These slides are only a few of many that have been observed over the past week ([photo page](#)).

While many slopes are obviously unstable, others appear to be getting stronger ([video](#)). This does not mean that overall stability is improving. What this does mean is there is more spatial variability, which can make stability assessment tricky. As the weather begins to shift to drier pattern and the snowpack has time to adjust, both natural and human triggered avalanches will become less common. This is actually a dangerous time to ride in the backcountry because it may appear that stability is improving. Unfortunately this is not the case.

The snowpack still holds all the necessary ingredients to produce an avalanche and dangerous conditions still exist. It does remain possible to trigger avalanches from low on the slope and from a distance. Read a [recent story](#) of two snowmobilers in Wyoming who were caught while sitting in an avalanche run out zone. The avalanche fatality last Saturday in Cooke City ([video](#), [photo](#)) was also the result of triggering a slide from low on the slope.

Today, dangerous avalanche conditions exist. Human triggered avalanches are likely and the avalanche danger is rated [**CONSIDERABLE**](#) on all slopes throughout our forecast area.

I will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations to share, drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a message at 587-6984.

EVENTS and AVALANCHE EDUCATION

A complete calendar of classes can be found [HERE](#).

West Yellowstone: January 2, *Ihr Avalanche Awareness*, West Yellowstone Holliday Inn, 7-8:30 p.m.

Bozeman: January 6, *Women's Avalanche Awareness and Beacon 101*, Beall Park, 6-8 p.m.

January 9 and 10, *Companion Rescue Clinic*, REI, Fri 6-8p.m., Sat 10a.m.-2p.m.

January 13, *Ihr Avalanche Awareness*, REI, 6-7:30 p.m.

Livingston: January 14, *Ihr Avalanche Awareness*, Neptune's Brewery, 6-7:30 p.m.

Dillon: January 19, *Ihr Avalanche Awareness*, UM Western Library, 6:30-8 p.m.

ASMSU Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Course

January 20, 21 and 23 or 24: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/16861>

The workshops will be held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, with a field course on either Saturday or Sunday. Different topics will be presented each evening. Topics include: avalanche terrain recognition, the effect weather has on avalanche hazard, the development of the mountain snowpack, decision making skills, and basic search and rescue procedures.