

AVALANCHE SAFETY PLAN



MUNICIPALITY OF
VALTOURNENCHE

Valtournenche is a town located at the foot of the Mount Cervin, whose beauty attracts a large number of tourists. The morphology of the territory, characterized by the presence of steep slopes and canals, together with the altitude of the area are the main reasons for which – in the event of abundant snowfall, but not exclusively – avalanches may occur. These natural phenomena can have a significant impact on the population. **It is therefore important that both residents and tourists become deeply aware of the surrounding environment and take responsible actions in case of avalanche risk.**

Avalanches: Classification

An avalanche is a mass of snow that moves rapidly down a steep mountain slope. There are several types of avalanches and different classification criteria of this phenomenon, for example:

“Ground avalanches”: generally occur when a heavy layer of snow slides down to the ground, often related to the physical features of the area;



“Powder avalanches”: characterized by dry, loose snow that creates a snow dust cloud (soffio);



Photo Credit: Catasto Regionale Valanghe - Ufficio neve e Valanghe – RAVA (Avalanches Regional Register – Avalanches and Snow Department)

“Slab avalanches” generally occur when wind forms large layers of snow that slide down along a slope. They may cause large-scale avalanche events;



“Spring avalanches”:

Characterized by heavy snow, which usually occur during spring due to rising temperatures.



Photo Credit: Catasto Regionale Valanghe - Ufficio neve e Valanghe – RAVA
(Avalanches Regional Register – Avalanches and Snow Department)

Factors which contribute to the development of avalanches:

- quantity of snow (at least 30 cm);
- slabs formed by wind;
- rising temperatures;
- rain falling on snow;
- falling seracs which may cause the detachment of a snow mass;
- physical features of the mountain: inclination of slope (30°-55°), different slope gradients, presence of grass on slopes...

Avalanches may be spontaneous or initiated, for example, by skiers whose weight puts pressure on weak layers of the snow-pack, triggering the fall of a snow mass.

Effects of avalanches:

- Traffic interruption;
- Avalanches may reach villages and damage buildings;
- Electric and phone service interruption;
- In springtime, wet snow avalanches may reach streams where fishing is usually practiced.

Preventive measures against avalanche risk adopted by Public Bodies

Valtournenche's territorial planning includes measures against avalanche risk. Specifically, a map of areas subject to avalanche and landslide risk, where building is forbidden, has been drawn up (Regional Law 11/98 – art. 37). The map identifies recurrent avalanche events occurring on municipal territory.

Moreover, further studies will be carried out to analyse in deep avalanche events which affect towns and residential areas. Depending on the degree of danger, guidelines for risk management shall be provided.

A further useful tool, regularly updated by the Snow and Avalanches Regional Office and used to analyse past avalanches, is the [Regional Avalanche Register](#) which keeps records of all avalanche events, by reporting their physical features, the damages done, the scale and type of event...

The municipality of Valtournenche also has a [municipal civil protection plan](#) that, based on specific studies, identifies risky situations on the municipal territory and its causes, including avalanche risk. The plan also establishes prevention activities to be adopted in order to reduce the occurrence of damage resulting from calamitous events and the procedures to be followed to rescue victims and face emergency in case of natural disasters.

[Avalanche defence infrastructures](#) – both active and passive – are located in areas subject to high avalanche risk. For example, the avalanche gallery located nearby Breuil Cervinia and the storage dam located along the right orographic side of the Marmore stream, nearby Breuil Cervinia.



YOU MAY NOT
NOTICE IT, BUT
WE ARE TAKING
GOOD CARE OF
YOU!

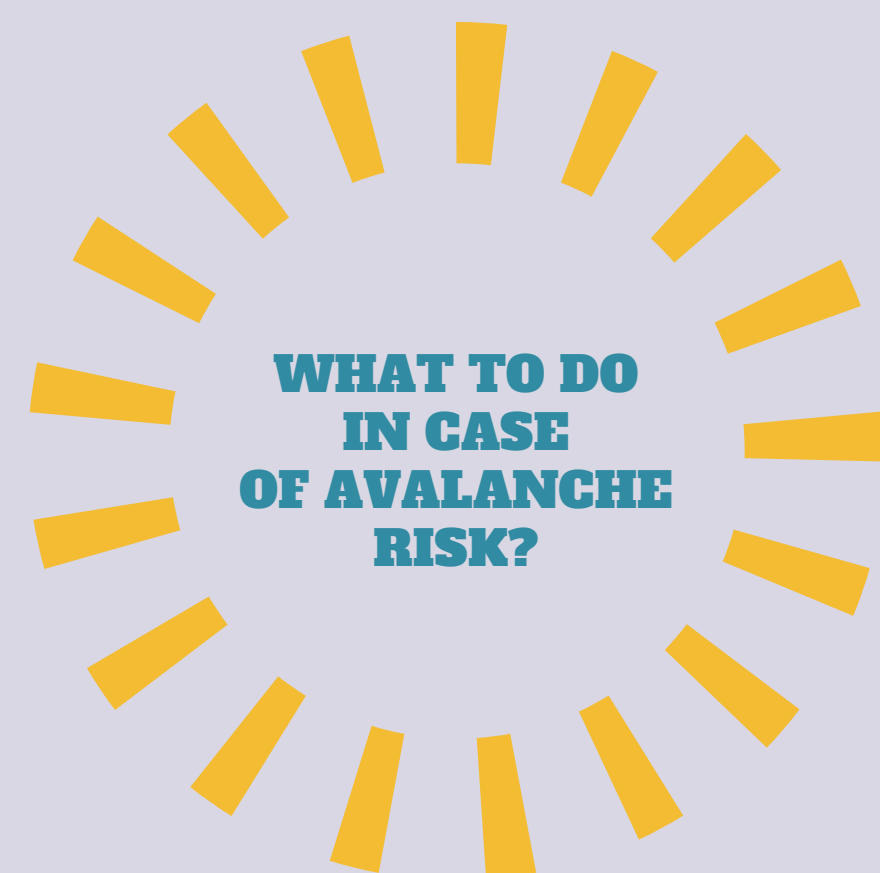
Monitoring of avalanche hazard



The [Local Avalanche Commission](#) (Commissione Locale Valanghe – CLV) constantly monitors the conditions of the snow-pack throughout the winter period by using the Regional Avalanche Bulletin and with the help of local actors. It also provides support to the Mayor in case of critical situations, by suggesting the right measures to adopt as, for example, the preventive closure of some road sections or the banning of all fishing activities along certain areas of the stream.

The [Snow and Avalanche Bulletin](#) is a tool that provides an overview of the quantity of fell snow and snow stability and estimates the avalanche danger in a certain area, also on the basis of weather forecasts, in order to prevent any accidents arising from avalanches, both spontaneous and provoked (www.regione.vda.it/bollnivometeo).

The new [Regional Meteorological, Hydrological, Hydraulic and Avalanche Bulletin](#) is able to assess with one single tool 3 types of dangerous situations; namely weather warnings, hydrogeological and hydraulic warnings (landslides and floods) and avalanche risk warnings. (http://cf.regione.vda.it/bollettini_criticita.php)



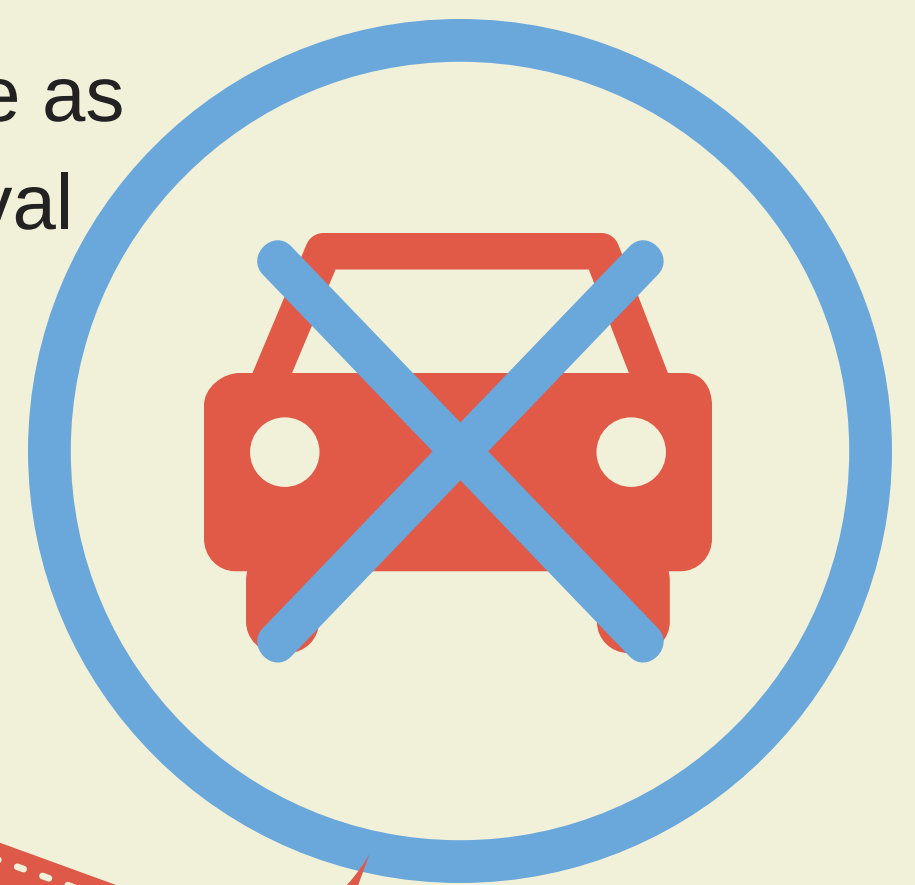
Behaviours to adopt in case of proven avalanche risk

- If you are at home or in a hotel, do not venture out and close windows and shutters;
- When possible, find shelter in underground areas and anyway keep away from the most risky rooms;
- Wear warm clothing and sturdy footwear;
- Prepare for any interruption of power, heating and water supply.
- Make sure that food and any other essential items are available, including lifesaving medicines;
- Keep updated and get informed on weather conditions by checking the regional weather report and the snow and avalanche bulletin available at www.regione.vda.it;it;



IN A CLOSED PLACE

- Do not venture out; stay at home or at your hotel;
- Do not travel by car in order to facilitate restoration of traffic and/or any rescue operation;
- Keep in mind that petrol stations will be closed to guarantee refuelling of rescue vehicles;
- Stop if you find road signs that forbid you to access certain areas: it is for your own safety;
- Be patient: restoring traffic after an avalanche takes time as avalanche risk assessment evaluations and snow removal operations will be carried out.



IN THE EVENT OF TRAFFIC INTERRUPTION

KEEP UPDATED!!

SMS-INFORMA



Go to the website of the
Municipality of Valtournenche
www.comune.valtournenche.ao.it
(Tel +39 0166946811) and
subscribe to the service
SMS-INFORMA.

Get updates on weather conditions
by checking the regional weather
report and the snow and avalanche
bulletin available at
www.regione.vda.it



Emergency Number

112

More useful contacts

[Guide del Cervino](http://www.guidedelcervino.com) <http://www.guidedelcervino.com>
(Tel. +39 0166 948169)

[Cervino S.p.a](http://www.cervinia.it) <http://www.cervinia.it> (Tel. +39 0166 94
43 11)

[Fondazione Montagna Sicura](http://www.fondazionemontagnasicura.org)
<http://www.fondazionemontagnasicura.org>

[Office du Tourisme Cervinia](http://www.office-du-tourisme-cervinia.com)
0166/949136

[Office du Tourisme Valtournenche](http://www.office-du-tourisme-valtournenche.com)
0166/92029



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Cervinia S.P.A.!!!

REMEMBER...



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