

Content and structure of public avalanche bulletins

Using avalanche bulletins, avalanche warning services inform the public about the current snow and avalanche situation in their territory. The content of the avalanche bulletin serves as a warning. The bulletin is published on a regular basis during the peak winter season and primarily contains a description of the avalanche danger. It also contains information on the weather parameters that affect avalanches and on the structure of the snowpack. The information provided by the avalanche bulletin serves as a basis for the user's own evaluation. It does not replace an autonomous assessment of the situation in each given locality. The information contained in the bulletin is too general for local assessment purposes because of the limited data resources.

The avalanche bulletins by all EAWS members have the same content and structure. The structure of the bulletin reflects the principals of an *information pyramid* illustrated in Figure 1. The most important topic, i.e. the danger level is described at the top of the bulletin, followed by the avalanche prone locations (core zone), avalanche problems, a description of the danger, and information concerning the snowpack and weather. Finally, the data recorded by the automatic weather stations can be displayed.

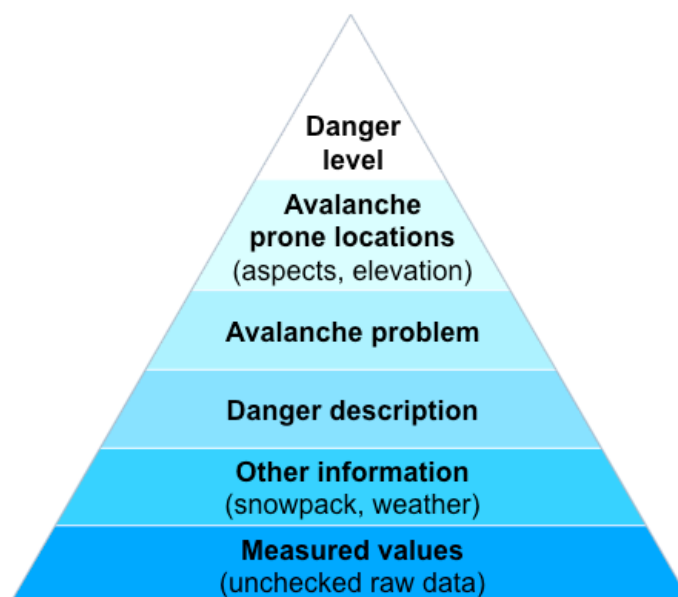


Figure 1: Structure of the information pyramid used in avalanche bulletins.