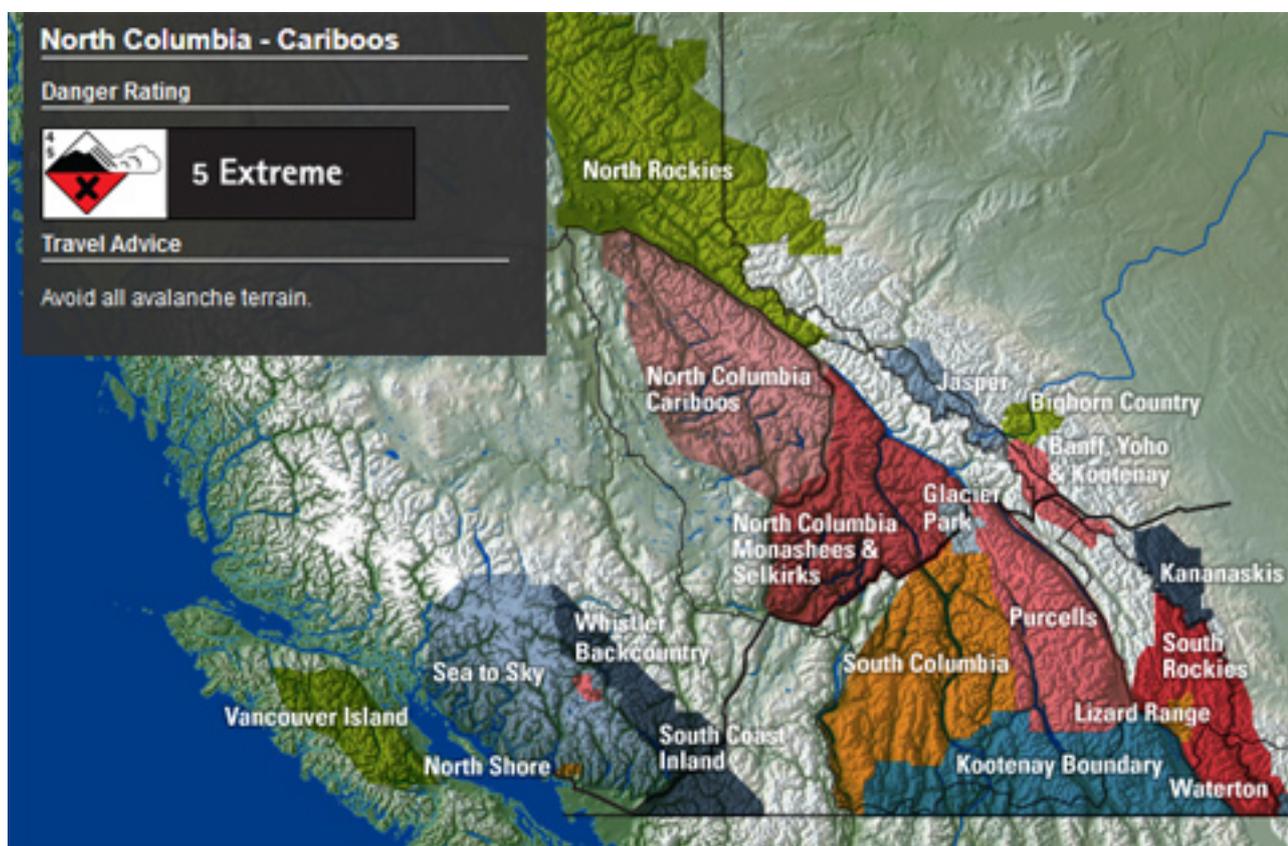


The Canadian Avalanche Center rates the avalanche danger in the region as 'extreme'. Their advice is to avoid all avalanche terrain.

On Thursday a 'Pineapple Express' brought a substantial amount of moisture to this region and approximately 30cm of snow is predicted at higher elevations today. There will be strong southwesterly ridgetop winds reaching up to 70kms.



40-70 cm of recent storm snow forms the upper layer of the snowpack. Strong southwest winds have redistributed the new snow into deep wind slabs on exposed lee slopes and cross-loaded gully features. The February 12 persistent weak layer (crust, and/or surface hoar) is now down 60-80 cm. It is primed for triggering and has been reacting readily to both natural and human triggers on all aspects and a wide range of elevations. The effect of a large storm on the snowpack, particularly one accompanied by warm temperatures, wind and possibly rain, will be dramatic.

Deeper persistent weak layers from early February and late January continue to show planar failures when moderate to hard forces are applied in snow pack tests. These deeper layers have not been reactive to the weight of a rider, but they could potentially be triggered during the upcoming storm, further increasing the potential size of avalanche events.

On Wednesday, natural avalanches up to size 3.5 were observed on north and south aspects from 1500 m to 2200 m. On Tuesday, a cornice fall triggered a size 3.5 avalanche on a northeast aspect, which ran for 800 m. Other natural and explosive-triggered avalanches were observed up to size 3 on a range of aspects.

In the past 30 years, from 1978 to 2007, an average of 11 avalanche fatalities have occurred per year in Canada.