

Be Aware of Depth Hoar



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Winter is in the rearview mirror and spring is gaining momentum but we cannot forget about avalanches. As the seasons change so do the types of avalanches. There are two ways to trigger avalanches: stress the snowpack or weaken it. Dry slab avalanches are common in winter and occur when too much weight (stress) is added to the snowpack. Under a heavy load of new snow, windblown snow or skiers, layers collapse and avalanche from this added stress. In spring the snowpack loses strength and weakens when melting water breaks down snow crystals and provides lubrication between layers. Some types of layers are more prone to this type of weakening and this season the western US has one of the worst: depth hoar.

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