

Avalanche warning during military field exercises in Northern Norway

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Norway frequently hosts the NATO cold weather exercise “Cold Response” in the Northern parts of Norway. Aim of the exercise is to train the participants in cold weather warfare. The terrain covered by the participants during the exercise covers an area from the coast to several 100 kilometers inland. The highest peaks are around 1500 meters. Near the coast the climate in the area is clearly maritime (sub arctic maritime) while the inner areas have a sub arctic continental climate. The exercise area is mostly covered by military avalanche hazard maps, showing A) potential release areas (zone 1), B) potential run out areas (zone 2), and C) areas that are generally not reached by avalanches (zone 3). The avalanche maps impose restrictions on movement through the different zones depending on the avalanche danger rating. An international team of avalanche experts prepare avalanche danger ratings throughout the exercise. Here, we present the methods and procedures for preparation of the danger ratings and experiences from avalanche forecasting in an area with challenging climatic conditions.