



**CAUTION, HIGH
MOUNTAIN!**

**HOW DANGEROUS
IS THE HIGH MOUNTAIN?**

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MAIN HAZARDS
IN THE HIGH
MOUNTAIN



CREVASSE



SNOW BRIDGE



SLIDING



AVALANCHE



CORNICE



ICE / ROCKFALL



FLASH FLOOD

MAIN HAZARDS IN DETAILS

In the high mountain environment, predictable or sudden hazards can occur and result in a situation that can potentially be dangerous to people nearby.

The high mountain entails a high sense of responsibility: it is unmarked, not secured and without surveillance from any type of authority. This document aims at presenting signs that can be found in this specific environment.



CREVASSE

It is a hole that varies in width (up to 20m) and depth (up to 80m). Crevasses can be seen on the surface of the glacier, but can also be hidden beneath glacier surface. Its sides are made of snow and/or ice and can be slippery.



SNOW BRIDGE

A snow bridge is a layer of compact snow, under which hides a crevasse. It varies in thickness and strength. It can break under the weight of a person, resulting in a potentially dangerous fall, deep into the crevasse.



SLIDING

Made of snow, ice and hard snowfields (compacted remaining snow patches in summer), wet rock, etc., terrain in the high alpine can be extremely slippery in specific conditions. Even on a low angle slope, a fall can lead to a long slide and eventually dangerous and chaotic terrain.



AVALANCHE

An avalanche is caused by a loose amount of snow, sliding down the mountain side. It can occur on low-angled and steep slopes, and can be naturally triggered or caused by a person or a group. This hazard remains high after a snow fall in summer.



CORNICE

Formed by wind, a cornice is made of compact snow and ice. It overhangs a ridge line, high above the mountain face. It can collapse in a very unpredictable way, naturally or under a person's weight.



ICEFALL

A serac is a gigantic block of ice (size may vary, from a car or a full-size building), which can collapse at any time and suddenly under its own weight.



ROCKFALL

Unstable rock slabs and blocks can suddenly break loose from a rock face or mountain side made of scree (e.i glacier moraine). The result is a rock and dirt avalanche roaming at high speed down the mountain side.



FLASH FLOOD

The flow of a mountain creek or river can suddenly increase and carry everything downstream along the way.



1 CREVASSE

2 SNOW BRIDGE

3 SLIPPING

4 AVALANCHE

5 CORNICE

6 ICE / ROCKFALL

7 FLASH FLOOD

**HIGH MOUNTAINS BEGIN
JUST OUTSIDE SECURED
INFRASTRUCTURES.
HAZARDS ARE ANYWHERE
BEYOND THIS LIMIT.**



HOW CAN WE DEFINE THE HIGH MOUNTAIN? HOW TO STAY SAFE?

In the Alps what we refer to as the “high mountain” is basically an alpine environment at high altitude: high peaks, glaciers etc. Yet, low altitude glacier sections and side moraines can present similar hazards. Exposed to extreme weather conditions, these areas attract many outdoor fans in spite of the multiple inherent dangers.

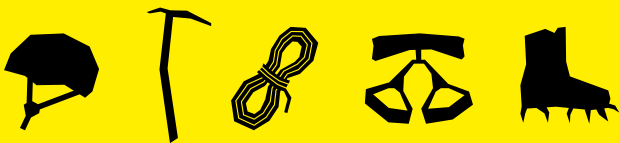
Entering the high alpine requires experience and knowledge in order to identify/anticipate hazardous situation and avoid them at best. Basic mountaineering skills are essential, such as roping up and using crampons, avoiding slipping and falling, glacier and fog navigating, progress efficiently and chose the right activity time, be physically prepared to altitude, etc.

HIKERS SHOULD USE CAUTION!

Mid- altitude terrain also entails natural hazards. Remaining hard-packed snow fields can be slippery, rock fall and torrential floods are persisting dangers in the mountains in summer. We recommend hikers visit local mountain information offices, check information bulletins, and equipment adapted to conditions at the time.

BY DEFINITION THE HIGH MOUNTAINS
ARE UNMARKED, NOT SECURED,
AND WITHOUT SURVEILLANCE
FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

**ARE YOU EXPERIENCED
AND PROPERLY EQUIPPED?
IF NOT, PLEASE STAY IN SECURED
AREAS OR USE THE SERVICE
OF A PROFESSIONAL GUIDE.**



PROTECT YOURSELF!

Specific mountain shoes and clothes are useful even in secured areas. They will protect you from the wind and cold. Sunglasses and sunscreen will protect you from damaging your eyes and getting sunburnt. Remember that nice weather conditions can change to extreme without warning. Rehydrating regularly is also essential in the alpine.

INFORMATION AND PREVENTION IN THE MONT-BLANC RANGE

La Chamoniarde is the Chamonix based mountain rescue and awareness organization. Its mission is to provide daily information about conditions in the alpine, and promote safety and reduce accidents in the mountains.

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USEFUL CONTACTS



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