
Contents

| | | |
|----------|---|----|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 | Avalanche hazards | 1 |
| 1.1.1 | Overview and terminology..... | 1 |
| 1.1.2 | Avalanche hazards: historical and geographical relevance | 2 |
| 1.2 | Technical avalanche defense: classification | 3 |
| 1.2.1 | Classification scheme of defense measures and their effects..... | 3 |
| 1.2.2 | Permanent technical avalanche protection (defense structures) | 6 |
| 1.2.3 | Technical avalanche defense with temporary effects | 7 |
| 1.3 | Avalanche disasters, development of avalanche defense: historical overview | 10 |
| 1.3.1 | Chronicle of avalanche catastrophes | 10 |
| 1.3.1.1 | Avalanche disasters in the Alps | 10 |
| 1.3.1.2 | Avalanche disasters in other regions | 12 |
| 1.4 | History of avalanche defense | 13 |
| 1.4.1 | Historical development in Europe..... | 13 |
| 2 | Avalanches: evolution and impact | 17 |
| 2.1 | Characteristics of avalanches | 17 |
| 2.1.1 | Definitions and classifications..... | 17 |
| 2.1.2 | Spatial and temporal occurrence of avalanches..... | 17 |
| 2.2 | Meteorological principles of avalanche evolution..... | 19 |
| 2.2.1 | Weather conditions forming avalanches in the European Alps..... | 19 |
| 2.2.1.1 | General remarks | 19 |
| 2.2.1.2 | Northwestern (precipitation build up) area..... | 20 |
| 2.2.1.3 | Western weather conditions | 21 |
| 2.2.1.4 | South foehn situation | 22 |
| 2.2.1.5 | Occlusion from the North East – north-east location | 23 |
| 2.2.2 | Weather conditions forming avalanches in North America (western ranges) | 23 |
| 2.2.3 | Weather conditions forming avalanches in other mountain regions.... | 24 |
| 2.3 | Nivological principles of avalanche evolution | 24 |
| 2.3.1 | Properties of material snow..... | 24 |
| 2.3.2 | Genesis of snow | 25 |
| 2.3.3 | Snow metamorphism | 27 |
| 2.3.3.1 | General remarks | 27 |
| 2.3.3.2 | Principles of snow metamorphosis..... | 27 |
| 2.3.3.3 | Initial metamorphism | 28 |
| 2.3.3.4 | Equilibrium growth metamorphism | 28 |
| 2.3.3.5 | Faceting..... | 29 |
| 2.3.3.6 | Melt-freeze metamorphism | 30 |
| 2.3.4 | Snowpack..... | 31 |
| 2.3.4.1 | Formation of snowpack and layering | 31 |
| 2.3.4.2 | Movements and tensions in snow cover..... | 31 |

| | | |
|----------|---|----|
| 2.3.4.3 | Avalanche classification according to evolution | 33 |
| 2.4 | Frequency and magnitude of avalanche events | 34 |
| 2.4.1 | Criteria for frequency, magnitude and risk assessment | 34 |
| 2.4.2 | Frequency (recurrence) of avalanche events | 37 |
| 2.4.3 | Magnitude of avalanche events | 37 |
| 2.4.4 | Intensity of avalanche impact..... | 38 |
| 2.5 | Morphological principles of avalanche evolution | 39 |
| 2.5.1 | Avalanche catchment area..... | 39 |
| 2.5.2 | Avalanche starting zone | 41 |
| 2.5.3 | Avalanche path | 45 |
| 2.5.4 | Avalanche runout zone (deposition zone)..... | 47 |
| 2.6 | Avalanche protection forest | 48 |
| 2.6.1 | Effects of vegetation and forest on avalanche formation | 48 |
| 2.6.2 | Effects of avalanches on trees and forests | 52 |
| 3 | Avalanche dynamics: models and impact..... | 55 |
| 3.1 | Principles of avalanche dynamics | 55 |
| 3.1.1 | Physical principles | 55 |
| 3.1.1.1 | General remarks | 55 |
| 3.1.1.2 | Characteristic criteria of avalanche movement..... | 55 |
| 3.1.1.3 | Avalanche velocity..... | 55 |
| 3.1.1.4 | Model laws of avalanche movement..... | 57 |
| 3.1.1.5 | Mathematical models for avalanche dynamics..... | 58 |
| 3.1.1.6 | Constitutive law | 59 |
| 3.1.2 | Dynamics of flow and powder snow avalanches..... | 60 |
| 3.1.2.1 | Avalanche release | 60 |
| 3.1.2.2 | Movement of flow avalanches | 60 |
| 3.1.2.3 | Movement of powder snow avalanches | 60 |
| 3.1.2.4 | Movement of mixed-motion avalanches | 62 |
| 3.1.2.5 | Movement of wet snow avalanches and slush flows | 63 |
| 3.2 | Numerical avalanche models and simulation | 64 |
| 3.2.1 | Application of avalanche models | 64 |
| 3.2.2 | Principles and data for avalanche modelling..... | 65 |
| 3.2.3 | Avalanche model overview: classification | 66 |
| 3.2.4 | Statistical-topographical avalanche models | 67 |
| 3.2.4.1 | Alpha-beta model..... | 67 |
| 3.2.4.2 | Other statistical models | 68 |
| 3.2.5 | Physical-dynamic avalanche models..... | 69 |
| 3.2.5.1 | Voellmy-Salm model | 69 |
| 3.2.5.2 | AVAL-1D | 71 |
| 3.2.5.3 | RAMMS | 74 |
| 3.2.5.4 | SamosAT | 74 |
| 3.2.5.5 | Application of avalanche models in engineering practice | 77 |
| 3.3 | Avalanche action on objects (obstacles) | 78 |
| 3.3.1 | Dynamic avalanche action | 78 |
| 3.3.1.1 | Principles | 78 |

| | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 3.3.1.2 | Action by flow avalanche on obstacles obstructing the flow..... | 79 |
| 3.3.1.3 | Action by flow avalanches on narrow obstacles..... | 81 |
| 3.3.1.4 | Action by powder snow avalanches..... | 83 |
| 3.3.1.5 | Impact of massive components (rocks, trunks) | 85 |
| 3.3.1.6 | Action by vertical avalanche deflection | 85 |
| 3.3.1.7 | Action by wet snow avalanches | 87 |
| 3.3.2 | Damage effects of avalanches | 87 |
| 3.3.2.1 | General remarks | 87 |
| 3.3.2.2 | Damage effects by flow avalanches | 89 |
| 3.3.2.3 | Damage effects by powder snow avalanches | 90 |
| 4 | Avalanche hazard assessment and planning of protection measures..... | 91 |
| 4.1 | Avalanche hazard (risk) assessment and mapping | 91 |
| 4.1.1 | Model of hazard assessment and risk concept..... | 91 |
| 4.1.2 | Avalanche hazards and risks: definitions and quantification | 91 |
| 4.1.2.1 | Avalanche hazards and hazard scenarios | 91 |
| 4.1.2.2 | Avalanche damage and risk | 95 |
| 4.1.3 | Methods of hazard assessment | 97 |
| 4.1.4 | Avalanche risk assessment..... | 99 |
| 4.2 | Mapping of avalanche hazards and risks..... | 100 |
| 4.2.1 | Overview..... | 100 |
| 4.2.2 | Hazard (indication) maps | 102 |
| 4.2.3 | Hazard zone plans | 105 |
| 4.2.4 | Risk maps..... | 109 |
| 4.3 | Planning of avalanche defense structures..... | 109 |
| 4.3.1 | Principles of planning | 109 |
| 4.3.2 | Objectives of avalanche defense | 113 |
| 4.3.2.1 | Principles of protection objectives | 113 |
| 4.3.2.2 | Quantitative and risk-based protection objectives..... | 115 |
| 4.3.3 | Sectorial protection concepts | 117 |
| 4.3.3.1 | Principles | 117 |
| 4.3.3.2 | Protection concept for settlement areas | 118 |
| 4.3.3.3 | Protection concepts for traffic routes and supply lines | 119 |
| 4.3.3.4 | Protection concepts for ski areas..... | 121 |
| 4.3.4 | Planning process for technical avalanche defense measures | 121 |
| 4.3.4.1 | General planning procedures in avalanche defense..... | 121 |
| 4.3.4.2 | Design of avalanche defense structures..... | 124 |
| 5 | Structural avalanche protection: defense systems and construction types | 127 |
| 5.1 | Principles of structural avalanche defense..... | 127 |
| 5.2 | Structural avalanche defense in the starting zone..... | 127 |
| 5.2.1 | Overview and classification | 127 |
| 5.2.2 | Snow supporting structures: construction types | 130 |
| 5.2.2.1 | Protection effect of snow supporting structures | 130 |
| 5.2.2.2 | Classification..... | 130 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----|
| 5.2.2.3 | Construction types: snow bridge of steel | 133 |
| 5.2.2.4 | Construction type: snow net..... | 136 |
| 5.2.2.5 | Construction type: combined snow bridge..... | 140 |
| 5.2.2.6 | Construction type: snow bridge and snow rakes of wood..... | 142 |
| 5.2.2.7 | Historical construction types of snow supporting structures | 144 |
| 5.2.2.8 | Type approval test..... | 146 |
| 5.2.3 | Foundation and anchoring of snow supporting structures..... | 149 |
| 5.2.3.1 | General remarks | 149 |
| 5.2.3.2 | Methods of foundation (anchorage) | 149 |
| 5.2.3.3 | Historical foundation methods | 151 |
| 5.2.4 | Snowdrift control structures | 155 |
| 5.2.4.1 | Effects and classification of snowdrift control structures | 155 |
| 5.2.4.2 | Construction type: snowdrift fence | 157 |
| 5.2.4.3 | Construction type: wind baffle | 157 |
| 5.2.4.4 | Construction type: wind roof (jet roof) | 159 |
| 5.2.5 | Snow glide protection structures | 159 |
| 5.2.5.1 | Protection effects..... | 159 |
| 5.2.5.2 | Snow glide protection methods: overview | 159 |
| 5.2.5.3 | Construction type: array of posts | 162 |
| 5.2.5.4 | Construction type: snow glide tripod | 163 |
| 5.2.5.5 | Construction type: berms | 163 |
| 5.3 | Structural avalanche defense in the avalanche path and deposition zone..... | 165 |
| 5.3.1 | Classification..... | 165 |
| 5.3.2 | Longitudinal defense structures (construction types to guide and deflect avalanches) | 165 |
| 5.3.2.1 | Protection effects of avalanche deflecting structures..... | 165 |
| 5.3.2.2 | Construction type: guiding wall | 165 |
| 5.3.2.3 | Construction type: deflecting dam (wall) | 166 |
| 5.3.3 | Transverse defense structures (construction types to catch or retard avalanches)..... | 167 |
| 5.3.3.1 | Protections effects of avalanche catching or retarding structures..... | 167 |
| 5.3.3.2 | Construction type: catching dam (wall) | 169 |
| 5.3.3.3 | Construction type: avalanche-retarding cone | 169 |
| 5.3.3.4 | Construction type: avalanche breaker | 171 |
| 5.3.4 | Avalanche galleries and tunnels..... | 172 |
| 5.3.4.1 | Construction type: avalanche gallery (tunnel)..... | 172 |
| 5.3.4.2 | Construction type: avalanche-secure pipe bridge..... | 173 |
| 6 | Structural avalanche defense: design and construction | 177 |
| 6.1 | Normative bases of design | 177 |
| 6.1.1 | EUROCODE and national standards in Austria, Germany and Switzerland | 177 |
| 6.1.2 | American national standard (ANSI) and Canadian standard (CSA) ... | 177 |
| 6.2 | Design of avalanche defense structures in the starting zone | 179 |
| 6.2.1 | General rules for designing avalanche defense structures | 179 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| 6.2.2 | Design snow height..... | 180 |
| 6.2.2.1 | Methodology..... | 180 |
| 6.2.2.2 | Extreme snow height in Switzerland and Austria | 180 |
| 6.2.2.3 | Extreme snow height in USA and Canada | 182 |
| 6.2.3 | Position of protected objects | 182 |
| 6.2.4 | Static systems for avalanche defense structures | 183 |
| 6.2.5 | Actions on snow supporting structures | 184 |
| 6.2.5.1 | Overview and classification | 184 |
| 6.2.5.2 | Snow pressure | 185 |
| 6.2.5.3 | End-effect loads | 189 |
| 6.2.5.4 | Resulting snow pressure and load arrangement | 190 |
| 6.2.5.5 | Snow pressure on grate | 192 |
| 6.2.5.6 | Snow load on slim components (structures)..... | 194 |
| 6.2.5.7 | Lateral loads..... | 195 |
| 6.2.5.8 | Dead weight | 195 |
| 6.2.5.9 | Wind load..... | 195 |
| 6.2.5.10 | Other actions | 195 |
| 6.2.6 | Layout and configuration of snow supporting structures in the starting area | 196 |
| 6.2.6.1 | General rules for layout..... | 196 |
| 6.2.6.2 | Slope inclination suitable for snow supporting structures | 196 |
| 6.2.6.3 | Vertical extension of defense area..... | 196 |
| 6.2.6.4 | Horizontal extension of defense area | 197 |
| 6.2.6.5 | Concepts for arrangement of snow supporting structures | 197 |
| 6.2.6.6 | Height of snow supporting structures..... | 199 |
| 6.2.6.7 | Distance between (rows of) structures in the line of slope | 200 |
| 6.2.6.8 | Lateral distance between structures..... | 201 |
| 6.2.6.9 | Combination of snow supporting structures with snow glide defense structures | 203 |
| 6.2.7 | Building materials for avalanche defense structures | 204 |
| 6.2.7.1 | General fundamentals of building materials..... | 204 |
| 6.2.7.2 | Construction steel..... | 204 |
| 6.2.7.3 | Construction wood | 204 |
| 6.2.7.4 | Fasteners and connecting means | 205 |
| 6.2.7.5 | Ropes and reinforcing steel..... | 205 |
| 6.2.7.6 | Anchor grout | 206 |
| 6.2.8 | Structure assessment and design | 208 |
| 6.2.8.1 | General fundamentals of structure assessment and design..... | 208 |
| 6.2.8.2 | Action combinations | 208 |
| 6.2.8.3 | Support reactions and internal forces | 209 |
| 6.2.8.4 | Dimensioning of supporting constructions of snow supporting structures in steel..... | 212 |
| 6.2.8.5 | Dimensioning of grates of snow supporting structures in steel | 213 |
| 6.2.8.6 | Dimensioning of snow supporting structures in wood | 213 |
| 6.2.8.7 | Dimensioning of snow nets..... | 215 |
| 6.2.8.8 | Dimensioning of snow rakes..... | 217 |

| | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 6.2.8.9 | Corrosion protection for steel structures above ground..... | 218 |
| 6.2.9 | Geotechnical design of the foundations of snow supporting structures | 219 |
| 6.2.9.1 | Principles of geotechnical design..... | 219 |
| 6.2.9.2 | Design of foundations of snow supporting structures | 219 |
| 6.2.9.3 | Design situations..... | 220 |
| 6.2.9.4 | Partial factors of safety for pile foundations..... | 221 |
| 6.2.9.5 | Design of foundations for supports | 221 |
| 6.2.9.6 | Design of girder foundations..... | 224 |
| 6.2.9.7 | Corrosion protection for foundations | 228 |
| 6.2.9.8 | Testing of micropiles | 228 |
| 6.2.10 | Design of snow supporting structures on permafrost sites | 230 |
| 6.3 | Design of snowdrift protection structures | 233 |
| 6.3.1 | Design of snowdrift fences and wind baffles | 233 |
| 6.3.1.1 | Principles of design..... | 233 |
| 6.3.1.2 | Structural systems of snowdrift fences and wind baffles..... | 234 |
| 6.3.1.3 | Action and action combinations..... | 235 |
| 6.3.1.4 | Construction principles | 235 |
| 6.3.2 | Design of wind roofs (jet roof)..... | 235 |
| 6.3.2.1 | Principles of design..... | 235 |
| 6.3.2.2 | Structural systems | 235 |
| 6.3.2.3 | Action and action combinations..... | 236 |
| 6.4 | Design of avalanche catching, deflection and retarding structures..... | 237 |
| 6.4.1 | Determining of the required height of catching and deflection dams (classical approach) | 237 |
| 6.4.2 | Determining the required height of catching and deflection dams by a more physically based approach..... | 237 |
| 6.4.2.1 | General principles of design..... | 237 |
| 6.4.2.2 | Catching and deflection dams | 239 |
| 6.4.2.3 | Avalanche guiding dams..... | 242 |
| 6.4.2.4 | Storage capacity | 242 |
| 6.4.2.5 | Actions on avalanche deflection and retarding dams | 243 |
| 6.4.3 | Geotechnical design of avalanche deflection and retarding dams | 244 |
| 6.4.3.1 | Fundamentals of geotechnical dam design..... | 244 |
| 6.4.3.2 | Rules of dam construction..... | 245 |
| 6.5 | Design of avalanche breakers..... | 247 |
| 6.5.1 | General remarks | 247 |
| 6.5.2 | Actions on avalanche breaker and structural systems | 247 |
| 6.5.3 | Constructive design..... | 248 |
| 6.6 | Design of avalanche galleries (tunnels)..... | 248 |
| 7 | Construction work and maintenance of structural avalanche control | 255 |
| 7.1 | Construction work (avalanche defense structures) | 255 |
| 7.1.1 | Fundamentals of construction work in Alpine environments..... | 255 |
| 7.1.1.1 | Conditions on avalanche control construction sites | 255 |

| | | |
|---------|--|-----|
| 7.1.1.2 | Demands for building methods and construction machines in avalanche control | 255 |
| 7.1.2 | Construction site facilities and infrastructure | 255 |
| 7.1.2.1 | Construction site facilities: overview and requirements | 255 |
| 7.1.2.2 | Social and office rooms, housing for workers | 257 |
| 7.1.2.3 | Storage and handling of construction material and equipment | 258 |
| 7.1.2.4 | Supply and disposal at construction zones | 260 |
| 7.1.3 | Transportation systems on avalanche defense construction sites | 261 |
| 7.1.3.1 | Principles of transportation | 261 |
| 7.1.3.2 | Transportation road | 261 |
| 7.1.3.3 | Material ropeway and cable cranes | 265 |
| 7.1.3.4 | Heavy transport helicopters..... | 265 |
| 7.1.4 | Special construction methods in avalanche defense in the starting zone | 267 |
| 7.1.4.1 | Principles of construction work in avalanche control..... | 267 |
| 7.1.4.2 | Construction of micropile foundations and drill technology | 268 |
| 7.1.4.3 | Construction of wire rope anchors | 270 |
| 7.1.4.4 | Construction of ground plate foundation | 272 |
| 7.1.4.5 | Construction of concrete foundation | 273 |
| 7.1.4.6 | Construction of micropile foundation in solid rock (rock anchor) | 274 |
| 7.1.4.7 | Mounting methods for snow supporting structures | 274 |
| 7.1.5 | Safety engineering in avalanche control | 275 |
| 7.1.5.1 | General principles of employee protection at construction zones in alpine environment..... | 275 |
| 7.1.5.2 | Preventive employee protection (prior start of construction) | 276 |
| 7.1.5.3 | Requirements for employees on avalanche control construction zones | 276 |
| 7.1.5.4 | Personal protective equipment (PPE)..... | 276 |
| 7.1.5.5 | Fall protection equipment and scaffolding | 279 |
| 7.1.5.6 | Safety regulation for helicopter transportation..... | 281 |
| 7.2 | Maintenance of avalanche defense structures | 281 |
| 7.2.1 | Principles of maintenance | 281 |
| 7.2.2 | Maintenance management and condition assessment | 281 |
| 7.2.2.1 | Lifecycle of avalanche defense structures | 281 |
| 7.2.2.2 | Functions and strategies of maintenance..... | 282 |
| 7.2.2.3 | Inspection and condition monitoring | 284 |
| 7.2.3 | Damage and functional defects of avalanche defense structures..... | 284 |
| 7.2.3.1 | Overview and classification | 284 |
| 7.2.3.2 | Causes for damages and functional deficits..... | 285 |
| 7.2.3.3 | Damage analysis and condition assessment | 286 |
| 7.2.3.4 | Damages at snow supporting structures | 289 |
| 7.2.3.5 | Damages at avalanche dams..... | 289 |
| 7.2.3.6 | Damage at avalanche galleries and tunnels | 290 |
| 7.2.3.7 | Damage to snowdrift structures..... | 290 |
| 7.2.4 | Maintenance measures for avalanche defense structures | 292 |
| 7.2.4.1 | Methods of maintenance | 292 |
| 7.2.4.2 | Methods of renovation | 302 |

| | | |
|----------|---|------------|
| 7.2.4.3 | Urgency of maintenance measures | 302 |
| 7.2.4.4 | Renovation methods for avalanche walls | 305 |
| 7.2.4.5 | Renovation methods for snow supporting structures | 306 |
| 7.2.4.6 | Renovation methods for snow nets | 308 |
| 7.2.4.7 | Costs of maintenance and renovation..... | 308 |
| 8 | Building protection (direct protection) measures..... | 311 |
| 8.1 | Structural building protection measures | 311 |
| 8.1.1 | Principles of building protection against avalanches | 311 |
| 8.1.2 | Avalanche action on buildings | 311 |
| 8.1.3 | Structural measures at the building | 314 |
| 8.1.3.1 | Shape and orientation of the building | 314 |
| 8.1.3.2 | Constructive building protection measures | 314 |
| 8.1.3.3 | Building protection measures with temporary effect..... | 317 |
| 8.1.3.4 | Design and commercial products for building protection against avalanches..... | 318 |
| 8.1.4 | Structural measures in front of the building | 319 |
| 8.1.4.1 | General remarks | 319 |
| 8.1.4.2 | Avalanche splitting wedges | 319 |
| 8.1.4.3 | Roof terrace..... | 321 |
| 8.1.4.4 | Impact walls | 321 |
| 8.1.5 | Building defense measures for other structures..... | 321 |
| 8.2 | Safety concepts for buildings endangered by avalanches | 323 |
| 9 | Artificial release and monitoring technology for avalanches... | 325 |
| 9.1 | Methods of temporary avalanche defense | 325 |
| 9.2 | Artificial release of avalanches..... | 325 |
| 9.2.1 | General remarks | 325 |
| 9.2.2 | Fundamentals of artificial release of avalanches | 326 |
| 9.2.3 | Effects of artificial release | 327 |
| 9.2.4 | Methods of artificial avalanche release: overview..... | 328 |
| 9.2.5 | Comparison of methods: effects and efficiency | 328 |
| 9.2.6 | Safety requirements and risks of artificial avalanche release | 330 |
| 9.2.7 | Construction and operation of selected artificial release systems..... | 336 |
| 9.2.7.1 | Gazex® | 336 |
| 9.2.7.2 | Wyssen Avalanche Tower LS12-5® | 339 |
| 9.2.7.3 | Avalanche protection system Innauen-Schätti in the Scuol-Ftan-Sent ski area, Switzerland | 342 |
| 9.3 | Avalanche monitoring technology | 345 |
| 9.3.1 | Principles of avalanche monitoring..... | 345 |
| 9.3.2 | Meteorological monitoring | 347 |
| 9.3.2.1 | Fundamentals | 347 |
| 9.3.2.2 | Automatic weather stations | 348 |
| 9.3.2.3 | Weather radar..... | 348 |
| 9.3.3 | Monitoring snow cover..... | 350 |
| 9.3.4 | Monitoring snow mechanics | 354 |

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| 9.3.5 | Monitoring with remote sensing technology | 354 |
| 9.3.6 | Monitoring snow forces on avalanche defense measures..... | 354 |
| 9.3.7 | Monitoring avalanche dynamics | 355 |
| 9.3.7.1 | Systems for monitoring avalanche motion | 355 |
| 9.3.7.2 | Measuring avalanche impact forces with load cells | 356 |
| 9.3.7.3 | Measuring avalanche flow depth..... | 358 |
| 9.3.7.4 | Measuring velocity with optical sensors | 359 |
| 9.3.7.5 | Measuring velocity with pulsed dual doppler radar | 359 |
| 10 | Technical avalanche protection international: facts and figures..... | 363 |
| | Literature..... | 373 |
| | Index..... | 393 |

