



Winter season 2009-2010 – avalanche accidents in Italy

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Italy's 2009-2010 winter season was one of the worst since 1986: the mean value of victims had almost doubled. AINEVA's data bank registered 120 avalanche accidents and 217 people caught, 45 victims, 48 injured, 123 unharmed. In 58 This work gives a statistical analysis of avalanche accidents situation for the winter season 2009-2010 on the southern side of the Alps, with respect to types of accidents and caught categories, methods of detection of buried victims, survival percentages and main morphometric values of detached avalanches - such as slope gradient, aspect, elevation by geographic area. Results are compared with similar papers for the northern Alps and statistic values of past seasons. Finally this work analyses the relationship between avalanche accidents, snow cover average values and meteorological evolution. During the period 29th January – 07th February 2010, frequent but small snowfalls, often combined with strong winds activity and low mean temperatures broken up by short mild periods, led to the evolution of a weak snow cover, characterized by wind slab covering weak layers (depth and surface hoars). It is clearly possible to correlate such instability with at least five short periods of avalanche accidents occurrence along the southern side of the Alps as well as along the northern one (Austria, Switzerland and France).