



New plans for avalanche observation in France

L. Bélanger for the team EPA CLPA

Cemagref, Grenoble, France (laurent.belanger@cemagref.fr / Fax: +33 476-513803 / Phone: +33 476-762793)

On February 12th, 1999, a huge avalanche killed 12 people in their mountain chalets at Chamonix (France). After this major accident, processes of avalanche observation have been deeply reviewed and upgraded.

Firstly, on 4000 avalanche sites, the process of observation of events, known as the Permanent Enquiry on Avalanche, has been restructured.

Secondly, a process for updating regularly the maps of avalanche maximal extension, which is available on more than 7.000 km², has been established.

Thirdly, in case of major events, a frame for detailed investigation has been set up.

Most of the results of these operations are or will be published on www.avalanches.fr, for citizens and practitioners. The data is also available on request for scientific purpose.

The presentation will give an overview of these evolutions. Their main characteristics will be detailed, examples of methods and results will be shown, and references will be given. Difficulties and future prospects will be pointed out, particularly for scientific research on risk assessment.