

Part II:

Let's explore the kinds of additional stress needed to make the following layers fail in shear. We can do this two ways: Increase the angle of the slope or increase the mass on top of the layer in question.

Failure will occur when stress = strength (or when stress is greater than the strength).

1. First let's look at the shear stress on the bottom of the surface hoar layer, at 41 cm. Use your number for the total stress on this interface, τ_{total} , to determine whether there is initially failure in shear at 41 cm on this 35 degree slope. Assume the shear strength of the layer was measured at .950 kPa.

$$\tau_{total} < T \quad (0.753 \text{ kPa} < 0.950 \text{ kPa})$$

therefore, no initial failure

2. Given the current stress on the layer at 41 cm, calculate at what slope angle shear failure will occur. Remember, failure occurs when

$$T = \sigma_{total} \cdot \sin \psi$$

$$T = \sigma_{+} \sin \psi$$

$$\sin \psi = \frac{T}{\sigma_{+}}$$

$$\psi = \sin^{-1} \left(\frac{T}{\sigma_{+}} \right) \rightarrow \psi = \sin^{-1} \left(\frac{0.950 \text{ kPa}}{0.753 \text{ kPa}} \right)$$

$$\psi = 46.35^{\circ}$$

3. Again using the data for the bottom of the surface hoar layer, and assuming the slope is again at 35 degrees, calculate how much additional snow with a density of 100 kg/m^3 needs to fall before failure will occur in shear.

$$\text{Additional stress needed } (\tau_a) = T - \tau_{total}$$

$$\tau_a = 0.95 - 0.752 \text{ kPa}$$

$$\tau_a = 0.198 \text{ kPa}$$

$$\tau_a = \frac{\rho g H}{1000} \sin 35$$

$$H = \frac{\tau_a \cdot 1000}{\rho g \sin 35}$$

$$H = \frac{0.198 \text{ kPa} \cdot 1000 \text{ Pa/kPa}}{100 \text{ kg/m}^3 \cdot 9.8 \text{ m/s}^2 \cdot \sin 35} = 0.352 \text{ m} = \boxed{35.2 \text{ cm}}$$