

Putin Should Be Fined for Pilot Stunt, Bloggers Say

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Bloggers took issue with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's decision to pilot a firefighting aircraft this week, saying he should be fined for operating a plane without a license.

Without a pilot's license, which can require years of training to obtain, Putin faces a fine of 2,000 to 2,500 rubles (\$66 to \$82), blogger viking_nord [wrote](#) on his LiveJournal blog.

News reports said Putin took the co-pilot's seat after receiving brief instructions but did not mention him having a license.

Putin helped dump water onto two fires in the Ryazan region in what political analysts called a publicity stunt to show the nation that he was at the forefront of efforts to extinguish the wildfires that have ravaged central Russia this summer.

Lawyer and activist Andrei Navalny [pointed out](#) on his blog that Putin was actually seated in the captain's, not the co-pilot's, seat.

Putin, who also sat in the pilot's seat of a Tu-160 bomber in 2005 and a Su-27 fighter in 2000, made no public comment about the bloggers' complaints Wednesday.

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