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Mobile Operators Ready to Handle New Year's Eve Jams

By Justin Lifflander

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Even the airwaves have traffic jams in Moscow, at least on New Year's Eve, but congratulating your family and friends while celebrating the arrival of the New Year via a call or SMS should work out, if you plan ahead.

Avoid the absolute peak of 11 p.m. to 1 a.m., according to the city's mobile telephone operators, who are gearing up for the extra load.

"We are doing everything possible so our customers can enjoy talking to their friends and loved ones," said Vasily Toropin, Moscow region technical director of VimpelCom, which operates under the brand name Beeline. "But keeping in mind that all operators have extraordinary loads just before and after midnight, you might want to carefully plan your telephone congratulations."

Megafon said it was preparing for an "avalanche" of calls in the peak period that begins at 1

p.m. on the 31st and runs through 10 a.m. on Jan. 1.

The completion of a call or even successful transmission of an SMS is not only in the hands of your provider, Megafon spokeswoman Tatiana Ivanova pointed out, but is dependent on several interconnected networks locally, between cities and internationally.

“We have the necessary resources to handle the extra load,” Ivanova said. “And our situation center will be monitoring the network in real time to make sure all goes well.”

Beeline is forecasting network activity to be five to six times greater than an average day. The company has doubled the capacity of its SMS processing center and upgraded the software on network equipment in preparation for the load.

It has also added bandwidth to its intercity and international connections. At places where they expect large crowds to gather on New Year’s Eve, like the Sorochany ski resort outside Moscow, Beeline is even deploying additional temporary base stations to handle revelers’ calls.

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