

Aeroflot's SuperJet Grounded

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Aeroflot received its first Sukhoi SuperJet 100 a month ago, but the jet has been grounded half of that time due to a defect in its climate-control system.

The SuperJet was parked for 17 days this past month, said sources close to Aeroflot and the plane's producer, Sukhoi Aviation Corporation. The jet did not fly on June 23, then again from June 29 to July 2, and finally from July 5 to 16 — all because of a malfunctioning sensor connected with its climate-control system, a source said. This in no way affects the safety of the flights, the source added.

In just over a month, the SuperJet has completed 60 flights, clocking 101 hours in the air, but Aeroflot had been counting on twice that amount, said a source close to the airline.

Despite the large amount of ground time, Aeroflot continues to pay the lease, \$165,000 per month, as well as for repair work, the source said. The latter is to be reimbursed by the producer, as is customary practice, the source added.

Another SuperJet has been used by the Armenian flag-carrier, Armavia, since April. That jet has completed 216 trips, clocking 531 flight hours, and spent only 13 days on the ground. An Armavia spokesperson said the airline has not experienced any problems with its SuperJet.

In general, the SuperJet is viewed as the hope of the domestic aviation industry. It is to replace the aging Tu-134, a Soviet relic similar to the American DC-9, and the Russian government has not been stingy with resources for its development. Amendments to the federal program for developing civil aircraft through 2015 foresee a 10 percent increase in funding to 388.4 billion rubles (\$13.8 billion).

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