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Car Drivers Face Mandatory Drug Tests

By The Moscow Times

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Car owners will face mandatory annual testing for illegal drugs under a bill submitted by a United Russia deputy to the State Duma on Monday.

The bill, drafted by Irina Yarovaya, chairwoman of the Duma's Security and Anti-Corruption Committee, calls for the drug tests to be administered to drivers of all kinds of vehicles, police officers, military personnel, airplane pilots, ship crews and private security guards, among others.

Yarovaya emphasized that her bill would affect those who want to get driving licenses, in an apparent nod to several deadly car crashes that have stunned Moscow in recent weeks, Interfax reported.

The bill would require drug tests annually — or sometimes even more frequently. Those who fail the test would have the right to be retested in six months, but employers would be able to dismiss anyone who failed the first test. Furthermore, investigators would be allowed to open inquiries based on the result of the checks.

Under the law, the use of illegal drugs is a misdemeanor offense, punishable by a fine of 4,000 to 5,000 rubles ($130 to $160) or up to 15 days in jail.

The country's top anti-drugs official, Viktor Ivanov, announced in March that he wanted to introduce harsh penalties by criminalizing drug use.

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