

Detention Vans to Get Upgrades

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moscow police are planning to upgrade the vans they regularly use to haul away opposition protesters from unsanctioned rallies, a prisons official said Monday.

Among planned improvements, police are planning to install toilets, air conditioning, improved ventilation, heating and CCTV, an unnamed source in the Federal Prisons Service told Izvestia.

The upgraded vans will have two general cells and five solitary ones, according to the prisons official. The area of each solitary cell will be less than 0.4 square meters.

The upgraded Valdai vans will cost approximately 2 million rubles (\$64,000) apiece and could appear by next year, the source said, adding that the first upgraded van has already been tested by Moscow's city police department.

But despite the planned improvements, rights defenders believe that the conditions in police vans will remain inhumane.

Anton Tsvetkov, a member of the Public Monitoring Committee, an organization that defends prisoners' rights, explained that police vans are overly cramped and that conditions inside are dangerous to detainees' health.

"There are no windows, there's no natural light, and if the air conditioning is not on or is broken, people could easily suffocate," Tsvetkov told the newspaper.

Tsvetkov said police vans were still designed in accordance with guidelines set during Soviet times, adding that it is high time the Federal Prisons Service reviewed the outdated norms.

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