

Sochi Olympics Boss Pledges Games Will Be Safe

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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ST. PETERSBURG — The head of the organizing committee for the 2014 Winter Olympics says Russian authorities are working intensively with games officials to ensure a high level of security.

Concern over security at the Olympics in Sochi next February has been high, as the city is in the vicinity of restive Russian regions, including Chechnya and Dagestan. The suspects in this year's Boston Marathon bombings were ethnic Chechens, and one of them last year visited Dagestan, where authorities are investigating if he had contact with Islamic militants.

Sochi organizing committee head Dmitry Chernyshenko said at a Wednesday briefing: "This season, our security tested all necessary projects to reach the goal," and "the state is providing outstanding efforts to guarantee that [the Olympics] will be safe and quiet."

Chernyshenko, speaking on the sidelines of the SportAccord industry convention, also

addressed concerns about weather and transportation for the games.

This season's test events at the snow sports venues saw spells of rain and warm weather, but Chernyshenko said an elaborate program for storing snow in the mountains would counteract any problems. The snow is being stored in huge piles under thermal blankets in the mountains.

"The lesson we learned from Vancouver is that the weather can be abnormal ... It's why we realized also that delivering snow by helicopter might not be the most efficient way," he said.

The snow storage "means that in any weather, the fields of play are guaranteed to be covered by snow for the period of at least 50 days," Chernyshenko said.

Sochi includes one of the Russian president's residences, and the airport is routinely closed for an hour or two when he arrives or departs. But Chernyshenko said efforts were under way to ensure that similar closures would not affect the Olympics.

"There is a special commission, a special working group linked to the Kremlin administration to guarantee that the visits of an expected up to 40 world leaders will not harm the regular flights or create any inconvenience for Sochi guests," he said.

Sochi traditionally receives relatively few visitors from outside the former Soviet Union, and international flights have been minimal. But Chernyshenko said negotiations were under way with airlines for direct flights from Frankfurt, Vienna and Rome.

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