

Fire in Tour Van Kills Circus Animals

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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SAKHA — A private circus troupe traversing through eastern Siberia lost their animal performers when the tour van went up in flames on the road, local police said.

The human artists managed to get out of the vehicle in time, but failed to rescue a snake and a lizard used in performances, a spokesman for the republic of Sakha's police department said Sunday.

He did not mention the reptiles' species or say whether the troupe, which hails from St. Petersburg, had any more animals left.

The van — which was taking the circus to a show in the city of Mirny, the capital of Russia's diamond mining industry — apparently went on fire due to faulty wiring, the spokesman said.

This is not the first time circus animals have met such fate in the Siberian republic. In 2011, a bus owned by a Ukrainian circus was torched, killing a bear and some pigeons. The arsonists were never caught.

In 2009, eight tigers and a lioness from a circus in Krasnodar suffocated in a tightly locked refrigerator transporting them to the regional capital Yakutsk, also for a performance that never took place.

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