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Medvedev Authorizes Change in Gas Payment Scheme

By The Moscow Times

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Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has authorized the Regional Development and Economic Development ministries, along with the Federal Tariffs Service, to draw up a plan that would oblige residents to pre-pay their utility bills.

The new payment scheme, due to be complete by Dec. 5, will look to solve problems of non-payments by requiring residents to pay their monthly utilities bills before the 10th day of the month being paid for instead of the 10th of the next month as under the current system, Vedomosti reported.

Medvedev's order came in the wake of the Cabinet meeting on Oct. 29 where amendments to the Housing Code regulating the billing of consumers for housing and utilities were discussed.

Besides moving back the payment period for supplied gas by a month the Cabinet authorized

the drafting of amendments to gas agreements that seek to reduce the shut-off waiting period for delinquent payers from 30 to 20 days after a supplier's warning.

The Cabinet also authorized a group of other initiatives, including instructing the Energy Ministry and non-profit partnership Market Council to work out steps for customers already in arrears to settle outstanding debts to gas suppliers.

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