

Police to Accept Submitted Videos as Evidence of Smoking Law Violations

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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One can be fined for smoking in entranceways if presented with photographic or video evidence of the crime. **Igor Tabakov**

Cigarette smokers of Moscow, already beleaguered by last month's ban on smoking in public places, must now be advised to beware any passerby with a recording device if they decide to risk having a smoke inside.

Moscow police officers will accept photographs and video recordings of people smoking in entranceways as evidence of a crime, Lyudmila Stebenkova, head of the Moscow City Duma's committee for public health, said.

"How else can we fight smoking in entranceways if there are no cameras?" Stebenkova said, m24.ru reported.

There are about 140,000 surveillance cameras in public spaces around Moscow but none in the

city's entranceways, which, as any Moscow resident can tell you, have long been a haven for smokers.

A countrywide ban on lighting up inside or within 15 meters of government buildings and other public places went into effect on Nov. 15 and will extend to restaurants, trains and hotels in the coming year.

The new law has already seen active enforcement from over 20,000 citizens who signed on to help implement the ban, said Alexei Mayorov, head of the city's regional security department.

So far about 1,000 Muscovites have been penalized for violating the ban, each receiving fines of up to 3,000 rubles, Rapsi reported Monday.

Mikhail Pashkin, head of the Moscow police trade union, advised against actually recording a neighbor smoking. "Such actions can provoke the neighbor to a conflict. It's better to calmly explain that the smoke bothers you," Pashkin said.

Video seems to be an increasingly popular way of catching those who break rules in Russia. Police have started using recordings from car dashboard cameras to catch traffic violators and the Education Ministry recently announced it will use video surveillance to monitor the Unified State Exam starting next year.

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