

Alcohol Retailers Forced to Reduce Foreign Workers to 15% of Staff

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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All retailers that sell alcohol will have to reduce the percentage of foreign workers in their staffs to 15 percent by Jan. 1., down from the 25 percent currently permitted.

The tougher quota joins a raft of regulations restricting employers' hiring practices — foreign workers are barred from working in stalls, markets, establishments that sell pharmaceuticals and any retail location other than permanent stores.

The updated dictates were signed by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Dec. 19 and published Monday on the government's website.

To cope with the new limitation, some retailers are searching for ways to attract workers from nearby regions, Vedomosti reported.

Supermarket chain Magnolia will have to spend 7,500 rubles (\$230) a month providing free

accommodation in dormitories for domestic workers and about 200,000 rubles (\$6,000) a month on advertising in local media in order to fill the employment gap, assistant general manager Alexei Gladyshev said.

Other companies plan to continue hiring foreign workers through intermediaries and risk fines from the Federal Migration Service, continuing a practice that developed during the complete ban on hiring foreigners for retail jobs between 2007 and 2012.

The Federal Migration Service declared employing foreigners through third parties illegal in 2011 and began fining offenders, after which retailers lobbied for and won the 25 percent quota.

At the time, the Association of Retail Companies argued that positions in retail were poorly regarded or viewed as temporary by Russian workers, as evidenced by the industry's 80 percent annual staff turnover.

The situation remains the same today, said Andrei Karpov, the association's executive director, but after hearing that the government was considering a return to a complete ban, retailers did not protest the drop to 15 percent.

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