

Moscow Sees Spike in Toxic Fumes – Again

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Weeks after a mystery stench repeatedly prompted the Emergency Situations Ministry to warn Moscow residents to stay indoors, an abrupt surge in hydrogen sulfide levels have been recorded in the city.

The city's environmental monitoring watchdog Mosecomonitoring was cited by the Interfax news agency Sunday as saying the southeastern part of the city had seen an increase of between five and six times the permissible level of the chemical, the source of which is still unknown.

Throughout much of November, emergency officials struggled to find the culprit behind the spike in fumes from industrial chemicals, with many speculating that an oil refinery run by Gazprom was to blame. A Moscow court later hit the refinery with a 250,000 ruble (about \$4,500) fine for the pollution, according to RAPSI legal news agency, though Gazprom denied that it was responsible for any increase in fumes.

Both hydrogen sulfide and styrene, a toxic chemical used for polymer production, were found

to have surpassed the maximum permissible levels by Mosecomonitoring in November.

On Sunday, the Emergency Situations Ministry refuted the environmental watchdog's data on the latest mystery fumes, saying that members of its laboratory team had "gone to the eastern and southeastern districts of the city and taken samples, but no surpassing of the maximum permissible level was discovered," Interfax reported.

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