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Russian Police Launch Selfie Safety Campaign

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The Interior Ministry's new illustrated guidelines stress that selfies should only be taken in a safe environment.

Russian police took action this week to tackle a growing new problem: the deadly selfie.

Concerned by the increasing number of attempts by people to take photos of themselves that have resulted in injuries and deaths, the Interior Ministry has launched a "safe selfie" campaign and designed an illustrated instruction leaflet on how to take a selfie without getting hurt.

"Before you take a selfie, make sure you're in a safe place and nothing is endangering your life," the Interior Ministry said in a statement published Tuesday on its website, together with the leaflet. "Millions of likes on social media are not worth [losing] your health or life," the headline warned.

The two-page guide features 11 pictograms resembling prohibitive road signs and depicting the most dangerous places to take a selfie, such as on the roof of a train, on the highway or on a railway track. All the pictures are accompanied by pithy warnings.

"A selfie while driving can shorten your route," one pictogram warns. "Selfies with firearms kill!" reads another. "Selfies with animals are not always cute," the third one cautions.

"We hope that adults, teenagers and children in all Russian regions will support our campaign," the statement said, inviting everyone to design their own cautionary pictogram and submit it to the Interior Ministry.

Police plan to distribute the guide in schools during safety lessons, at large-scale public events and at events organized by the Interior Ministry this summer, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday.

Many if not all of the pictograms depicted real incidents in which Russians have been injured or killed while posing for the camera. Several people have been killed or injured while attempting to take selfies with dangerous animals. In May, a 21-year-old woman in Moscow tried to take a picture of herself holding a traumatic pistol, but accidentally shot herself in the head. She survived, but was taken to a hospital in critical condition.

Reports from around the world of selfies gone wrong have made the headlines in recent months. On Monday, media reports suggested that a British man who died when he was struck by lightning while walking in the Welsh mountains had been carrying a metallic selfie stick that may have acted as a conductor for the lightning.

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