

Russia's Firefighter Chief Proposes Sled Dogs Service

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Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry are to create a special sled dogs service as “an alternative means of transport,” the state-owned Tass news agency reported Wednesday.

The proposal, put forward by Director of Fire and Rescue Forces Alexander Agafonov, was welcomed by ministry chief Vladimir Pushkov. The ministry head said that the service would be created by the end of the year and would represent a “good modern trend.”

Pushkov has also ordered increased financing for the ministry's 470 canine teams by one third in a bid to boost wages for canine specialists and food allowances for dogs.

The ministry's official dog-handling department was created in 1996 following an earthquake in Russia's Far East. Almost 2000 people were killed after tremors hit Sakhalin island in 1995, but a spaniel brought to the disaster site with rescue teams was able to save a baby girl from the rubble.

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