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Violations Found in Half of Inspected Russian Malls Following Deadly Fire

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Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Half of the shopping malls inspected across Russia in the wake of the deadly fire in Siberia have been found to be operating with violations, Russia's Ministry of Emergency Situations has said.

The ministry, together with the General Prosecutor's Office, launched nationwide inspections after 64 people were killed in the Winter Cherry mall fire in the city of Kemerovo on March 25. Seven people were detained in an investigation into safety violations at the mall, which included malfunctioning fire alarms and blocked fire exits.

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"More than 140,000 violations of fire safety requirements have been discovered at 19,000

sites, which is 50 percent of inspected [malls],” the state-run TASS news agency quoted Russia’s chief fire inspector Rinat Yenikeyev as saying Monday.

In Kemerovo, unnamed investigators told the Kommersant business daily that the Winter Cherry mall owners knew about a malfunctioning fire alarm system for two years but were unwilling to spend money to fix it.

Speaking at the Emergency Situations Ministry board meeting, Yenikeyev said 400 malls were found to be operating in Russia without building permits.

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