

All Moscow Shawarma Joints Violate Food Safety Regulations, Consumer Watchdog Says

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Russia's consumer protection watchdog Rospotrebnadzor said that it has found sanitary violations in all 252 shawarma shops that it inspected in Moscow.

Shawarma, a meat dish which originated in the Middle East, has become a popular Russian street food choice over the past decade. In 2016, Moscow residents [launched](#) an internet campaign in support of shawarma after rumors that city authorities were planning to ban its sale over safety concerns.

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Rospotrebnadzor said in a statement Tuesday that it had [conducted](#) a city-wide inspection of 252 shawarma shops between June and October 2018 after “multiple customers complained of

food poisoning after eating shawarma.”

“All of the inspected businesses were found to have violated legislation relating to the sanitary-epidemiological safety of the population and technical regulations,” the statement said.

The inspections found that 54 percent of all shawarma products had failed in bacteria tests, with 140 swabs of employees’ hands and equipment showing the presence of E. coli and staphylococcus bacteria.

Other violations related to food storage and safety, including the use of products beyond their expiration date, the absence of facilities for the washing of meat and vegetables and employees working without wearing disposable gloves or having the required documents about medical examinations and vaccinations.

Following the inspections, 112 shawarma shops were temporarily closed and 293 administrative violations were issued, including fines exceeding 5.9 million rubles (\$90,000).

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