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In Most of Russia Emergency Hotline Doesn't Work, Audit Finds

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A federal audit has found that a shockingly low number of Russian regions have a fully functioning emergency telephone number, the equivalent of 911 in the United States.

Russia's 24-hour hotline, 112, combines the fire service, the police and ambulances and is designed to reduce the emergency services' response time. A 2013 target envisioned the system working in 67 out of Russia's 85 regions by 2017.

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However, the emergency hotline is fully operational in only 12 regions across Russia, the Audit Chamber said in findings published Monday.

"Currently only 28 percent of the population living in 15 percent of the country's territory can fully benefit," deputy chairperson Vera Chistova said.

Chistova blamed a lack of inter-agency cooperation and funding cuts on the stalled deployment of the emergency hotline. She said the Audit Chamber will conduct a second inspection after a bill drafted by the Emergency Situations Ministry becomes law.

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