

56M Russians Breathe Polluted Air – Weather Service

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Around 56 million Russians across 143 cities are breathing bad air, the Russian state weather and environment service said in its annual atmospheric pollution report.

Roshydromet assessed the concentration of pollutants across a total of 246 Russian cities and towns in 2018. It noted that 89% of all monitored cities exceeded pollution norms that year.

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The weather service's regional breakdown of the 143 cities with significantly polluted air includes 34 Siberian, 24 Far Eastern and 20 central Russian cities.

"Pollutant concentrations exceed the maximum allowable levels in most Far East, Siberian and Urals Federal District cities," Roshydromet said in its annual report [published](#) Thursday.

The report also named 46 Russian cities with "high" or "very high" concentrations of

pollutants in the air, which have a combined population of over 30 million people. Twenty-two of these cities are considered “priority” cities because they have the highest levels of air pollution, Roshydromet said. About 5.1 million people live in one of the “priority” cities.

Despite the grim figures, Roshydromet says the average concentration of major pollutants has decreased over the five-year period between 2014 and 2018.

Air pollution is one of several environmental issues to capture Russia’s national attention this year, along with wildfires, floods, melting Arctic ice and protests against the construction of landfills. Breathing polluted air has been linked to a number of health problems including stroke, heart disease and lung cancer.

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