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Moscow to Announce Virus Quarantine Passes 'Soon' – RBC

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The Russian capital was widely reported to be planning a system of QR code passes to allow residents to leave their homes during lockdown. **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

Update: In a statement Friday, Sobyanin confirmed that Moscow will gradually introduce a digital pass system to enforce lockdown rules starting April 14. The first stage will introduce passes for trips to work, the second stage will introduce them for other trips and the third stage will introduce them for trips within the region.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin will soon announce a digital pass system to enforce coronavirus lockdown rules as soaring hospitalizations strained the city's healthcare system, the RBC news website reported Friday.

The Russian capital was widely reported to be planning a system of scannable QR code passes to allow residents to leave their homes during the lockdown that's currently scheduled to end on May 1. Authorities have put off the decision, noting that they were satisfied with current rates of self-isolation.

Related article: Are QR Coronavirus Quarantine Passes for Muscovites Workable? Experts Doubt It

An unnamed source close to City Hall told RBC that Sobyanin will announce the "digital passes" in the near future, but did not specify when. The Kommersant FM radio station reported that he will issue the announcement "within an hour."

The mayor and his deputies previously warned residents that they would face tighter lockdown rules if they stopped following self-isolation orders. The Yandex tech giant's recently developed self-isolation tracking system has noted an uptick in quarantine violations in recent days.

The digital pass system won't involve QR codes, a source told the Vedomosti business daily.

Moscow's IT chief said last week that any pass system would start working as soon as city authorities pass a legal act.

Under Moscow's stay-at-home order, its 12 million residents are only allowed to go outside for trips to the grocery store or pharmacy, to take out the trash, to walk their pets or to seek emergency medical care. Those who violate these rules are subject to fines.

Russia became the world's 17th most affected country with 11,917 officially reported coronavirus cases Friday. Moscow accounts for two-thirds of the country's cases with 7,822 infections and 50 of its 94 deaths.

Sobyanin said Friday that "we're far from the peak" of coronavirus infections.

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