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Russian Maker Recalls Ventilators Tied to Deadly Hospital Fires

By AFP

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The recall comes as Russia has confirmed 493,657 virus cases and 6,358 deaths. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

The Russian manufacturer of ventilators involved in two deadly fires at hospitals treating virus patients said Wednesday it has recalled the devices for checks.

In a statement sent to AFP, the Urals Instrument-Building Factory that makes the ventilators said it decided to "carry out extra technical tests on the equipment supplied earlier."

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Doctors said the Aventa-M ventilators made by the company sparked a fire at a hospital in St. Petersburg that killed five people on May 12, three days after one person died in a blaze at a Moscow hospital.

Investigators said the same model of ventilator was in use at both hospitals and the state healthcare regulator after the St. Petersburg fire told hospitals to stop using devices manufactured after April 1.

Russia delivered a batch of the machines to the United States on April 1 to help its fight with the coronavirus but they have never been used and are being kept in storage pending the result of Russia's investigation into the fires.

The manufacturer, part of Rostec state conglomerate, said it ordered the recall on its own initiative because it wanted to test how the devices perform "under heavy use and in non-routine situations."

In some cases these tests will be carried out in hospitals with medical staff involved, it said.

It did not say how many of the devices will be checked or give details of any possible malfunction.

The Russian healthcare regulator has circulated a letter on the recall to healthcare providers, according to its website.

The letter says the ventilators were first registered for use in 2016.

The recall comes as Russia has confirmed 493,657 virus cases and 6,358 deaths, while the number of new cases has been over 8,000 for the last week.

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