

Moscow Orders Remote Work Amid 'Very Dangerous' Coronavirus Spike

October 01, 2020



Moscow has been the most-affected Russian city amid the pandemic. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

Moscow employers will be required to transfer up to one-third of their workforces to remote work starting next week due to the city's "very dangerous" coronavirus situation, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin [announced](#) Thursday.

Sobyanin's order for companies to send at least 30% of staff to work from home between Oct. 5-28 comes as the Russian capital's daily count of new Covid-19 infections has more than doubled over the past week, surpassing 2,400 on Thursday.

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Workers over the age of 65 and those suffering from chronic diseases will also be required to work remotely during this period.

“I hope this will be enough to bring down the incidence rate of the disease and we won’t have to make more difficult decisions,” he warned.

Sobyanin did not indicate whether he plans to enforce the rules through fines or other measures.

Workers at medical institutions, defense agencies, the state nuclear agency Rosatom and state space agency Roscosmos are exempt from the new rules.

Late last week, Sobyanin had urged businesses to reinstate work-from-home measures and “strongly recommended” Muscovites aged 65 and older to self-isolate.

“There was hope that this would significantly reduce trips by metro and land transport,” he wrote on his website Thursday. “Unfortunately, that wasn’t enough.”

Moscow's schools will also take a two-week vacation from Oct. 5-18 in order to slow the city's rise in coronavirus cases, Sobyanin announced earlier this week, saying that a large number of asymptomatic cases are among children.

Russia has officially confirmed 1.18 million coronavirus infections, the world's fourth-highest number, with new daily cases growing rapidly from less than 5,000 to nearly 9,000 in a month.

Moscow has been the most-affected Russian city with almost 300,000 total infections and, according to Sobyanin, more than 5,000 hospitalizations per week and more than 1,500 severe cases.

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