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Moscow Goes on Partial Lockdown Starting Oct. 28

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Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has announced a non-working week from Oct. 28 until Nov. 7 to "break the maximum number of disease transmission chains in a short time," according to the decree published Thursday.

Russia registered its highest number of one-day coronavirus deaths and infections since the start of the pandemic Thursday as scientists warn of a potentially more infectious variant of the fast-spreading Delta strain further overwhelming hospitals.

The non-working week provides a paid vacation or orders for non-essential businesses to furlough their workers.

The additional restrictions announced Thursday suspend businesses, services, catering, sports, recreation, entertainment and film screenings with the exception of organizations that serve city infrastructure and sell essential goods like medicines and food.

The Moscow authorities will monitor compliance with restrictions in stores and restaurants during the non-working week both in person and through video cameras and social networks, the head of the profile department Nemeryuk told RIA Novosti.

Restaurants are allowed to stay open for delivery, while corporate catering establishments and restaurants in hotels are allowed to operate with restricted access.

Theaters and museums are allowed to stay open at 50% attendance capacity for visitors with masks and QR codes proving vaccination, recent negative PCR test or antibody test results. Mass events, except those authorized by health officials, will be banned.

Moscow administrative offices will suspend their office work during the period with the exception of emergency civil registration services. Government services will still be available online, but in-person public services will be suspended.

Kindergarteners and school students sent home between Oct. 28 and Nov. 7. Students at higher learning institutions will switch to remote learning.

From Nov. 8, Muscovites over the age of 60 will have their free public transport passes suspended with the exception those vaccinated in the past 6 months.

After the end of the non-working week, QR codes and masks will be mandatory for attending theaters, museums, as well as for concerts, entertainment, cultural and sports events with 500 people or more in attendance, the Moscow decree said. Capacity at events will be capped at 70%.

On Wednesday, President Vladimir Putin approved the imposition of the non-working week while allowing local governments to determine the guidelines.

The Moscow region introduced identical restrictions following mayor Sobyanin's announcement.

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