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Government Launches Airline Safety Inspections After Aviation Accidents Double

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russian authorities will launch thorough inspections of regional airlines amid a growing number of aviation accidents and fatalities in recent years, the pro-Kremlin newspaper Izvestia reported on Thursday.

Authorities say commercial aviation accidents increased from eight in 2023 to 17 in 2024, while the number of deaths more than tripled from 12 to 37 over the same period. So far in 2025, 53 people have died in major incidents, exceeding the fatalities in both previous years combined.

Izvestia cited a report by Rostransnadzor, Russia's federal transportation watchdog, as stating that "systemic violations of aviation safety laws," including poor aircraft maintenance, inadequate pilot training and failure to follow technical regulations, were causing the accidents.

The safety concerns are also tied to Western sanctions, which have forced companies to rely on aging Soviet-era planes that lack newly manufactured parts. Airlines must increasingly carry out maintenance using spare parts salvaged from storage facilities or decommissioned aircraft.

Industry experts told Izvestia that young pilots avoid flying aging aircraft, while older staff are retiring, contributing to skill shortages.

Authorities reportedly concluded that regional air carriers "pose a real threat to human life," raising the need for a "comprehensive assessment."

Rostransnadzor will audit 51 of Russia's regional airlines from December of this year through December 2026, according to the Transportation Ministry and the government's directive to the agency cited by Izvestia.

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