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St. Petersburg Deploys AI Patrols to Spot Hazardous Icicles

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Icicles hang from the edge of a rooftop in St. Petersburg. **Anton Vaganov / TASS**

Authorities in St. Petersburg announced Monday that an AI-assisted surveillance system has begun scanning rooftops for icicles, snow and other hazardous ice formations after the season's first snowfall.

The system, known as Gorodovoy, consists of eight vehicles that patrol the city and scan buildings as they pass. When ice is detected on a non-residential building, the owner faces a fine of 100,000 rubles ($1,230), transportation authorities said.

"With temperatures swinging between freezing and thawing, the risk of ice forming on rooftops increases sharply," authorities said in a statement announcing the shift to "winter mode," urging building owners to monitor roofs and prevent ice buildup.

Gorodovoy was trained to recognize icicles late last winter, according to transportation authorities. It flagged violations at 21 properties in 2024, generating 2.1 million rubles ($25,800) in fines.

This winter, patrols will prioritize central districts dense with historic architecture, where aging cornices and roof structures pose heightened risks.

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Ice-related incidents are a perennial hazard in the city. Early last winter, 42 cases of falling roof ice were recorded, and hospitals treated more than 1,000 people for ice- and fall-related injuries across St. Petersburg and the surrounding Leningrad region.

At least one person died in January after slipping on black ice.

Transportation authorities said Gorodovoy will continue its year-round monitoring for potholes, graffiti, illegal structures and other infrastructure problems alongside its new winter duties.

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