

City Hall Intends to Introduce Mandatory Polygraph Testing

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City Hall plans to introduce mandatory polygraph testing for all employees, legally requiring all Moscow government staff to follow members of its state tender commissions who take the tests on a voluntary basis.

Some 70 percent of tender commission staff have taken the polygraph test recently, and the city plans to amend its legislation to make the rest of its officials follow suit, department head Gennady Degtyov said, Interfax reported.

“I believe that officials whose work involves some kind of risk should undergo mandatory testing,” Degtyov said.

He said the bureaucrats will have to face the testing when taking a job at City Hall. The legislation making testing mandatory will be passed “soon,” Degtyov added, without specifying a time frame.

Deputy Mayor Andrei Sharonov said Monday that lie detector testing for tender commission

members is aimed to curb rampant graft. He pledged that more measures to step up transparency are to follow, but did not elaborate.

State tenders remain a corruption-ridden practice nationwide, including in the capital. Mayor Sergei Sobyenin personally ordered in December a suspension of city tenders for medical drugs over suspicions that some of them were rigged, though no criminal cases followed.

Law enforcement agencies such as the Federal Drug Control Service and the Interior Ministry subject employees to polygraph testing, but there is no federal legislation regulating such tests for all agencies — a related draft bill is still stuck in the Duma.

“The [testing] system should be transparent enough to be effective. I assume that results of those tests will depend upon the will of the testers,” former City Hall official Yury Zagrebnoi said by telephone Monday.

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