

Sochi Organizers Storing Snow, Just in Case

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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SOCHI — While Moscow digs itself out of a huge snow storm that hit the Russian capital in the last few days, organizers of the Winter Olympics are worried that a lack of white powder could become a problem next February.

Unseasonably warm temperatures this winter in Sochi have forced local organizers to store some 450,000 cubic meters of snow in the nearby Caucasus Mountains that surround this subtropical Black Sea resort.

"We've prepared seven separate areas for snow storage high up in the mountains," said Sergei Bachin, general director of Roza Khutor, a ski resort in Krasnaya Polyana that will host Alpine skiing, snowboarding and freestyle Olympic competitions.

"I want to assure all the competitors that there won't be any shortage of snow next February even if we encounter even warmer temperatures next year," he said. "We're storing such huge

amounts of snow just in case."

The snow will be covered with a "special thermo seal" to protect it from melting during the summer, Bachin said.

"We expect that about 140,000 [cubic meters] will melt away, but we'll still have more than 300,000 cubic meters of snow available for next year," he predicted, saying the storage would cost his company an extra \$11 million.

Nevertheless, Sochi 2014 chief Dmitry Chernyshenko has stated on several occasions that the weather has become a bigger problem than security or the infrastructure for the organizers, who are frantically trying to finish all the construction projects on time.

Bachin, however, assured that Krasnaya Polyana, once a sleepy mountain village, about 70 kilometers from central Sochi, would be ready to host all the outdoor Olympic events next February rain or shine.

"Of the 76 Olympic test events scheduled in Krasnaya Polyana this winter, a great majority had been completed and only a handful have been called off because of bad weather," he said. "I think we've passed the test as the last major event of the season was held this weekend in nearby Laura complex."

Usually, Krasnaya Polyana has the opposite problem: too much snow and the risk of avalanches, Bachin said. "This was a very odd winter. Even locals don't remember when was the last time they had such warm days in the mountains. It's highly unlikely we'll see the same kind of weather next year," he added.

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