

Firefighter, Politician and Nurse Face Charges in Deadly Fire

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Investigators believe negligence is to blame for a fire that killed 38 people in a psychiatric hospital in the Moscow region last week and are considering charges against a firefighter, a politician and a hospital nurse.

Three criminal cases have been opened into local fire captain Alexei Yefimov, district head Nikolai Yelesin and officials from the psychiatric hospital, news reports said Tuesday.

A nurse who saved two patients from the burning building may also be charged for being away from her workplace during work hours and noticing the fire too late.

Investigators believe the nurse might have not been in the building when the fire started.

The nurse and the two patients are the only people who survived the April 26 fire in the Ramensky village.

The Investigation Committee had no immediate comment on the news reports, which cited unidentified sources close to the investigation.

Firefighters responded within a minute after receiving the alert around 2 a.m., but they arrived only one hour later because of poor roads and the fact that the fire station was located far away, the Emergency Situations Ministry said.

"Unfortunately, the hospital is far from any fire station, and the ferry crossing a canal near the hospital was out of service, which prevented the firefighters from arriving in a shorter period of time," senior ministry official Vladimir Stepanov said Tuesday, Interfax reported.

The firefighters correctly assessed the situation and saved five adjacent buildings from also catching fire, he said, adding that the blaze was extinguished one hour and 42 minutes after it started.

Investigators were looking at arson, violations of fire regulations or a short circuit as the possible causes for the blaze.

President Vladimir Putin has called for a thorough investigation.

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