

# City Authorities Promote Building Modern Funeral Homes

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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In an effort to legitimize the capital's growing funeral services market, city authorities plan to start building funeral homes and have promised to keep investors in that sector busy, a news report said Monday.

The annual volume of the funeral services market in Moscow is estimated at 10 billion rubles (\$309 million), as 120,000 people die in the city annually.

Only a quarter of the market is served by the state-controlled Ritual agency while grey market players provide about 60 percent of services.

To implement a European-style system, in which the deceased moves from his home to the funeral parlor to the cemetery, the process here has to be simplified, said Andrei Marsiya, deputy head of Moscow Trade and Services Department, Kommersant reported.

Now a corpse must be first delivered to a medical facility, which decides if an autopsy is necessary. Every additional step opens the door for middlemen to latch on to bereaved relatives and offer services up to three times more expensive than market prices—thus eliminating the use of a funeral home. The city plans to guarantee the loading of the new funeral homes.

Prior to leaving his position, former Moscow deputy mayor Andrei Sharonov ordered a review of possible locations for 35 modern funeral homes.

Estimates are that from \$5 million to \$10 million would be needed to build one such home. The authorities are now reviewing over 90 possible land plots in the northwest and southeast of Moscow.

Each funeral home will have an area of 1.5-3 thousand square meters and will offer a whole range of basic services, including aid from lawyers and psychiatrists, Marsiya also said.

However, the authorities did not give the specific date when the first funeral home will appear in the city vicinity.

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