

Moscow to Pay \$6.5 Million to Force Sun to Shine on Russian Holidays

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Moscow authorities have allocated nearly 430 million rubles (\$6.5 million) to ensure that Victory Day celebrations and other public holidays run smoothly this year, news agency Interfax reported Thursday.

That sum will go toward breaking up cloud cover over the city on May 9, when the Victory Day celebration commences with a military parade near Red Square. The Day of Slavic Writing and Culture, May 24, will also receive funds to break up clouds, as will Russia Day, on June 12, and City Day, which traditionally falls on the first weekend of September.

The city's Victory Day celebrations have traditionally been a hotly anticipated event, with thousands of soldiers parading through Red Square, military hardware put on display in the streets and fighter jets flown overhead.

The city has relied on technology to disperse cloud cover for such events for several years, but this year's allocated funds are significantly greater than in previous years. In 2014, for example, the city allocated about 180 million rubles (\$2.70 million) for the purpose, according to Interfax.

The clouds are dispersed by the release of granular carbon dioxide and liquid nitrogen, from airplanes.

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