

Construction of Swanky Moscow Business District Plagued by Safety Violations

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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State inspectors have reported more than 100 safety violations at the building site of Moscow's shiny new business district Moscow-City, home to the tallest skyscraper in Europe.

Protective barriers were missing at construction sites, electrical safety regulations were not observed and workers were not trained in labor safety or given properly certified work clothes and protective gear, the Federal Labor and Employment Service said in a statement late last week.

"Administrative action has been taken against the guilty legal entities and officials," the statement said.

The inspection follows a series of accidents at the site. One person died and seven were injured

when a construction hoist fell last autumn, and 2,000 shoppers had to be evacuated after a fire broke out near a shopping mall in the complex earlier in the year.

A gleaming cluster of skyscrapers containing Europe's highest building, the Mercury City Tower, Moscow-City has become a symbol both of Russia's desire to develop its economy and its difficulty in realizing that dream.

The project has been plagued by delays since it was first proposed in 1992. The site remained an empty hole in the ground through most of the 1990s and then stalled again with the economic crisis of 2008-09. The project is now expected to be completed in 2018.

But with the Russian economy speeding into recession, the business district now faces a new problem: lack of tenants. The vacancy rate in the district could hit 45 percent this year, elite real estate consultancy Blackwood forecast last month.

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