

Joint meeting of boards of Investigative Committee and Emergency Ministry held in Moscow



A joint meeting of the boards of the Investigative Committee and Emergency Ministry was held on 30 March 2016 to discuss the development of cooperation during response to emergency situations, investigations into accidents and disasters and other crimes involving human casualties and disruptions in normal functioning of the society. The meeting was chaired over by Minister of Emergency Situations Vladimir Puchkov.

The event was attended by Vice-Chairmen of the Investigative Committee, acting Head of the Criminalistics Directorate of the Investigative Committee, acting Head of the Moscow Interregional Transport Investigations Office, senior officials of the Emergency Ministry and representatives of the divisions of the two agencies.

In the first place, the boards discussed the development of cooperation between the Emergency Ministry and Investigative Committee in disaster management. The speakers noted that according to

the laws of the Russian Federation the duty to respond to emergency situations is entrusted to the Ministry for Emergency Situations, executive authorities of constituent territories of the Russian Federation and local governments. Investigation into such matters is under the jurisdiction of the Investigative Committee. The main form of collaboration between the Emergency Ministry and Investigative Committee is joint operations at the scene while responding to an emergency, investigating accidents or disasters.

In his speech acting Head of the Criminalistics Directorate of the Investigative Committee Zigmund Lozhis said that “the meeting of the board is taking place while the threats to national security become bigger and require from everybody to be ready at any moment to attacks of terrorist and similar perpetrators. Although the tasks the Investigative Committee and the Emergency Ministry have are slightly different, they have the same goal – the security of our people in any point of the world. The Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergency Situations and Disaster Relief invariably becomes one of the first state authorities which relying on the high level of professionalism and advanced equipment, reliably ensure effective work of investigators at the emergency site. At the same time, the current meeting has to become a starting point for building new approaches to cooperation based on many years of experience in joint operations.”

According to the data the senior officials of investigative authorities have, in 2013, 2,460 calls were attended together with the Emergency Ministry units to examine an accident scene, in 2014 – 2,759 and over 8 months of 2015 – 1,718.

One of the points of contact in the joint work of the two agencies is the provision of high-quality emergency psychological aid. Some of the constituent territories, for instance in Penza and Leningrad Regions, have agreements between the offices of the Investigative Committee and Emergency Ministry providing for participation of psychologists in the probe.

In 2013, after the Investigative Committee got reports on the missing, employees of the Emergency Ministry took part in 1,135 search operations, in 2014 – 1,564, and 1,123 over 8 months of 2015.

Forensic examination institutions of the Emergency Ministry and the employees who have special forensic knowledge play a big part in the efficient and quick review of the reports on the missing people and investigations. In 2010, 328 forensic inquiries were passed on to forensic examination institutions of the federal fire service following the warrants issued by the Investigative Committee, in 2014 this number reached 1,231. This way, the number of forensic inquiries run following orders of investigators has been growing in the past 5 years. This work done by forensic examination institutions of the Emergency Ministry is considerable support in investigating criminal cases related to fires (including arsons committed by criminals to cover hide the traces of their crimes).

The members of the boards came to a conclusion that to further improve cooperation between the Emergency Ministry and the Investigative Committee it was necessary to revise organization of joint actions by clearly defining the algorithm of receiving the report about an incident, the registration of

the situation by Emergency Ministry workers before investigative teams arrive and a list of measures that should be taken to keep the traces of the crime intact and others.

Vice-Chairman of the Investigative Committee Ilya Lazutov stressed that it was necessary for the two agencies to sign joint agreements setting out all actions in search for missing people.

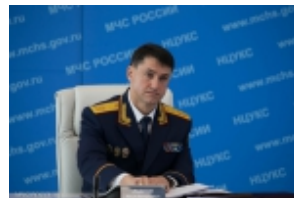
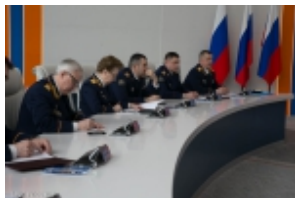
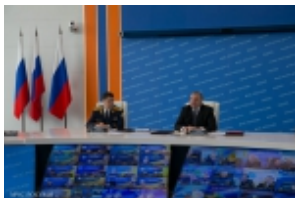
The boards discussed management of mine rescue operations when it is not clear what has to be done next and legal consequences of making decisions.

Over the past 11 years (2005-2015) and first months of the current year over 1,500 people have been killed in mining enterprises. A large portion of the killed (356 people) are mass deaths connected to large accidents.

For now the only way to rescue miners trapped in the affected area of the mine is to send mine rescuers down to them. The head of the emergency operation in the conditions of uncertainty has to make a call – either suspend rescue operations and jeopardize the victims' lives, or continue SAR operations risking the lives and health of rescuers. If people get injured or killed, or large damage is done following the decision, the actions of the head of the operation can be considered as a crime. This way, the head of the SAR operations constantly risks to be jailed while doing their duty. There is no single approach to the actions of the head of SAR operations or to determining the degree of his responsibility for the decisions made in the emergency situation (it is also not clear when the principle of justified risk should be used).

The boards concluded that resolving those contradictions is a first-priority task. They should develop a single approach to the legal evaluation of the actions of heads of mine rescue operations taken when there is no clarity and their possible consequences during rescue and relief operations.

Изображения



30 March 2016

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