

Beat: Miscellaneous

More than 1,100 injured after meteor hits central Russia

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USPA News - A meteor streaked through the skies over central Russia on Friday morning, setting off a shock wave that damaged buildings and injured more than 1,100 people, officials said. Several suspected meteor impact sites were discovered in the region.

The Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) said the meteor was several meters in size and weighed an estimated 10 tons when it entered Earth's atmosphere at a speed of at least 54,000 kilometers (33,500 miles) per hour. It lit up the sky across the region and set off a powerful shock wave before breaking up at an altitude of about 30 to 50 kilometers (18 to 31 miles). Russia's Emergencies Ministry on early Saturday said at least 1,145 people had sought medical treatment, mostly for cuts caused by broken glass. At least 50 of the victims, most of them in Russia's Ural Mountains region of Chelyabinsk, were hospitalized and two people were in a serious condition. "Chelyabinsk Region suffered the greatest damage. The impact wave and blast damaged around 297 homes, 12 schools, a number of other social facilities, and some industrial sites," said Emergencies Situations Minister Vladimir Puchkov. "A crisis management system was rapidly put in place." The governor's office said at least two meteor impact sites had been found in the region, including an eight-meter (26-foot) crater on a frozen lake about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) from the town of Chebarkul. The Russian Academy of Sciences said the meteor, which had gone undetected, seemed "very strong" and was probably made of iron. NASA said the unusual event was not related to asteroid 2012 DA14 that safely passed Earth later on Friday at a distance of more than 17,000 miles (27,350 kilometers). Early assessments of the meteor which hit Russia was traveling in a different direction, the U.S. agency said.

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