

Safe Communities Portugal

We are privileged to live in Portugal which is one of the safest places to reside and visit in the world. It is essential therefore that it remains that way which is a collective responsibility of us all.

Safe Communities Portugal was launched on 14th January 2015 and is Portugal's only registered non-profit national association providing a "one stop shop" of crime prevention information available to all members of the community.

Our aim is to promote safer communities, enhance security awareness and reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime. We do this through a number of specific objectives covering police/public engagement; communication and awareness; as well as enlisting public support in the fight against crime and promoting environmental protection.

Background

Safe Communities Portugal's origins date back to 2011 when following discussions with the GNR Faro District Command, it was agreed that in order to help promote police/public engagement, particularly with the foreign community, that work should commence developing Safe Communities Algarve.

This was initially simply a website but in November 2012 it was registered as Associação Safe Communities Algarve (SCA), a non-profit association funded by donations. SCA has worked closely with the GNR, PSP, Judicial Police, SEF, ANPC, Turismo do Algarve, Embassies, the municipalities, and many other authorities in helping to keep the Algarve a safe place to live and visit.

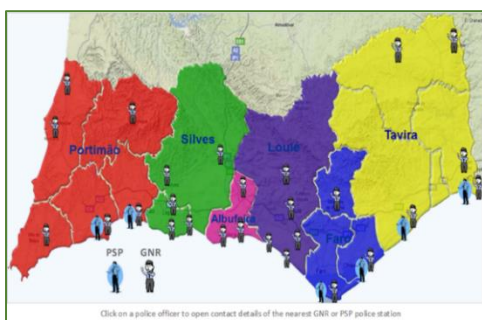


As a result of public feedback and taking account of the needs of law enforcement agencies, we have been expanding our services leading to our association being re-registered as Associação SCP Safe Communities Portugal in late 2014.

Services

Our association provides a diverse range of free services to the public ranging up to date news, missing persons, reporting suspicious activities, crime prevention, tourist advice in ten languages, to promoting public safety by supporting the work of Civil Protection.

With over 90 downloads of crime prevention advice, our two websites hosts a comprehensive range of material much of which has been developed in association with local law enforcement agencies. These range from protecting your home to reducing the risk of cybercrime. Our websites are unique in combining the work of the GNR, PSP, SEF, Judicial Police, ANPC and ASAE, so that readers can obtain a more easily accessible complete overview.



We have our own radio feature on Kissfm and we keep residents and visitors up to date through our fortnightly newsletter with a circulation of around 1200 persons. There are daily news updates on our two websites which in August 2016, received over 1000 visitors per day from around 90 countries. We have a Facebook page with nearly 7000 likes, where we can circulate urgent information. We hold various displays and seminars on topics ranging from wildfire protection, property crime prevention and computer security. Our website also features a unique interactive police station locator. SCP responded to over 1600 requests for help and

assistance from the public in the last twelve months, including crime reports and information which we pass to various police agencies.

How SCP is administered

The President of SCP David Thomas is a former Assistant Commissioner of the Hong Kong Police and consultant to INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The management board of SCP comprises five persons with a diverse range of experience and skills; such as public administration, legal practice, computer security, and military and international agencies. SCP relies on donations and is run by non-salaried volunteers.

Support

The association is officially supported by the British, Irish and Dutch Ambassadors to Portugal. We have signed eight protocols with the GNR, PSP, SEF and the ANPC, which provide the framework on how we collaborate together in order to benefit the community. We also work closely with ASAE and the Judicial Police.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is a global problem. Safe Communities is becoming increasingly involved in the war against cybercrime and promoting the steps that can be taken to help keep us and our families safe. We have written a number of features available on our website, dealing with email scams, romance fraud in respect of on-line dating; avoiding “technical support” phone scams; identity theft, and we provide a comprehensive list of direct links to most common bank security centres. We have held four well attended cybercrime seminars and more are planned for the future.

Wildfire prevention

One of our main priorities in 2016 is to help the ANPC and the GNR promote awareness of the serious problems of wildfires and measures we can all take to help safeguard our forests and the environment. We have held five seminars across the Algarve to help convey these messages and promoted this through Facebook, on the radio, through our newsletter and on our website. We are working with the ANPC to help facilitate communication in cases of disasters. In 2015 we initiated and produced the first Forest Fire Prevention leaflet for tourists who may not be aware of the fire risks here when camping and the use of motorhomes.

Tourism

This is of vital importance to Portugal and one of the highest priorities for tourists is enjoying a safe and secure holiday. To help maintain Portugal as a safe destination SCP has crime prevention information in nine languages available for tourists and we have worked on a number of projects with the Portugal and Algarve Tourism Boards. This includes a gambling laws information document in English, car hire property theft stickers and a seminar on Local Lodging in 2015.



Our plans for the future

Safe Communities is currently expanding its services to other areas of Portugal including areas such as Lisbon, Leiria, Porto and Madeira. We have held two seminars in Cascais and participated a Civil Protection Day there. We hold frequent meetings with the PSP, GNR, SEF and ANPC in Lisbon to discuss various crime matters and generally planning the way forward. We have also met with law enforcement and civil protection agencies in Madeira. In August 2016 we launch a Safe Communities Lisbon section on our SCP website.

Our service to the community



Policing is only successful when the public are engaged in the fight against crime and that is what Safe Communities is all about. The police need the public's assistance and it is important for the community to understand the work of police and the various programs that are available. So as we move forward, our emphasis will be to further embrace this philosophy to the benefit of all parties and communities in Portugal as well as visitors here.

It is important therefore to keep Portugal a safe place to live and visit and that is our number one aim.

More about Safe Communities Algarve can be found at our websites www.safecommunitiesalgarve.com, and www.safecommunitiesportugal.com as well as our Facebook page www.facebook.com/scalgarve or by contacting info@safecommunitieportugal.com.

