

Crime Prevention Leaflet – Theft of animals

In some countries theft of animals, particularly pedigree and hunting dogs, is becoming more widespread and on occasions significant sums of money have been demanded by criminals for their return.

In the Algarve, although the scale of dogs being stolen is unknown, there have been some reported cases to the police and a few have been posted on various websites. Often if a dog goes missing it is difficult to ascertain whether it was stolen or has simply become lost.

Prevention therefore is better than cure and Associacao Safe communities Algarve (SCA) has worked with Lost Pets in the Algarve to produce guidelines which are aimed at reducing the risk of animals going missing, whether or not is through theft or other reasons. The full guidelines and details as well as pictures of missing pets can be found at [Lost Pets in the Algarve](#). SCA offers the following advice:

- Ensure that your dog is permanently identified by a microchip which is inserted by a vet. The microchip system in Portugal is administered by [SIRA](#) which maintains a searchable data base of micro chipped dogs. Their FAQ page is very useful.
- Always know where your pet is and never leave your dog tied up outside a shop, newsagents, alone in a car, or anywhere else as an open invitation to an opportunist thief
- Make sure your garden is escape proof, check fences, hedges and gates regularly, and if your dog could possibly push its way though - fix it!
- Having your pet tattooed provides an additional means of identification should the microchip fail or has been removed. Prior to micro chipping this was system that was commonly used.
- Be cautious in crowded places especially markets and make sure your dog's lead and collar is secure. Be alert to any strangers following you or giving undue attention to the dog.
- Beware of strangers and your pet becoming overly friendly with them – don't give them details about your dog.
- Keep all documentation relating to your dog(s) in a safe place. Include clear photos of front and side profiles of your dog including unusual markings.
- Be cautious when choosing someone who will care for your dog(s) while you are at work, in hospital or on holiday. It might be better to use a registered boarding kennel or professional dog carer with documentation to this effect unless you know someone who is trustworthy that will care for your dog in your absence.



- Beware of strangers – don't give details about your dog. Don't allow strangers to have their photograph taken with your dog.

In the Algarve there are a number of well established organizations and other forums that provide help in alerting the public to animals that have been reported missing namely:

[Lost Pets in the Algarve](#)

[Anything Animal Algarve](#)

[Lost and Found Pets in the Algarve](#)

[Missing Pets Algarve](#)

[SOS Animals Algarve](#)

[SOS Animals Algarve Facebook](#)

Reporting a stolen animal to police

If you have evidence that your pet has been stolen then in addition to any other action, it should be reported to the police. Clearly this needs to be more than suspicion. Likewise if a demand is made to you for the return of an animal this should also be reported. It is important to give as much detail as possible particularly the description of the person(s) who stole the animal. Details of nearest police stations can be found on the Associação Safe Communities Algarve website

Reporting cruelty to animals

The GNR has a special unit SEPNA dedicated to the protection of the environment and the enforcement of environmental laws, including cruelty to animals. If you observe any crime against animals this can either be reported in person to the police, by phone to SEPNA or online by completing a [simple template](#).

Sharing and posting details of missing pets.

Lost Pets in the Algarve has a [dynamic feed](#) aimed at those who have a website or blog that targets the Algarve market, by helping them reunite lost and missing pets with their owners. Please help them by making use of this facility.