

Safe Communities Algarve Bulletin

Night Guard (Guarda-Nocturno)



Introduction

This Bulletin describes the Night Guard service in Portugal, including its roles and responsibilities, how it operates, steps required to create one in your area and who to contact. Night Guards supplement the work of the GNR and PSP and provide a number of services over a 6 hour shift. The bulletin has been compiled by ISECA from the input of José dos Santos Vice President of the Night Guard Association (Associação Sócio-Profissional dos Guardas-Nocturnos) known as the ASPGN.

Night Guards are civilians selected by city councils (Câmaras) through a competitive process to carryout specific duties in a designated area. One Night Guard is assigned per area and works traditionally from midnight to 6am, patrolling the area to prevent or detect unusual situations.

The Night Guard service is in operation throughout Portugal and in the Algarve covers the following areas: Tavira, Almancil, Loule, Quarteira, Portimão, Lagos, Luz and Faro the latter being in the early stages of forming this service.

Night Guard Duties

- Carrying out foot or vehicles patrols in a designated area and checking on properties registered with them,
- Responding to alarms activated within subscribed clients' properties.
- Medical emergencies by obtain medicine between the hours of the Night Guard service.
- Exercising the power of arrest
- Provide general support to the GNR and PSP and Civil Protection.
- Provide key holder service to conduct checks on empty premise.

They are permitted to operate both in public and private areas.

Use of Force

As an official and licensed service, Night Guards wear uniform and are permitted to carry and use in appropriate circumstances, firearms and non lethal weapons such as gas/pepper spray, Taser gun (for administering an electric shock) and a baton. They also carry handcuffs.

Obtaining the Night Guard Service in Your area

The steps to be taken are as follows:

1. First talk to neighbours in your area and ascertain if there is a common interest in obtaining this service,

2. If so make an application on behalf of the group to the Mayor of the local Camera requesting this service,
3. If endorsed by the Mayor, the Camera conducts a selection process to select the night Guard(s) to cover the designated area.
4. Once selected the Night Guard will approach those residents who have requested the service and other residents in the area to introduce himself explain the service and seek a contribution which is set out above.

If you experience difficulty in obtaining local camera support then you should contact the Night Guard Association and the contact number given below.

Cost

Remuneration is in the form of voluntary contributions paid monthly or annually by property owners, which can range from as little as €20-€30 per month for a standard villa.

Liaison with the GNR

Before commencing their nightly patrols the Night Guard checks in with the local GNR or PSP station and at the end of the shift reports to them again to brief them on any unusual circumstances or incidents. During the 6 hour shift in the event of any unusual situations or incidents the Night Guard can contact the security force for support by radio or by mobile phone.

Contact

To find out more about the work of the Night Guard service you may contact Mr. Santos by phone on 964 542 462 or by email at aspguardasnocturnos@gmail.com . Residents of Praia da Luz may also contact Mr. Santos as he is a Night Guard covering that area. The ASPGN website is www.guarda-nocturno.blogspot.com

Safe Communities Algarve fully supports the Night Guard Service as it provides an important supplement to the work and resources of the GNR and PSP in preventing crime and helping to ensure safe communities.

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