

## Minimizing the risk of pet theft

These are Safe Communities Algarve's top tips for minimizing the risk of theft of your pet:

- 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 <http://www.sira.com.pt/> 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.

