



QUINTA DO COBRAL

FIRE PREVENTION PREVENTION - July 2022

SAFE COMMUNITIES PORTUGAL

Up to date information can be accessed from

<https://www.safecommunitiesportugal.com/find-information/fire-prevention-and-protection/rural-fire-prevention/>

Since the devastating fires of 2017 when 96% of the Oliveira do Hospital region burned we are very aware that we need to be organised and better prepared for any future fires. This includes giving our guests as much information as possible. I have taken this information from the Safe Communities Portugal website.

Unfortunately 98% of all rural fires in Portugal are caused by human error.

It is therefore the responsibility of the community to take preventative steps to avoid starting a fire in the first place. This means avoiding inadvertently starting a fire by, for instance, dropping a lighted cigarette, or lighting a BBQ in the countryside during the critical fire period or when the fire risk is “very high” or “extreme”. The daily IPMA Rural Fire Risk can be downloaded here:

<https://www.ipma.pt/en/riscoincendio/rcm.pt/>

Steps to take to prevent Rural Fires

The following information is provided for residents, tourists and visitors. Familiarise yourself to keep safe by Preventing Rural Fires.

The Critical Fire Period is normally from **1st July to 30th September** but can be brought forward or extended should weather conditions dictate.

During this period or outside this period when the fire risk is “very high” or “extreme” the following provisions apply:

- Carrying out burning and lighting bonfires for recreation, leisure or cooking;
- Using burning and combustion equipment intended for lighting or cooking;
- Burning cut scrub and other waste piles, as well as any other kind of farm surplus unless authorised by the city council;
- Releasing balloons with a lit fuse or any other type of rockets/fireworks;
- Smoking, lighting fires or using naked flames of any kind in the forest spaces and paths/roads that surround them;
- Fumigating and pest control in apiaries with devices that are not fitted with spark-retention devices.

Access to forest areas by unauthorised persons may also be restricted at this time.

Travelling in areas which may be affected by rural fires.

Before setting off on your journey, particularly during the rural fire season, check:

- Fire risk levels and fire alert information or SMS text messages sent by the ANEPC in areas you are travelling through or visiting
- Weather conditions on the IPMA website.

- How you can call for help
- If staying in rural accommodation check what action to take in case of a rural fire
- Emergency survival kit is packed, including a working battery operated radio, protective clothing, woollen blankets and water.
- If caravanning or camping read the Caravan and Camping Rural Safety advice
- If trekking/hiking read the Rural Fire Safety for hikers

BBQs/grills

- When grills or BBQ are placed in rural areas (agriculture, forest or shrub land areas) you have to follow the restrictions mentioned in both ICNF Fire risk tables (during and outside the critical period).
- When grills or BBQ are placed in treated home gardens you may use them, regardless the critical period and the municipality fire risk. Of course that, despite there is no law against the use of treated home gardens grills and BBQ, days of very high/highest fire risk and hours of high temperatures should be avoided.
- In any case, in the event of a fire, the user is held responsible for the damages caused.
- After the grill/BBQ is used, check that the coal/fire is completely put out.

The Instituto Português do Mar e da Atmosfera (IPMA) has a system of fire risk levels ranging from Green (low risk) to dark red/brown (extreme risk). By checking their website the level in each municipality throughout the country can be found.

Arson

Arson is the crime of deliberately causing a fire. Unfortunately in Portugal this is often a cause of rural fires.

If you see something that looks out of place, this may be what Police are looking for. Take note of the appearance of anyone acting suspiciously. If you can, record the details of vehicles such as the make, model and registration of suspicious vehicles and call 112 immediately. Your prompt actions may help prevent a fire and loss of life.

ANEPC SMS Fire Warnings in Exceptional High Risk Circumstances

The Portuguese National Emergency and Civil Protection Authority (ANEPC), together with the National Communications Authority (ANACOM), the mobile communications operators and the General Secretariat for Internal Administration, and under the supervision of the Secretary of State for Civil Protection, has developed a warning system to the population, via written message (SMS) sent to mobile phones.

These SMS warnings are issued to inform the population in an exceptional dangerous situation, related to rural fires, which causes the activation of the highest level of readiness and mobilization of operational forces (“red alert”).

The warning system is used in the geographical areas covered by the “red alert” declared for National Mechanism for Rural Fire Fighting Operations. This alert level is absolutely exceptional and was declared only on two occasions throughout 2017, but more recently since then.

The content of the message is entirely produced by ANEPC and is not altered or modified by the communications operators.

The SMS messages will be received by any citizen who, at the moment that ANEPC requests the “red alert” warning to be sent by the operators, is located in the affected districts and nearby areas. Roaming citizens will also receive SMS messages (in Portuguese and English), together with a contact number for more information.

SMS alerts will be sent to the geographic areas covered by the declared “red alert”. In these cases, in addition to an initial message, citizens will also be informed periodically about the maintenance of such alert level, as well as about its cancellation.

The system has no cost to users and it does not require any subscription.

During the summer period it is important to keep up to date where there are forest fires to avoid straying into the areas affected. The best way to do this is to check the ANEPC) website. Another useful resource for real time location of rural fires is Fogos.pt Links to both on left of page.

All prevention and protection information is from official sources in accordance with Safe Communities Portugal’s national protocol with the ANEPC and as an official Civil Protection Volunteer Organisation.

Ishbel Ramsay

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