COUNTRY GUIDE



EUROPE

Italy.

Italy's Codice penale (art. 593) makes failing to assist or alert the authorities about an injured or endangered person a criminal offense. The Codice del Terzo settore (D.Lgs. 117/2017) sets rules and tax incentives for nonprofit and volunteer activity, the Servizio civile universale (D.Lgs. 40/2017) is a state-run national service program, and taxpayers can direct a share of income tax to nonprofits through the 5 per mille.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER
Yes

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS
Limited

GIVING AND SERVICE
5 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

YES

Article 593 of the Codice penale ('Omissione di soccorso') punishes anyone who, finding a person who is wounded or otherwise in danger, or a body that is or seems lifeless, fails to give needed assistance or to notify the authorities immediately, with imprisonment up to one year or a fine up to 2,500 euros. The first paragraph covers finding an abandoned or lost child under ten or another person unable to care for themselves; the penalty rises if injury results and is doubled if death results.

REGIO DECRETO 19 ottobre 1930, n. 1398 (Codice penale), art. 593 (Normattiva (Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato)) Art. 593 codice penale - Omissione di soccorso (secondary copy of the article text) (Brocardi.it)

Are people who help protected?

LIMITED

No statute specific to good-faith rescuers was found in the sources reviewed. Article 54 of the Codice penale ('Stato di necessità') provides that a person is not punishable for an act they were forced to commit by the need to save themselves or others from the present danger of serious harm to a person, if the danger was not voluntarily caused, could not otherwise be avoided, and the act is proportionate.

REGIO DECRETO 19 ottobre 1930, n. 1398 (Codice penale), art. 54 (Normattiva (Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato))

How the government promotes giving and service

Codice del Terzo settore (D.Lgs. 117/2017), arts. 1 and 17

Art. 1 states the aim of supporting citizens' autonomous initiative toward the common good and active citizenship, citing Constitution arts. 2, 3, 4, 9, 18 and 118. Art. 17 defines a volunteer as a person who freely and without pay acts for the community through a Third Sector entity, and bars pay or flat-rate expense refunds.

NORMATTIVA (ISTITUTO POLIGRAFICO E ZECCA DELLO STATO)

Codice del Terzo settore, art. 18: mandatory volunteer insurance

Third Sector entities that use volunteers must insure them against accidents and illness connected to the volunteer activity and for civil liability toward third parties.

NORMATTIVA (ISTITUTO POLIGRAFICO E ZECCA DELLO STATO)

Codice del Terzo settore, art. 83: tax relief for donations

Individuals may deduct 30 percent of cash or in-kind gifts to qualifying Third Sector entities from gross income tax, up to 30,000 euros per year, rising to 35

percent for gifts to volunteer organizations; gifts are also deductible up to 10 percent of declared income for individuals, entities and companies.

NORMATTIVA (ISTITUTO POLIGRAFICO E ZECCA DELLO STATO)

Servizio civile universale (D.Lgs. 40/2017)

Art. 2 establishes the universal civil service, aimed at the unarmed and nonviolent defense of the homeland, education for peace, and promotion of the Republic's founding values; it is run by the Department for Youth Policies and Universal Civil Service.

NORMATTIVA (ISTITUTO POLIGRAFICO E ZECCA DELLO STATO)

The 5 per mille

Under D.Lgs. 111/2017, as described on the Agenzia delle Entrate page, taxpayers can direct a share of their income tax (5 per mille of Irpef) to eligible nonprofits, including registered volunteer organizations, at no added cost; the page describes the 2023 cycle and rules may have changed.

AGENZIA DELLE ENTRATE

Ways to give and volunteer

Italy has a large Third Sector with a national registry, local volunteer service centers and strong blood and organ donation systems. Many local social services are run by Catholic organizations, so look at how a group is registered rather than its name.

Check a charity before you give

The Ministry of Labor's national registry of Third Sector organizations lets you confirm that a group is registered.

RUNTS (Registro Unico Nazionale del Terzo Settore)

Give your time

CSVnet

The national network of Centri di Servizio per il Volontariato points people to local volunteer service centers.

Croce Rossa Italiana
The Italian Red Cross recruits volunteers for first aid, emergency response and social services.

Dipartimento della Protezione Civile
The national civil protection department explains how volunteers join registered civil protection groups.

Give money, blood or a donation

AVIS
The largest association of voluntary blood donors, with local branches across the country.

Banco Alimentare
The national food bank network collects food surplus and distributes it to charities.

Centro Nazionale Trapianti
The national transplant center explains how to declare your wishes on organ donation.

Istituto Italiano della Donazione
An independent body that certifies nonprofit organizations that meet transparency standards.

In an emergency or a crisis

Telefono Amico Italia: 02 2327 2327
Free volunteer listening line, open every day around the clock; WhatsApp 324 011 72 52 daily 6 to 9 pm.

Telefono Amico Italia

A volunteer listening service for people in distress.

Before you act

- Ask any fundraiser for the group's RUNTS registration or tax code, and be wary of unsolicited requests for cash, especially at traffic stops, outside stores or by text.
- Short volunteering by visitors is usually fine through registered groups, but long placements may need a visa and an insurance arrangement.

This list covers only a few national and well-known channels and does not rank charities or cover every local group. Checked 2026-10-28. Listing an organization is not an endorsement, and none of them has endorsed this site. Some official sites block automatic checks, so a link may need a second try.

One thing worth knowing

The notes to D.Lgs. 40/2017 quote Constitution art. 2, which 'requires the fulfillment of the inderogable duties of political, economic and social solidarity,' and both the Codice del Terzo settore and the civil service decree are framed as implementing constitutional articles.

What this does not mean

Normattiva loads statute text through scripts, so the article text was verified through its article endpoint and, for art. 593, a secondary copy; consolidated text can change. Texts are in Italian and summarized here without an official translation. Article 593 sets a minimum duty and says nothing about rewarding rescuers. This is not legal advice. This is a plain-language summary of public sources, not legal advice, and it does not rank countries. No government named here has endorsed this site. Not reviewed by a lawyer. Statutes were read in public sources and may have changed. Last checked October 26, 2026.

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