COUNTRY GUIDE



OCEANIA

New Zealand.

New Zealand's Crimes Act 1961 imposes duties to provide necessaries and take care on people who have charge of others or who undertake dangerous acts. The Charities Act 2005 sets up a register of charitable entities, and Inland Revenue allows individuals a tax credit of one third of eligible donations. Royal honours include the King's Service Order and Medal for voluntary community service and the New Zealand Bravery Awards.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER
Limited

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS
None found

GIVING AND SERVICE
5 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

LIMITED

The Crimes Act 1961 imposes legal duties on people who have actual care or charge of a vulnerable adult (section 151) or a child under 18 (section 152), and on anyone who undertakes a lawful act dangerous to life (section 155) or an act whose omission may be dangerous to life (section 157). The sections reviewed do not contain a duty on a stranger with no such relationship or undertaking to rescue another person.

Crimes Act 1961 | New Zealand Legislation (Parliamentary Counsel Office, New Zealand)

Are people who help protected?

NONE FOUND

No statute giving general civil or criminal protection to a good-faith helper was located in this review. Section 155 of the Crimes Act excepts "a case of necessity" from the duty of skill and care for people who undertake treatment, but this is not a Good Samaritan clause. Whether other schemes (for example accident compensation) cover helpers was not checked.

Crimes Act 1961 | New Zealand Legislation (Parliamentary Counsel Office, New Zealand)

How the government promotes giving and service

Charities Act 2005

The Act's stated purposes include promoting public trust and confidence in the charitable sector and encouraging the effective use of charitable resources, and it provides for registration of charitable entities.

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Donation tax credits

Inland Revenue states individuals can claim 1/3rd of the value of eligible donations of $5 or more to an approved donee organization, up to their taxable income, with receipts submitted within 4 years; payroll giving gives the credit during the year instead.

INLAND REVENUE TE TARI TAAKE

King's Service Order and King's Service Medal

DPMC describes the Order (formerly the Queen's Service Order, renamed on May 3, 2024) as arising from a need to recognize voluntary service to the community and service through elected and appointed office; it is for civilians only.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

New Zealand Bravery Awards

These Royal honours recognize people who save or attempt to save another person's life while placing their own safety at risk; any person may make a nomination to the Honours Unit, and levels run from the New Zealand Bravery Medal to the New Zealand Cross.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017

The Act's purpose clause includes strengthening the role of communities and improving support for volunteers in providing fire services, and enabling volunteers to communicate directly with Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

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Ways to give and volunteer

New Zealand has a public register of charities and a strong volunteer culture in fire, rescue and community groups. Check the register first, then pick a local group.

Check a charity before you give

The government register where you can look up any registered charity and read its returns and financial statements.

Charities Services, Charities Register

Give your time

Volunteering New Zealand

The national body for volunteering, with links to volunteer centres and finding roles.

New Zealand Red Cross

The national Red Cross society, with volunteer roles in disaster response and community support.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand
The national fire service, which recruits volunteer firefighters and support crew in many towns.

Give money, blood or a donation

New Zealand Blood Service
The national blood service, with donor information and appointment booking.

Organ Donation New Zealand
The national organ donation service, which explains how to register your wishes.

Foodbank Project
A national effort that supports foodbanks and collects food and funds.

KiwiHarvest
A food rescue charity that collects surplus food and takes volunteers and donations.

In an emergency or a crisis

1737, Need to talk?
Free call or text line for mental health support at any hour.

Lifeline Aotearoa
A long-running helpline for people in distress.

Before you act

- Scammers copy real charity names after disasters, so open the charity's own site instead of a link in a message. Look up a group on the Charities Register before giving and check its latest return. Visitors on a tourist visa should check immigration rules before doing unpaid work.

This list does not cover iwi, marae and church services or every regional community trust. 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 bravery honours are defined around saving another person's life at personal risk and are open to nomination by any member of the public, so recognition of rescue by strangers is built into the Royal honours system.

What this does not mean

Sections reviewed reflect the legislation.govt.nz versions current in 2026 and may change; the tax credit rules are summarized from Inland Revenue and a cap on donations reported by a non-official site was not verified. Volunteering New Zealand is a non-governmental body listed for context only. This guide did not review Civil Defence legislation or the Royal Humane Society, and 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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