COUNTRY GUIDE



EUROPE

Poland.

Poland's Kodeks karny (art. 162) makes failing to help a person in immediate danger of death or grave bodily harm a crime, and the Act on State Medical Rescue adds a duty to alert emergency services and gives first-aid givers legal protections. The Act of April 24, 2003 on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism regulates volunteering and lets taxpayers direct 1.5 percent of their income tax to public benefit organizations.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER

Yes

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS

Yes

GIVING AND SERVICE

4 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

YES

Article 162 par. 1 of the Kodeks karny punishes with up to three years of imprisonment anyone who fails to help a person in a situation of immediate danger of loss of life or grave bodily harm, when they could do so without exposing themselves or another person to similar danger. Par. 2 provides that no offense is committed where help would require submitting to a medical procedure or where prompt help by an institution or person designated for it is possible. Separately, art. 4 of the Act on State Medical Rescue obliges anyone who notices a person in sudden health emergency to try, within their means and skills, to notify the designated rescue services.

Ustawa z dnia 6 czerwca 1997 r. Kodeks karny (consolidated text, Dz. U. 1997 Nr 88 poz. 553) (Kancelaria Sejmu (Sejm of the Republic of Poland)) Ustawa z dnia 8 września 2006 r. o Państwowym Ratownictwie Medycznym (consolidated text, art. 4) (Kancelaria Sejmu (Sejm of the Republic of Poland))

Are people who help protected?

YES

Under art. 5 of the Act on State Medical Rescue, a person giving first aid has the protection that the Kodeks karny gives to public officials, and may sacrifice another person's personal goods other than life or health, and property, to the extent necessary to save life or health. Art. 6 gives a person who suffers property damage as a result of giving first aid a claim for compensation against the State Treasury, represented by the voivode.

Ustawa z dnia 8 września 2006 r. o Państwowym Ratownictwie Medycznym (consolidated text, arts. 5-6) (Kancelaria Sejmu (Sejm of the Republic of Poland))

How the government promotes giving and service

1.5 percent of income tax for public benefit organizations

Art. 27 of the 2003 Act lets a personal income taxpayer direct 1.5 percent of their calculated tax to a public benefit organization of their choice, to be used only for public benefit activity. The tax authority's guide says taxpayers enter the organization's KRS number and an amount not above 1.5 percent of tax due, in their return or, for pensioners who do not file, on form PIT-OP.

MINISTERSTWO FINANSÓW (PODATKI.GOV.PL)

Civil Society Day and merit badge

Art. 5d of the 2003 Act establishes 24 April as Civil Society Day, and art. 5e creates the badge 'Za Zasługi dla Społeczeństwa Obywatelskiego' as an honorary distinction for exceptional service to civil society.

KANCELARIA SEJMU (SEJM OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND)

Statutory volunteer protections

Arts. 42–46 of the 2003 Act set rules for volunteers serving nongovernmental organizations, public bodies and healthcare providers. For service of up to 30 days the host must arrange accident insurance, and volunteers may be entitled to publicly financed health services and accident benefits.

KANCELARIA SEJMU (SEJM OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND)

Local initiative and cooperation programs

Local governments adopt annual programs of cooperation with nongovernmental organizations after consultation (art. 5a), and under the 'local initiative' mechanism residents may propose and jointly carry out public tasks for their community with their local government (art. 19b).

KANCELARIA SEJMU (SEJM OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND)

Ways to give and volunteer

Poland has a large nonprofit sector, and taxpayers can direct 1.5 percent of their income tax to a registered public benefit organization. The one thing to know first: look up a charity in the national court register before donating.

Check a charity before you give

The official register where foundations and associations are listed, so you can confirm a group exists and see who runs it.

Krajowy Rejestr Sadowy (National Court Register)

Give your time

Polski Czerwony Krzyz (Polish Red Cross)
The national Red Cross society explains how to become a volunteer in first aid, aid to people in need and disaster response.

Centrum Wolontariatu (Volunteer Center)
A long-standing national site that connects people with volunteer opportunities.

ngo.pl
A national nonprofit portal that carries volunteer offers and guidance for Polish organizations.

Give money, blood or a donation

Federacja Polskich Bankow Zywnosci (Polish Federation of Food Banks)
The national network of food banks accepts food donations, money and volunteer help.

Narodowe Centrum Krwi (National Blood Center)
The national public body for blood services, with information on how to donate blood.

Poltransplant

The national transplant coordination center, where you can learn how organ donation works in Poland.

Polski Czerwony Krzyz (Polish Red Cross)
The national Red Cross society accepts donations and runs aid and first-aid programs.

In an emergency or a crisis

Find A Helpline: crisis and emotional support lines in this country
A directory of free crisis and emotional support lines, run by ThroughLine. No single national line could be confirmed for this guide, so check the line you choose before you rely on it.

Ministry of Interior and Administration
The ministry that oversees the national emergency number 112, which works across Poland.

Before you act

- **Street and online collections need official permission, so ask collectors for their organization's name and registry number. Be careful with fake donation appeals tied to crises, and pay only to an account in the organization's name listed on its own website. Foreign residents can volunteer freely, but long stays follow normal residence rules.**

This list does not cover local parish, city or hospital volunteer programs, which differ by region. 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

Poland's Act on State Medical Rescue pairs the duty to alert rescue services with explicit protections for the person giving first aid, including a State Treasury compensation claim for property damage suffered while helping.

What this does not mean

Texts are in Polish and summarized here without an official translation; consolidated texts change with amendments, and the figures cited come from the versions consulted. Art. 162 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.

---

thisisdisclosure.com
A free message about how we treat each other. Nothing to buy, nothing to join. One person’s hypothesis, not advice. Woodcut images were made with AI tools; the words are Keith Adler’s. Share freely.