COUNTRY GUIDE



ASIA

South Korea.

South Korea's Emergency Medical Service Act requires any person who finds an emergency case to report it and to cooperate with emergency personnel, and Article 5-2 limits liability for good-faith emergency help. The Framework Act on Volunteer Service Activities sets a national basic plan, designates December 5 as Volunteer Day, and provides for rewards and protection of volunteers.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER
Limited

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS
Limited

GIVING AND SERVICE
4 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

LIMITED

Article 5 of the Emergency Medical Service Act says any person who finds an emergency case shall report it without delay to an emergency medical institution, and shall cooperate when emergency personnel ask. The text is a duty to report and cooperate, not a duty to give hands-on aid; this guide did not find the penalty for breach in the sources read.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE ACT (English translation, Article 5) (Korea Legislation Research Institute (Korean Law Translation Center))

Are people who help protected?

LIMITED

Article 5-2 provides that where an actor commits no intention or gross negligence, a person who gives first-aid treatment to an emergency patient whose life is in jeopardy bears no civil liability and no criminal responsibility for injury, and criminal responsibility for death is reduced or exempted. The protection covers bystanders and, in set cases, off-duty professionals. A 2025-era title list on the same site names it 'Exemption from liability for emergency medical services performed in good faith'.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE ACT (English translation, Article 5-2) (Korea Legislation Research Institute (Korean Law Translation Center)) EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE ACT (table of contents, current version) (Korea Legislation Research Institute (Korean Law Translation Center))

How the government promotes giving and service

Volunteer Day and Volunteer Service Week (Framework Act on Volunteer Service Activities, Art. 13)

The State must designate December 5 each year as Volunteer Day, and the week from that day as Volunteer Service Week, to promote participation and boost volunteers' morale.

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Rewards for volunteers (Art. 12)

The State and local governments may reward volunteers, volunteer service organizations and volunteer service centers that render distinguished service, as set by Presidential Decree.

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National basic plan for volunteering (Art. 9) and schools and employers (Art. 11)

The Minister of the Interior and Safety must draw up a national basic plan every five years. Schools and employers are told to endeavor to encourage student and worker volunteering.

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Protection of volunteers (Art. 14)

The State and local governments shall endeavor to ensure volunteers work in a safe environment, with matters such as insurance set by Presidential Decree.

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Ways to give and volunteer

South Korea has well-organized national giving bodies, and public volunteering is centered on the government-run 1365 portal and the Red Cross. The one thing to know first: only groups with government-recognized donation status are listed in the tax service's lookup.

Check a charity before you give

The tax service's site has a disclosure section where you can look up whether a donation group is a recognized public-interest organization and read its filed financial statements (in Korean).

National Tax Service, Hometax (public-interest corporation disclosure)

Give your time

Korean Red Cross

The national Red Cross society, which recruits volunteers for relief, blood drives and community care.

Give money, blood or a donation

Community Chest of Korea

The national community chest that raises and distributes donations to social welfare programs.

Korean Red Cross Blood Services
The national blood service site for finding donation centers and eligibility rules.

Korea National Food Bank
A national food-sharing network that collects donated food for people in need.

In an emergency or a crisis

Suicide Prevention Counseling Line 109: 109
The Ministry of Health and Welfare suicide prevention counseling line for anyone in South Korea; the Korean mental health crisis line 1577-0199 is also listed.

Korea Foundation for Suicide Prevention
A national organization for suicide prevention and crisis support resources.

Before you act

- **Phone, SMS and social media donation scams, including fake disaster appeals, are common, so look the group up on Hometax before giving.**
- **Ask for the group's registration and use official channels only.**
- **Foreign visitors should check immigration rules before volunteering, since unpaid work can fall under visa limits, and most sites are in Korean.**

This list does not cover every local group, religious services or political causes, and it is not a recommendation of any one charity. 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 Framework Act defines volunteer service as unpaid, spontaneous, public-interest activity and requires that it be open to all citizens regardless of age, gender, disability or background (Articles 2 and 3).

What this does not mean

Both laws are quoted from KLRI English translations, which are for reference and can lag the Korean text; the Emergency Medical Service Act page read here shows an older consolidated version, so wording should be checked against the current Korean law. The Act on Collection and Use of Donations and national good-deed honors could not be verified from primary sources and are not described. 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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