COUNTRY GUIDE



EUROPE

Spain.

Spain's Criminal Code (Ley Orgánica 10/1995) makes failing to help a person who is helpless and in manifest, grave danger a criminal offense when help can be given without risk to oneself or others. Separately, Ley 45/2015 de Voluntariado sets a legal framework for volunteering through organizations, and Ley 49/2002 gives tax incentives for donations to qualifying nonprofits.

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER

Yes

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS

Limited

GIVING AND SERVICE

4 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

YES

Article 195 of the Criminal Code (title: 'De la omisión del deber de socorro') punishes anyone who does not help a person who is helpless and in manifest and grave danger, when this can be done without risk to oneself or third parties, with a fine of three to twelve months. Paragraph 2 applies the same penalty to a person who is unable to help but does not urgently request outside aid, and paragraph 3 sets prison terms where the person who omitted help had caused the victim's situation by accident (6 to 18 months) or through negligence (6 months to 4 years).

BOE-A-1995-25444 Ley Orgánica 10/1995, de 23 de noviembre, del Código Penal (consolidated text, Title IX, art. 195) (Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE))

Are people who help protected?

LIMITED

No statute specific to good-faith rescuers was found in the sources reviewed. The Criminal Code's general 'estado de necesidad' provision (art. 20.5) exempts from criminal responsibility a person who, to avoid harm to oneself or another, injures a legal interest or breaches a duty, if the harm caused is not greater than the harm avoided and the necessity was not intentionally provoked by that person. Under Ley 45/2015, civil liability for harm caused by volunteers in organized programs rests with the volunteer organization toward third parties.

BOE-A-1995-25444 Ley Orgánica 10/1995, de 23 de noviembre, del Código Penal (art. 20) (Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE)) BOE-A-2015-11072 Ley 45/2015, de 14 de octubre, de Voluntariado (art. 14.3) (Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE))

How the government promotes giving and service

Ley 45/2015 de Voluntariado: definition and rights

The law defines volunteering as solidarity-based, freely chosen, unpaid activity of general interest carried out through volunteer organizations (art. 3). Volunteers are entitled, among other things, to reimbursement of expenses and accident and illness coverage arranged by the organization (arts. 10 and 13).

AGENCIA ESTATAL BOLETÍN OFICIAL DEL ESTADO (BOE)

Ley 45/2015, art. 20: subsidies and work-time measures

The national administration may grant subsidies or sign agreements with volunteer organizations under transparency and competition criteria, and public and private employers may offer reduced or adapted hours or leave so employees can volunteer.

AGENCIA ESTATAL BOLETÍN OFICIAL DEL ESTADO (BOE)

Ley 45/2015, arts. 23-24: recognition and accreditation

Volunteers may receive benefits set by regulation for the sole purpose of social recognition of volunteering, and the organization must certify service on request and at the end of the volunteer period.

AGENCIA ESTATAL BOLETÍN OFICIAL DEL ESTADO (BOE)

Ley 49/2002: tax deduction for donations

In the consolidated text consulted, art. 19 lets individual taxpayers deduct from their income tax 80 percent of the first 250 euros donated to qualifying entities and 40 percent of the remainder, with 45 percent for amounts above 250 euros given to the same entity in repeated years at equal or higher amounts.

AGENCIA ESTATAL BOLETÍN OFICIAL DEL ESTADO (BOE)

Ways to give and volunteer

Spain has a strong network of national nonprofits, including the Red Cross, and many local services are run by Catholic and other faith-based groups. The one thing to know first: an independent evaluator and public registries let you check a charity before you give.

Check a charity before you give

An independent nonprofit that evaluates Spanish charities against transparency and good-practice standards and publishes the results (in Spanish).

Fundación Lealtad

Give your time

Cruz Roja Española
The Spanish Red Cross, which takes volunteers for emergencies, health and social programs.

Plataforma del Voluntariado de España
The national umbrella network of volunteer organizations.

Hacesfalta.org
A nonprofit portal that lists volunteer opportunities across Spain.

Give money, blood or a donation

Organización Nacional de Trasplantes (ONT)
The national transplant organization, with information on becoming an organ donor.

Federación Española de Bancos de Alimentos (FESBAL)
The federation of Spanish food banks, which collects and distributes food.

Fundación Lealtad
Its evaluations help you choose among charities that meet transparency standards.

In an emergency or a crisis

Línea 024 de atención a la conducta suicida: 024
Free, confidential line run by the Ministry of Health, open 24 hours every day, for people with suicidal thoughts and their families.

Teléfono de la Esperanza
A long-running emotional support helpline staffed by trained volunteers.

Before you act

- Street collectors, phone calls and fake online campaigns can be scams, so check the group on Fundación Lealtad or the official registry and donate through its own website.
- Ask collectors for authorization and ID.
- Foreign residents and visitors should check immigration rules before volunteering, and many sites are only in Spanish.

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

Ley 45/2015 art. 3.3 states that isolated or sporadic acts outside volunteer organizations, and acts done for family, friendship or good-neighbor reasons, are not 'voluntariado' under the law, so its protections and incentives are aimed at organized volunteering.

What this does not mean

This guide relies on Spanish-language statute texts read in the original; quoted meanings are summaries, not official translations. Article 195 sets a minimum duty and says nothing about rewarding rescuers, and tax percentages and rules may have changed since the consolidated texts consulted. 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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