
In 1966 Florence was hit by a devastating flood and thousands of volunteers, the so called “angeli del fango” – mud angels – joined efforts to rescue the population and the city’s rich cultural heritage at danger. Today there are thousands of volunteer organizations ready to be activated and intervene promptly in case of need. Over the years, civil protection volunteering has become a strong and wide spread resource providing a network of specialized, trained and prepared volunteers available throughout the country. A true asset benefiting from professionals and highly competent experts. All volunteers, women and men, ready to lend their know-how, skills and solidarity by offering free help and assistance in emergency situations as well as contributing every day to forecasting and preventing the many risks affecting our disaster prone country.



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The civil protection volunteer service



What is it?

The civil protection volunteer service is a free and organized force. An extraordinary resource in terms of skills and operational capacity counting over 5 thousand organizations throughout the country. Civil protection volunteering is made up of women and men who on a free basis provide their time and energy to acquire the necessary preparation to protect people and the environment. To ensure a more effective result, civil protection volunteers are pooled in different organizations, thanks to which they share resources, knowledge and experience. Organizations differ in size, history, approach and specialized areas. They support the civil protection authorities in a wide range of activities, joining efforts with other structures operating within the civil protection system.



VOLUNTEERING WITHIN THE CIVIL PROTECTION SYSTEM

Civil protection in Italy is a function operating within a system, the National Service, which includes the volunteer service as an “operating structure”. The National Service, constituted by the State, the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano as well as the Local Authorities, operates according to the principle of subsidiarity.



A MULTIFACETED REALITY

A reality that joins together national organizations, local associations and municipal groups. Civil protection volunteering entails multiple forms of association well rooted across the territory. The larger national organizations are characterized by the presence of a central coordination structure and a network of sections spread throughout the national territory. Local associations and municipal groups, both small and middle sized, are the expression of a specific territorial area and identity. Municipal groups, in particular, originate from the citizens active participation and are encouraged by municipal administrations responsible for their constitution, organization and specific regulations.



What does it do?



Organized civil protection volunteering operates daily in the context of risk forecasting and prevention to increase the culture of resilience. In an emergency, it intervenes to provide relief and assistance to the population hit by disaster. The contribution of professional skills and the highest levels of competence is essential especially in large scale disasters or major emergencies. The field of civil protection volunteering includes a wide range of specializations and covers many different areas of competence. To name

just a few: rescue and health assistance, forest fire fighting, telecommunications, setting up shelter areas and tented camps, protection of cultural heritage. Being prepared to perform the different tasks in risk situations is essential. For this reason, to become a civil protection volunteer, you are requested to subscribe to a registered organization and follow a training course. Within the civil protection system, periodic exercises are organized to improve an effective collaboration between the volunteer service and the other operating bodies.



DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A CIVIL PROTECTION VOLUNTEER?

Organizations that are part of the civil protection system are recorded in specific registers. Choose the organization that's right for you, based on your skills, your time and goals of the organization you wish to apply to. The official lists are available on the websites of Regions, Autonomous Provinces and Civil Protection Department www.protezionecivile.gov.it

SUPPORT BY INSTITUTIONS

Institutions value organized civil protection volunteering as an expression of active citizenship by ensuring independence and promoting development. Volunteer organizations that are recorded in the registers can benefit from subsidies and tax benefits as well as access contributions and stipulate agreements with public bodies. In particular, the Civil Protection Department, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces promote organized volunteering by supporting projects aimed at improving their operational skills, increasing the synergy between volunteers and other actors in the system and training citizens in the culture of civil protection.

THE CIVIL PROTECTION VOLUNTEER'S RIGHTS

- *The civil protection volunteer does not receive any compensation, but the law protects him as a worker: in case of training or employment, the State reimburses the working day to the public or private employer.*
- *The civil protection volunteer is insured by his/her organization against the risks of civil responsibility towards third parties, accidents and illness.*
- *Volunteer civil protection organizations can request reimbursement of authorized expenses incurred by their volunteers during their service.*

REFERENCE LEGISLATION

- **Leg. Decree no.1 of 2 January 2018, Chapter V**
Recognizes volunteering organized as an operational structure of the National Civil Protection Service, enhancing its role and capabilities.
- **Leg. Decree no.117 of 3 July 2017 and subsequent amendments**
It defines volunteering as a personal, voluntary and free activity and regulates its associative forms.