
By civil protection we mean all the activities put in place to protect lives, property, settlements, animals and the environment from disasters and their damaging effects. Such activities include: risk forecasting, prevention and mitigation as well as disaster management and post-emergency recovery operations. In Italy, the civil protection is not just a branch of the public administration, but rather it can be defined as a function. The National Civil Protection Service provides for the implementation of civil protection activities; it is an integrated system composed of public and private, central and local structures, working together to guarantee safety and security throughout the country. The direction and coordination of this system are entrusted to the President of the Council of Ministers, that is the Prime Minister, who exercises such functions through the Civil Protection Department.



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The Italian civil protection



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An integrated system

Italy is one of the most exposed countries to natural and man-made risks in the world. It is therefore crucial for the civil protection system to ensure throughout national territory the presence of human resources, means, competences as well as organizational and operational capacities ready to intervene effectively in a timely and coordinated way in case of emergency, but also to operate to prevent and, if possible, foresee potential disasters. **For this reason, in Italy, civil protection is not a task assigned to a single administration but a function attributed to an integrated system: the National Civil Protection Service, established in 1992 by Law no. 225.**

The National Service – governed by the Civil Protection Code since 2018 – is constituted by all levels of government: the State, the Regions, the Autonomous



Provinces of Trento and Bolzano and the Local Authorities. The operating structures working in coordination with such components are: the National Fire Brigades, holding a central role, the Armed Forces, the Police Forces, the scientific community, the National Health Service, the organized civil protection volunteer service, the Italian Red Cross, the National Corps of Alpine and Speleological Rescue, the National System for Environmental Protection and the structures responsible for meteorological services at national level. Civil protection activities also benefit from the contri-



bution of professional orders and boards as well as private companies, in particular those linked to strategic sectors such as communications, transport and essential services networks.

The National Service operates according to the subsidiarity principle at central, regional and local level through the civil protection authorities, which are: the President of the Council of Ministers as a national authority, the Presidents of the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, the Mayors and Metropolitan Mayors as local territory authorities. When the Municipality can not cope with the event, the Province, the Prefecture and the Region provide their support. In case of a national scale emergency the State is called to intervene.

The direction and coordination of this network of capacities are entrusted to the President of the Council of Ministers, that is the Prime Minister, who exercises such functions through the Civil Protection Department.

THE CIVIL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

WHAT IS IT?

It is a structure of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

WHEN WAS IT ESTABLISHED?

On April 29, 1982, in order to provide the country with a body able to mobilize and coordinate the national resources useful to ensure assistance to the population in case of major emergencies. The dramatic delay of rescue and relief operations and the lack of coordination experienced during the Irpinia earthquake in 1980 highlighted the urgency to establish a structure to deal with civil protection on a permanent basis. With Law no. 225 of 1992 the Department became the connecting point of the National Service, qualification that the Civil Protection Code has reinforced and improved, by enriching it with new tasks and responsibilities.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

It addresses, promotes and coordinates the National Service. In close coordination with the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, it develops and organizes national Plans for risk scenarios and organizes exercises, coordinates the intervention of the National Service in case of national emergencies, promotes activities of risk forecasting and prevention. The Department coordinates also the participation of the National Service in European Union civil protection policies and its intervention in disaster relief operations abroad.