

Good Samaritans Protection Guidelines

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Source: Press Information Bureau

Background

Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Save life Foundation and another V/S, Union of India and another in Writ Petition (Civil) directed the Central Government to issue necessary directions with regard to the protection of Good Samaritans until appropriate legislation is made by the Union Legislature

The guidelines issued by the central Government

The Central Government hereby issued the following guidelines to be followed by hospitals, police and all other authorities for the protection of Good Samaritans

- A bystander or good Samaritan including an eyewitness of a road accident may take an injured person to the nearest hospital, and the bystander or good Samaritan should be allowed to leave immediately except after furnishing address by the eyewitness only and **no question** shall be asked to such bystander or good Samaritan.
- The bystander or **good Samaritan shall be suitably rewarded or compensated to encourage other citizens to come forward** to hold the road accident victims by the authorities in the manner as may be specified by the State Governments.
- The bystander of **good Samaritan shall not be liable for any civil and criminal liability.**
- A bystander or **good Samaritan, who makes a phone call to inform the police** or emergency services for the person lying injured on the road, **shall not be compelled to**

reveal his name and personal details on the phone or in person.

- The **disclosure of personal information**, such as name and contact details of the good Samaritan **shall be made voluntary** and optional including in the Medico Legal Case (MLC) Form provided by hospitals.
- **The disciplinary or departmental action** shall be initiated by the Government concerned against public officials who coerce or intimidate a bystander or good Samaritan for revealing his name or personal details.
- In case a bystander or good Samaritan, who has voluntarily stated that he is also an eye-witness to the accident and is required to be examined for the purposes of investigation by the police or during the trial, such bystander or **good Samaritan shall be examined on a single occasion** and the State Government shall develop standard operating procedures to ensure that bystander or good Samaritan is not harassed or intimidated.
- **The methods of examination** may either be by way of a commission under section 284, of the **Code of Criminal Procedure** 1973 or formally on affidavit as per section 296, of the said Code and Standard Operating Procedure shall be developed within a period of thirty days from the date when this notification is issued.
- Video conferencing may be used extensively during examination of bystander or good Samaritan including the eyewitness of a road accident, in order to prevent harassment and inconvenience to good Samaritans.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shall issue guidelines stating that **all registered public and private hospitals are not to detain bystander or good Samaritan or demand payment for registration and admission costs**, unless the good Samaritan is a family member or relative of the injured and the **injured is to be treated immediately** in pursuance of the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Pt. Parmanand Katara Vs Union of India & Ors [1989]

- Lack of response by a doctor in an emergency situation pertaining to road accidents, where he is expected to provide care, shall constitute “**Professional Misconduct**”, under the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulation, 2002 and disciplinary action shall be taken against such doctor the said Regulations.
- **All hospitals shall publish a charter in Hindi, English and the vernacular language** of the State or Union territory at their entrance to the effect that **they shall not detain bystander or good Samaritan** or ask depositing money from them for the treatment of a victim.
- In case a bystander or good Samaritan so desires, the hospital shall provide acknowledgement to such good Samaritan, confirming that an injured person was brought to the hospital and the time and place of such occurrence and the acknowledgement may be prepared in a standard format by the State Government and disseminated to all hospitals in the State for incentivizing the bystander or good Samaritan as deemed fit by the State Government.
- **All public and private hospitals shall implement these guidelines** immediately and in case of noncompliance or violation of these guidelines appropriate action shall be taken by the concerned authorities.
- A letter containing these guidelines shall be issued by the Central Government and the State Government to all Hospitals and Institutes under their respective jurisdiction, enclosing a Gazette copy of the notification and ensure compliance and the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** shall publish advertisements in all national and one regional newspaper indulging electronic media informing the general public of these guidelines.

The above guidelines in relation to protection of bystanders

or good Samaritan are without prejudice to the liability of the driver of a motor vehicle in the road accident, as specified under section 134 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988

Motor vehicles amendment bill, 2019:

The Bill defines a good Samaritan as a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the scene of an accident. Such a person will not be liable for any civil or criminal action for any injury to or death of an accident victim, caused due to their negligence in providing assistance to the victim.