Orchard Tech
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Orchard sanitation and general clean-up on an almond farm

What to expect before you start

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This sheet describes typical orchard sanitation and general clean-up work and conditions. Your actual duties depend on the farm and what you are trained and authorised to do. Reading this sheet does not authorise you to drive a farm vehicle, operate machinery or repair equipment.

Who you work for

Orchard Tech is your employer. Your host farm (your host) directs your daily work. Both are responsible for your health and safety. Raise questions or safety concerns with your supervisor or Orchard Tech: Hari Yellina, 0439 32 32 32, or Soana Fanua, 0400 174 471.

Your working hours

Your confirmed roster sets your days, hours and breaks. During harvest, some shifts may be at night. Ask your supervisor if you are unsure.

The work you may do

Orchard sanitation. Sanitation (also called orchard hygiene) means cleaning up the orchard. It may happen at harvest time or at other times of the year. Your host will show you what to remove, how to do it and where to put it.

General clean-up. You may pick up rubbish and other material by hand in the areas your supervisor shows you. Put it where your supervisor tells you. If your host gives you a hand tool, such as a shovel, use it only as your host shows you.

- **Do not touch anything that may be dangerous,** such as a chemical container, broken glass or sharp metal. Tell your supervisor where it is.
- **Report damage.** If you see a damaged or leaking drip line or other farm equipment, tell your supervisor and say where it is (block and row). Repairs are a separate task, not part of this work.

This sheet covers hand work only. Driving, operating machinery, using power tools, cutting branches, burning, and using chemicals or sprays are separate tasks. So are cleaning machines and using a pressure washer, compressed air or a blower. Electrical work, working at heights, and entering confined spaces, dams, tanks or channels are also separate tasks. All these tasks need their own instructions, training and authorisation.

Working near harvest machines

Shakers, sweepers, pick-up machines, tractors and other vehicles may be working in or near your area.

- **Keep separate from machines.** Before you start, ask your host to show you where to work and how workers are kept away from machinery. If a machine comes into your work area, stop work, keep clear and tell your supervisor. Keep well away from trees being shaken: branches and nuts can fall.

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- **Never approach a working machine** until the operator has stopped and clearly signalled you to come closer. Eye contact alone is not enough.
- **Keep well away from blowers** on sweepers and other machines.
- **Be seen:** wear the high-visibility clothing your host provides, and watch for vehicles coming out of rows and turning at the headlands (the turning areas at the ends of the rows). If you work at night, follow your host's instructions on lighting. If you cannot see your work area clearly, stop work, move to a safe place and tell your supervisor.

Weather and the outdoors

Most work is outdoors in heat, cold, wind, rain and dust. Watch for holes, pipes, slippery ground and snakes. Work may change or stop in heat, storms or smoke: follow your host's instructions. Use sun protection all year (broad-brim hat, long sleeves, sunglasses, sunscreen), drink water often, take shade breaks and dress for the weather. Tell your supervisor straight away if you or a co-worker feel sick, dizzy or very hot.

- **Do not enter a block that is being sprayed or has a no-entry sign. Do not drink irrigation water:** it may contain fertiliser or chemicals.

Movement and lifting

Expect long walks on uneven ground, a lot of bending, and repeated lifting and carrying. Rubbish and other material can be heavy, sharp or hard to carry. Dust and twigs can get in your eyes. Wear the gloves and eye protection your host provides. If a lift feels unsafe, ask for help or use the equipment provided. Report pain or discomfort early.

- **Dust:** follow your host's instructions for dust. If dust makes it hard to breathe or to see clearly, stop work, move to a safe place and tell your supervisor.

Moving around the farm safely

Mule or similar farm vehicle

Some farms use a side-by-side vehicle, such as a Kawasaki MULE, to carry workers and materials.

- **Driving is not covered by this sheet.** If driving is part of your confirmed job, get the safe work instructions, training and authorisation for that vehicle first. A licence alone does not show you can drive it safely.
- **Driver and passengers:** wear your seat belt every time, and the helmet and eye protection your host provides (your host will tell you what to wear). Keep doors or nets closed and arms and legs inside. Sit only in a seat with a seat belt. Never ride in the tray or bypass a safety device.

Farm traffic rules

- **Follow the farm traffic plan:** use set routes, obey signs and speed limits, and keep away from steep slopes, banks and water.
- **On foot:** use walking routes and keep clear of moving machinery. Stop in a safe place before using a phone.

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PPE and help on the farm

Your host will provide the personal protective equipment (PPE) for your tasks and show you how to wear, check and look after it. This may include safety boots, high-visibility clothing, gloves, eye or hearing protection, sun protection and a vehicle helmet. Report missing, damaged or poorly fitting PPE before you start. PPE does not replace training, instructions or other safety controls.

At induction, learn who your supervisor is, where water, toilets and first aid are, the emergency plan, how to get help where there is no phone coverage, and the check-in arrangements when you work alone.

- In a life-threatening emergency, call Triple Zero (000), then tell your supervisor. If you see a snake, keep clear and never try to catch or kill it. If a snake bites you, or you think you have been bitten, keep as still as possible and call 000 or ask someone to call.
- Report every injury, near miss or unsafe situation to your supervisor and Orchard Tech as soon as possible, even if it seems small.
- Ask for a demonstration, an explanation or language help whenever you do not understand.

Important note before starting any job

This sheet describes typical orchard sanitation and general clean-up work. Before you start, your host will give you the job description and safe work instructions for your actual duties, the PPE you need, a farm induction and training for your tasks. Follow those instructions. Do not do any work without the required PPE, training and authorisation. Complete the induction at every new farm, and get the instructions and training for every new task. **If anything is missing, unsafe or unclear, stop and ask your supervisor. You can also contact Orchard Tech.**