Orchard Tech
ABN 16 102 266 894
PO Box 755 ROBINVALE VIC 3549
e: hari@orchardtech.com.au m: 0439 32 32 32 o: 03 9332 3232

Loading and unloading the bankout on an almond farm

What to expect before you start

Version 1.1 | Date of review: 18 October 2026 | Date of next review: 18 October 2028

This sheet describes typical work and conditions for loading and unloading the bankout at harvest. Your actual duties depend on the farm and what you are trained and authorised to do. Reading this sheet does not authorise you to operate a bankout or any other machine, or to 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. Ask your supervisor if you are unsure.

The work you may do

The machines. At harvest, a bankout (a harvest machine with a large bin, the tub) takes the almonds from the pickup trailer to the elevator site. There it tips them into the elevator hopper (the bin that feeds the elevator). The elevator moves them onto a truck or a stockpile.

Your host will train you in its own procedure. The work may include:

- **Before you start:** doing the daily checks your host trains you in. Keep the bankout shut down while you inspect it. Your host will show you how to test the radio, brakes and controls safely. Report faults straight away. Do not use the bankout if a fault could make it unsafe.
- **Loading from the pickup:** line up the bankout behind the pickup trailer in the row. Your host will tell you whether both machines must stop for loading, or may move together. Follow only the procedure you are trained and authorised to use. Your host will train you in the approach, the low-speed setting and the position to use. Watch the line-up until the trailer is empty, then tell the pickup operator by radio that you are pulling away. Use the augers (turning screws) to spread the almonds, as your host trains you, and keep within the load limit for that machine.
- **Waiting at the elevator site:** wait where your host shows you, well away from any bankout that is unloading. Move forward only on a clear signal to come.
- **Unloading:** your host will show you the hopper's emergency stops and the rails that help prevent falls. If these are missing or damaged, do not unload; stop and tell your supervisor. Approach the hopper very slowly. Stop where your host shows you and apply the park brake. Unload only when the elevator operator signals you. Raise the tub gently, as your host trains you, for a steady flow into the hopper. Watch the almonds, the hopper and the elevator operator all the time so the hopper does not overload.

Orchard Tech
ABN 16 102 266 894
PO Box 755 ROBINVALE VIC 3549
e: hari@orchardtech.com.au m: 0439 32 32 32 o: 03 9332 3232

- **When the bankout is empty:** lower the tub fully, as your host trains you. Wait for the elevator operator's signal to move away. Check that everyone is well clear behind and beside the bankout. Use the horn as your host trains you, then reverse away slowly. At the end of the shift, park where your host shows you.

Only if you are trained and authorised. Operate a bankout only after your host has trained you, checked that you can operate it safely and authorised you for that machine and this task. A licence alone does not show you can operate it safely. Get training for each new machine model.

This sheet covers loading and unloading the bankout. Transporting almonds between the pickup and the elevator site is a separate task. So are operating the pickup or the elevator, clearing blockages, adjustments, maintenance and repairs, blowing down machines with compressed air, jump-starting, spraying chemicals, electrical work, working at heights and entering confined spaces, dams, tanks or channels. Each needs its own instructions, training and authorisation.

Working close to other machines and people

- **Agree your signals first:** agree the radio calls and signals with the other operators, as your host trains you. Keep your radio on and working. Load only after a clear radio call and a clear reply from the pickup operator. Approach the hopper and unload only after a clear signal from the elevator operator. If the radio fails, a signal is not clear, you lose sight of the elevator operator while working at the hopper, or the machines are not lined up, stop in a safe place and sort it out.
- **Never load the bankout** while turning at the headlands (the turning areas at the ends of the rows), while going down a steep slope, or while going up a steep, sandy slope. If the row is rough or uneven, the pickup stops and the trailer is emptied while both machines are stopped.
- **Stay in your cab** while you load and unload. Never get out while the machines are working. Before you leave the seat, always follow the safe-stop procedure your host teaches you. If another operator is working with you, tell them by radio and get a clear reply before you get out.
- **Turning seat:** some bankouts have a seat that turns. Stop before you turn it, and lock it in the correct position before you operate.
- **People on foot:** keep everyone except the elevator operator away from the hopper during unloading. Your host will show you the elevator operator's safe position. Always know where the elevator operator is. If anyone comes close to the bankout while you approach, unload or reverse, stop and wait until they are clear. A person caught between the bankout and the pickup trailer, the hopper or another machine can be crushed. Never stand or walk between them.
- **Never climb onto or into the bankout tub, the pickup trailer or the elevator hopper.** A person can fall in. Never lift or carry people on attachments, trailers, bins or tanks. Do not carry passengers on the bankout.

Other dangers to watch for

- **Raised tub:** the tub is lifted by hydraulics to tip the almonds. Never go under a raised tub, and keep everyone clear while it is raised. Lower the tub fully before you drive away: a bankout moving with its tub raised can tip over. If the tub will not lower, keep clear and tell your supervisor.

Orchard Tech
ABN 16 102 266 894
PO Box 755 ROBINVALE VIC 3549
e: hari@orchardtech.com.au m: 0439 32 32 32 o: 03 9332 3232

- **Power lines:** look up for overhead power lines before you raise the tub, and when you move the bankout around the elevator site. Electricity can jump to a machine that comes close to a line, even if it does not touch it. Ask your host to show you the power lines and how to keep the bankout and the raised tub safely clear. If unsure, stop and ask. If your bankout touches a power line, or electricity jumps to it, stay in the bankout. Call 000 or ask someone to call, and warn others to keep away. Get out only if fire or another life-threatening danger forces you to. Your host will show you how to get out safely in an emergency.
- **Hydraulics:** these machines may use hydraulics (oil under high pressure) to move parts. If a hydraulic hose or fitting leaks or bursts, stop in a safe place, keep clear and tell your supervisor. Never touch a leak or feel for it with your hand: the oil can go through the skin. If you think this has happened, get urgent medical help, even if the injury looks small.
- **Moving parts:** the bankout augers and the elevator belts can catch clothing, hair or a hand and pull a person in. Keep everyone clear while they turn. Do not wear loose clothing, and tie back long hair. Never use a machine with a missing or damaged guard: report it. Never reach into a working machine.
- **Blockages and breakdowns:** if the almonds stop flowing, something blocks, or a machine breaks down or is damaged, stop and tell the elevator operator or your supervisor. Before anyone goes near, all machinery must be turned off and made safe so it cannot start or move, using your host's procedure. Wait until all moving parts have stopped. Clear a blockage only if you are trained and authorised. Only maintenance staff do repairs.
- **Uneven ground and roll-overs:** wash-outs, bog holes, rough or sandy ground and slopes can make a machine tip or roll over. A full bankout is heavy and can be less stable. Always wear your seat belt: the roll-over frame or safety cab protects you only if you wear it. If the roll-over protection is missing, damaged or folded down, do not drive; ask your supervisor. If the machine starts to tip, stay in your seat and hold on. Do not try to jump out.
- **Fire:** follow your host's fire rules. Report smoke or fire straight away. In a fire, follow the farm emergency plan and go to the meeting point (muster point).

Moving the bankout safely

- **Getting on and off:** keep the steps free of mud. Use three points of contact (two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet). Never get on or off a moving machine.
- **Before you move:** tell nearby workers you are about to move, and wait until they are clear. Places the driver cannot see are called blind spots. Look in all directions and use your mirrors. If you cannot see that the way is clear, stop and ask for help.
- **Traffic:** follow the farm traffic plan, signs and speed limits. Give way to working machines. Take extra care on sandy corners and blind rises. Before you leave a row and enter a headland, stop and look both ways.
- **Seeing clearly:** keep the windows and mirrors clean. If dust, low sun, dawn or dusk make it hard to see, stop in a safe place. Stop in a safe place before you use a phone.
- **When you are on foot:** wear the high-visibility clothing your host provides. Use walking routes and keep clear of moving machinery. Never approach a working machine until the operator has stopped and clearly signalled you to come closer. Eye contact alone is not enough.

Orchard Tech
ABN 16 102 266 894
PO Box 755 ROBINVALE VIC 3549
e: hari@orchardtech.com.au m: 0439 32 32 32 o: 03 9332 3232

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.

Noise, dust and long hours in the seat

You may sit for long periods and climb on and off the machine many times. Use your breaks and report pain or discomfort early. If you feel too tired or unwell to operate the machine safely, stop in a safe place and tell your supervisor. The machines can be loud: wear the hearing protection your host provides.

- **Dust:** harvest work makes a lot of dust. Keep the cab doors and windows shut, and run the cab fan as your host shows you. Follow your host's instructions for dust. If dust makes it hard to breathe or to see clearly, stop the machine in a safe place and tell your supervisor.

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, long sleeves and long trousers, gloves, eye or hearing protection, sun protection and a dust mask. 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 work loading and unloading the bankout. 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.**