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

Watercart operation 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 watercart operation 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. Ask your supervisor if you are unsure.

The work you may do

What a watercart is. A watercart is a water tank on wheels, towed behind a tractor. The tank is filled with water, and the water is spread through the cart's spray unit or booms (spray arms). Your host will tell you what the water is for and where to spread it. Watercart work may be part of harvest work.

Operating the tractor and watercart is the job, but only when you are authorised. Do it only after your host has trained, assessed and authorised you on that tractor and watercart. You need training for each make and model you use. A licence alone does not show you can operate them safely.

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

- **Before you start:** talking with your supervisor about the weather, and checking that your radio works on the right channel. Keep watching the weather while you work. If it changes and you are unsure, stop in a safe place and ask your supervisor.
- **Filling:** filling the tank only at the filling point your host shows you, in the way you were trained, and wearing the PPE your host tells you to wear there. Before filling, your host must confirm that the cart and filling procedure are suitable for this water-only task. Stay with the tank and watch it while it fills.
- **Spreading water:** spreading water only where your host tells you. Your host will show you how to check that the water spreads properly. Watch the hoses and connections for leaks or breaks. If you find one, stop spreading water and tell your supervisor.
- **End of shift:** parking where your host tells you, on firm, level ground, with the handbrake on, and returning the keys as you were shown. Report anything that may affect the next shift.

This sheet covers operating the tractor and watercart with water only. Adding chemicals or fertiliser to the tank, spraying chemicals, maintenance and repairs, jump-starting a flat battery, electrical work, working at heights, and entering confined spaces, dams, tanks or channels are separate tasks. They need their own instructions, training and authorisation.

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

Watercart dangers to watch for

- **Water moving in the tank:** water can surge (move suddenly) inside the tank, especially when the tank is only partly full. This can push the tractor and make it less stable when you turn, brake, or drive on slopes or rough ground. Drive smoothly, as you were trained. Your host will show you the maximum water load for that tractor and watercart. Do not exceed it.
- **Roll-overs:** tractors can roll over on slopes, banks, rough or muddy ground, and near dams, channels and ditches. Keep away from steep slopes, banks and water. Your host will show you the tractor's roll-over protection (protective frame or safety cab). If it is missing, damaged or folded down, do not drive; ask your supervisor. Wear your seat belt every time the tractor moves.
- **People on foot:** before you move, tell workers nearby and wait until they are clear. Keep watching for people while you work. If someone comes close, stop in a safe place and wait until they are clear. Make sure no one is between the tractor and the watercart when it is being hitched. Check behind you before reversing; if you cannot see that the way is clear, stop and ask for help.
- **Booms and turning:** learn how wide your booms are. When you turn, check that the booms are clear of trees, posts and other farm equipment. Take extra care when you enter and leave tree rows.
- **Power lines:** look up for overhead power lines. Ask your host to show you the power lines and how to keep the tractor and booms safely clear, including during any folding or raising. If unsure, stop and ask.
- **At the filling point:** the ground can be wet and slippery. Use three points of contact (two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand) when you climb on or off the tractor. Climbing onto the tank is not covered by this sheet. It needs separate safe work instructions, training and authorisation.
- **PTO shaft and moving parts:** if this equipment has a PTO shaft (a spinning drive shaft), check its guards as trained. Keep hands, hair and loose clothing away from moving parts.
- **Lifting:** hoses and hitch parts can be heavy or awkward. If a lift feels unsafe, ask for help. Report pain or discomfort early.

Moving around the farm safely

- **Public roads:** never drive on or across a public road unless your host has confirmed that the tractor, the watercart, your licence and the route are approved.
- **Before driving:** do the pre-start checks you were taught on the tractor and the watercart, from the ground. Check that windows are clean, steps are free of mud and guards are in place. Report faults to your supervisor. Never use an unsafe machine. Only maintenance staff repair machines. Close the door and windows before the tractor moves.
- **Follow the farm traffic plan:** use main tracks and headlands, obey signs and speed limits, and slow down for turns, people, dust, poor visibility and rough ground. Keep away from steep slopes, banks and water.
- **Headlands and radio:** headlands are the turning areas at the ends of the rows. Your host will explain when you must call your location and wait for a reply before entering a headland. The reply must clearly tell you where other workers are.

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

- **On foot:** 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. Stop in a safe place before using a phone.

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.
- **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.

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 any extra PPE needed at the filling point. 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 watercart operation 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.**