

## Compressed air blowdown 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

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This sheet describes typical compressed air blowdown 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 use compressed air, 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

**Compressed air blowdown.** Blowdown means using compressed air to blow dust, dirt, nuts and other debris off harvest machines and other farm equipment, such as shakers, sweepers and pick-up machines. It may be done at the end of a shift or before maintenance, when your host tells you.

Your host will train you to use the compressor, hose and nozzle, and show you which machines to clean and how. Use compressed air only after your host has trained and authorised you.

**This sheet covers blowdown with compressed air only.** Driving or moving machines, operating harvest machinery, using a pressure washer or power tools, repairs and maintenance, electrical work, using chemicals, working at heights, and entering confined spaces, dams, tanks or channels are separate tasks. They need their own instructions, training and authorisation.

### Before you clean a machine

- **The machine must be stopped and secured.** Use the cleaning area your host shows you. Clean only after the machine has been switched off and secured so it and its parts cannot start or move. Your host will show you how to check this. Moving or making the machine safe needs separate instructions, training and authorisation. If you are not sure, do not start. Ask your supervisor.
- **Hot parts:** engines, exhausts and other parts can stay hot after a machine stops. Do not touch hot parts. Follow your host's instructions on letting the machine cool down.
- **Fire:** dust, leaves and other debris that build up on a machine, especially near the engine and exhaust, can catch fire. Ask your host where the fire extinguishers are and what to do if there is a fire. If you see smoke or fire, move away, warn others and tell your supervisor straight away.
- **High or hard-to-reach parts:** do not climb on a machine, use a ladder, open covers or remove guards without the separate safe work instructions, training and authorisation needed for that task.

## Using compressed air safely

Compressed air is very strong. The air and the dirt it blows can hurt your eyes, ears and skin. Air can also get into your body through a cut or other opening and cause serious injury.

- **Never point the air at yourself or anyone else.** Never use it to clean dust off your clothes, skin or hair. Never play or joke with an air hose.
- **Protect your eyes, ears and lungs.** Dust, dirt, nuts and sticks can fly off at speed, and compressors are loud. Wear the sealed goggles, hearing protection and gloves your host provides, and a face shield if required. Keep your sleeves down. When it is dusty, wear the dust mask or respirator provided.
- **Keep other people away.** Before you start, check that nobody is near you or where the air is pointing. Your host may ask you to set up barriers. If someone comes close, stop blowing. Never hand the nozzle to anyone without the right PPE while the compressor is running.
- **Check the hose** and its connections before use. If you find damage, missing parts or loose connections, do not use the equipment. Put a "do not use" tag on it and tell your supervisor.
- **Hoses can trip people**, so lay them out with care. When you finish, switch off the compressor if you are the last person using it. Leave the equipment safe and roll up the hose as your host shows you.

## Working near machinery

Shakers, sweepers, pick-up machines, tractors and other vehicles may be moving near your work 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.
- **Never approach a working machine** until the operator has stopped and clearly signalled you to come closer. Eye contact alone is not enough.
- **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).

## 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

You may stand for a long time, drag hoses and reach into tight spaces. Report pain 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.

## 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, gloves, eye protection and any required face protection, hearing protection, a dust mask or respirator, 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 compressed air blowdown 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.**