Orchard Tech
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Pressure washing on an almond farm

What to expect before you start

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This sheet describes typical pressure washing 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 a pressure washer, drive a farm vehicle, operate other 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

Pressure washing. You may use a pressure washer to wash down farm machinery, vehicles and equipment. A pressure washer sends water through a hose and out of a spray gun at very high pressure. Some pressure washers can also use hot water or detergent. Your host will show you what to wash, where to wash it and how to use their pressure washer.

- **Only after training.** Use a pressure washer only after your host has trained you, checked that you can use it safely and authorised you. Ask your host to show you its controls and how to turn it off.
- **Check before you start,** as your host shows you, with the machine and the power switched off. Look for splits or damage in the hose, and damage to the power cord, plug and socket. If the machine uses fuel and oil, check there is enough. Do not use damaged equipment: tell your supervisor.
- **Machines must be stopped.** Wash a machine only after your host has made it safe to clean. Its engine must be off and all parts must be stopped. If it has just been working, let it cool down first. If you are unsure, do not start: ask your supervisor.
- **Fuel.** Refuel the washer only if this is part of your confirmed job and your host has trained and authorised you. Use only the fuel your host tells you. The wrong fuel can cause an explosion.
- **When you finish,** shut down the pressure washer and release the pressure, as your host shows you. Never disconnect a hose while there is still pressure in it. Disconnect the water and any power lead as your host shows you. Roll up the hose and power lead and store them away from walkways.

Other work is separate. Driving or moving the machines you wash, operating other machinery, using compressed air, repairs and maintenance, and electrical work are separate tasks. So are working at heights (such as climbing onto a machine or using a ladder), and entering confined spaces, dams, tanks or channels. All these tasks need their own instructions, training and authorisation.

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Using a pressure washer safely

The spray from a pressure washer can cause serious injuries. Your host will show you how to use their pressure washer safely. Watch for these hazards.

- **Never point the spray at yourself or at anyone else.** The water can cut or pierce the skin and push dirt under it. Never put your hand or foot in front of the spray. If the spray hits anyone's skin, get medical help straight away, even if the injury looks small. Tell your supervisor. Tell the doctor or nurse that a pressure washer caused the injury.
- **Keep other people out of the wash area.** Your host will show you how to mark off or block off the area. If anyone comes into the area, stop spraying and wait until they leave.
- **Electricity:** never spray the pressure washer, power leads, power points or any other electrical item. Do not walk on, drive over or drop things on hoses or power leads. If you see damage, stop and tell your supervisor.
- **Flying dirt and splashes:** the spray can throw dirt and other material back at you. Wear the sealed safety glasses your host provides.
- **Hold on firmly.** The spray gun can push back when you start spraying, and a loose hose can whip around. Hold the spray gun as your host shows you. Keep the hose behind you so that you do not trip on it.
- **Hot water:** some pressure washers heat the water. Hot water can burn you. Wear the gloves your host provides.
- **Wet, slippery ground:** wash areas can get wet, muddy and slippery. Walk carefully and wear the safety boots your host provides.
- **Noise:** pressure washers are loud. Wear the earplugs or other hearing protection your host provides.

Cleaning products

Your host may ask you to use detergent with the pressure washer. Do this only after training and authorisation. Your host will show you which detergent to use, whether to use hot or cold water, and how to use it with their washer. Before you use it, your host will show you its label, its safety data sheet (SDS) and the PPE you need. Follow the label. If detergent gets on your skin or in your eyes, get first aid straight away and tell your supervisor. Other cleaning products, other chemical work and spraying are separate tasks.

Working near machines

Tractors, harvest machines and other vehicles may be moving near where you work, for example when they come to be washed.

- **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.
- **Never approach a working machine** until the operator has stopped and clearly signalled you to come closer. Eye contact alone is not enough.

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- **Be seen:** wear the high-visibility clothing your host provides, and watch for vehicles and machines moving near you.

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 long periods. You may need to bend, reach, kneel or work in awkward positions to wash under and around machines. Hoses, power leads and the pressure washer can be heavy or awkward to move. If a lift feels unsafe, ask for help or use the equipment provided. Report pain or discomfort early.

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, gloves, sealed safety glasses, earplugs or other 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.

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- 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 pressure washing 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.**