

Stock pad and harvest transport coordination on an almond farm

What to expect before you start

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This sheet describes typical stock pad and harvest transport coordination 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. Stock pad work may include night shifts.

The work you may do

The stock pad. At harvest, bankouts (harvest machines that carry the almonds out of the rows) bring the almonds to the elevator site. An elevator is a machine with a moving belt. It carries the almonds up into a truck or onto a stockpile (a large pile of almonds). The area where this happens is often called the stock pad. Front-end loaders and tipping trucks may also work there.

Helping to coordinate. As your host directs, you may help to organise where the almonds are stockpiled, and where and when bankouts and trucks wait, unload, load and leave. At some farms, bankout drivers tell a stock pad controller when they arrive, then wait at a set holding place. The controller tells each driver when to go to the elevator and when to move away. Drivers tell the controller when they leave, and follow the set exit route. Your host will tell you who gives directions on the stock pad and what you are responsible for. Give directions to drivers only if your host has trained you and given you that job.

Records. If your host asks you to keep a record of loads, it will show you what to record and how.

This sheet covers coordination work on the ground only. It does not cover driving (including bankouts, trucks and loaders), operating the elevator or any other machine, clearing blockages, repairs, using power tools, handling chemicals, covering or uncovering stockpiles with tarps (large covers), electrical work, climbing onto machines, trucks or stockpiles, other work at heights, or entering confined spaces, dams, tanks or channels. These are separate tasks. They need their own instructions, training and authorisation.

Working on foot among machines

The stock pad can be busy. Bankouts, trucks, loaders, elevators and other vehicles may be moving or working close together. A person on foot can be hit, run over or crushed.

- **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.
- **Be seen:** wear the high-visibility clothing your host provides at all times. Stand where drivers can see you. Places a driver cannot see are called blind spots. Never stand in a blind spot or behind a vehicle that is reversing or may reverse. Dust, low sun, dawn, dusk and darkness can stop a driver from seeing you.
- **Use set walking routes:** use the walking routes and safe places your host shows you. Never stand or walk between two machines, or between a machine and the elevator, a truck or a stockpile.
- **Agree signals first:** before you start, agree the radio calls and signals with the drivers and the elevator operator, as your host trains you. Check your radio before work, as your host shows you, and keep it on and working. Before you direct any machine, learn the stop signal and what to do if you lose radio contact or cannot see the driver. Give signals only from a safe place where the driver can see you. If the radio fails, a call is not clear or you are not sure a driver has seen you, do not signal a machine to move. Stay in a safe place and tell your supervisor.
- **Night work:** in the dark it is harder to see people, machines and the ground, and harder for drivers to see you. Before night work, your host will show you the lights, routes and how to stay in contact.

Other dangers to watch for

- **At the elevator:** the hopper is the bin at the bottom of the elevator where the almonds are tipped in. Keep clear of the hopper while a bankout or loader unloads or backs away. Keep out of any barricaded area, such as around the stick chute (where sticks come out). Ask your host to show you the elevator's emergency stops.
- **Moving parts:** belts and other moving parts can catch clothing, hair or a hand and pull a person in. Never reach into the elevator, the hopper or a belt. Do not wear loose clothing, and tie back long hair. If a guard is missing, something is jammed or something looks wrong, keep clear and tell the elevator operator or your supervisor.
- **Tipping trucks:** keep well clear of a truck while it tips its load. Never go under a raised tray or any raised part.
- **Power lines:** elevators and tipping trucks are tall. A tipping truck becomes taller when its tray is raised. Electricity can jump to a machine that comes close to a line, even if it does not touch it. Before you start, ask your host to show you the overhead power lines and where machines and raised parts must not go. Never direct a machine towards a power line. If you are unsure, do not signal a machine to move; ask your supervisor. If a machine touches a power line, or electricity jumps to it, keep well away from the machine, anything touching it and the ground around it. Do not go near it, even to help someone. Warn others to keep away. Call 000 or ask someone to call.

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.
- **Fire:** follow your host's fire rules. Ask your host where the fire extinguishers are. If you see smoke or fire, move away, warn others and tell your supervisor straight away. In a fire, follow the farm emergency plan and go to the meeting point (muster point).

Movement, noise and dust

You may stand or walk for long periods on rough or uneven ground. Almonds and sticks on the ground can make you slip or trip. Use your breaks. Tell your supervisor early if you feel pain, discomfort or unusual tiredness. If you feel too tired to work safely, stop in a safe place and tell your supervisor.

- **Noise:** elevators, trucks and other harvest machines can be loud. Wear the hearing protection your host provides. Noise can make it hard to hear a vehicle coming, so keep looking around you.
- **Dust:** harvest work makes a lot of dust. Wear the dust mask and eye protection your host provides, and 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 and long trousers, gloves, eye or hearing protection, sun protection, a dust mask 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 stock pad and harvest transport coordination 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.**