Grow That Local

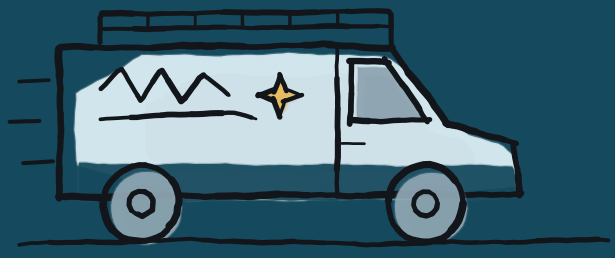
a free guide

The job-site photo shot list

The 13 photos to take on every job with your phone, and where each one earns its keep.

For owners who forget to take photos.

- 11 short sections in 4 parts
- 33 things you can do in the next 24 hours
- An example in every section
- Sources for every figure



growthatlocal.com · Text us at (423) 924-2014

Contents

Before you start: how this guide works 3

Part 1 **Before the first photo** 3

1 Why the same shots, every job 3
2 Set up your phone once 4
3 Ask the customer, and know what never goes in the frame 4

Part 2 **The 13-shot list** 6

4 Shots 1 to 3: arrival and before 6
5 Shots 4 to 8: the work nobody sees 6
6 Shots 9 to 13: the finish 7
7 Your trade's version of the list 7

Part 3 **Before-and-afters that convince** 9

8 Frame the pair the same way 9
9 Don't fake it 9

Part 4 **Where every photo goes** 11

10 The photo map 11
11 The ten-minute Friday routine 12

Your first 24 hours, in one list 13

Where to go next 14

If you'd rather hand it off 15

Sources 16

GTL estimates 16

Before you start

Most owners forget photos until the job is done and the truck is loaded. By then the "before" is gone for good. This guide fixes that with one list: the same 13 shots on every job, taken in the order the job happens, so nobody has to think about it.

It covers setting up your phone, asking the customer, the shot list itself, how to frame a before-and-after that convinces, what Google's rules say about profile photos, and where each photo gets used afterwards.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every rule we quote has a public source you can check, listed at the end. When we give our own judgment, we say "GTL estimate" and tell you why we think it.
- Every example is made up to show the idea. None of them are real customers or results.



Part 1

Before the first photo

1 Why the same shots, every job

The idea. A shot list turns photos from a chore into a habit. When the crew takes the same 13 shots in the same order, you always have a before, an after and the proof in between. You never have to stage anything later.

Real photos also matter to Google. Its own guidelines say a profile photo "should be in focus and well lit, and have no significant alterations or excessive use of filters," and add that "the image should represent reality" (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). A plain phone photo of real work is exactly what it asks for.

Example. A made-up painter laminates the list on a card and clips it to the visor of every van. The crew lead ticks it off at lunch and before they leave. On a job where they forget the before, the owner shoots it from the customer's old listing photo instead, and learns not to forget again.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Copy the 13 shots from Part 2 onto one card for each truck or van.
- [ ] Pick one person per crew who owns the photos, the way someone owns cleanup.
- [ ] Look at your Google profile and write down the date of your newest photo.

2 Set up your phone once

The idea. Five minutes of setup makes every photo better for the rest of the year. You want a clean lens, a straight horizon, the full-size file, and no surprise information inside the photo.

- **Turn on the grid.** It's in the camera settings on iPhone and Android. Use it to keep rooflines, door frames and fence lines straight.
- **Wipe the lens.** Phones live in pockets with sawdust and grease. A smeared lens is the most common reason a photo looks foggy.
- **Shoot sideways for before-and-afters.** A landscape photo fits a website gallery and a side-by-side post better. Shoot tall for single close-ups and short clips.
- **Check what's saved inside the file.** Your phone may store the location in every photo. Turn off camera location if you ever send photo files outside your crew.
- **Keep photos within Google's limits.** Google asks for JPG or PNG files between 10 KB and 5 MB, at least 250 by 250 pixels, with 720 by 720 recommended (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). Most phone photos fit. If an upload fails from an iPhone, it may be saving HEIC files: in Settings, Camera, Formats, pick "Most Compatible" to save JPGs.

Example. A made-up plumber sets one shared album called "Jobs 2027" that the whole crew can add to. Each job gets its own sub-album named with the street and date, like "Elm St, Mar 4."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Turn on the camera grid on every crew phone.
- [ ] Make one shared photo album for job photos.
- [ ] Decide on a naming rule for each job's album and tell the crew.

3 Ask the customer, and know what never goes in the frame

The idea. A photo of someone's home is their business before it's yours. Asking takes ten seconds and makes most customers proud to be in your post. Do it at the quote or on day one, not after.

What never goes in a public photo, even with a yes:

- House numbers, street signs and mailboxes with names.
- License plates on the customer's cars.
- Faces of the customer, their kids or their neighbors, unless they say yes to that too.
- Inside a home: family photos, mail, medicine, screens, and anything with an alarm or lock code.
- Anything that shows when the home is empty.

Example. A made-up house cleaner adds one line to the welcome text: "We sometimes share before-and-after photos of a kitchen or bath, never anything personal and never your address. Is that OK with you? Totally fine to say no." Most say yes. The ones who say no get a note in the client file.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add one photo question to your quote, contract or welcome text.
- [ ] Keep a "no photos" note in the customer's file when they decline.
- [ ] Read the "never in the frame" list to your crew once.



Part 2

The 13-shot list

4 Shots 1 to 3: arrival and before

The idea. The before is the only shot you can't take later. Take these three in the first ten minutes, before a single tool comes off the truck.

1. **The truck at the job.** Your marked truck or van parked on the street, with the house out of frame or unrecognizable. It shows a real local business.
2. **The wide before.** The whole area you'll work on, from a spot you can find again: the end of the driveway, a corner of the yard, a doorway. Note where you stood.
3. **The close-up of the problem.** The worst of it, up close and in focus: the curled shingle, the stain, the rust, the bare patch.

Example. A made-up landscaper marks the wide-before spot with a small flag in the lawn and tells the crew, "After shot from the flag." It costs nothing and every pair lines up.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] On your next job, take shots 1 to 3 before you unload.
- [ ] Mark or write down where you stood for shot 2.
- [ ] Check shot 3 is sharp by zooming in before you move on.

5 Shots 4 to 8: the work nobody sees

The idea. These are the photos that prove you don't cut corners. Customers can judge a finished job by eye. They can't see what's under it, so show them.

1. **The cause.** What a pro spots that the owner didn't: the rotted decking, the corroded fitting, the clogged coil, the grout that's failing, the peeling primer.
2. **Prep.** The tarps, drop cloths, shoe covers or protected plants. It answers the worry about mess before anyone asks.
3. **The hidden work.** The layer that gets covered: underlayment, new pipe inside the wall, the cleaned blower, sanded trim, the base under new pavers.
4. **The materials.** The product label or box: shingle line, paint brand and color, filter size, fixture model. It shows you used what you said you would.
5. **The crew at work.** Hands and tools on the job, faces only with their OK. People hire people.

Example. A made-up HVAC tech takes a photo of a dirty blower wheel before cleaning and the clean one after. On its own, that pair gets more questions from neighbors than the new thermostat photo ever did.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] On your next job, take one photo of the cause and one of the hidden work.
- [ ] Take a photo of the material label before the box goes in the trash.
- [ ] Ask each crew member if they're OK being in photos, and write it down.

6 Shots 9 to 13: the finish

The idea. The after sells the next job. Take it the same way as the before, then add the details that make customers trust you.

1. **The wide after.** Same spot, same height, same angle as shot 2.
2. **The close-up after.** Same spot as shot 3, so the pair tells the story in two frames.
3. **The detail of the craft.** The thing only a good tradesperson gets right: a straight cut line, a clean ridge, a level paver edge, a neat solder joint, a crisp caulk line.
4. **The cleanup.** The swept driveway, the empty dumpster spot, the vacuumed floor, the tools packed. Cleanup is a worry in every trade, and this photo answers it.
5. **A 10-second clip.** One slow pan across the finished work, or the before turning into the after. Hold the phone still and move your feet, not your wrist.

Example. A made-up roofer's crew lead takes shot 12 last, standing where shot 1 was taken, with the truck in the frame. That one photo shows the clean yard and a local company in the same frame.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] On your next job, take shot 9 from the exact spot of shot 2.
- [ ] Take one cleanup photo before you drive away.
- [ ] Try one 10-second clip this week.

7 Your trade's version of the list

The idea. The 13 shots are the same in every trade. What fills them is not. Here is what shots 3, 4, 6 and 11 look like in each of six trades, so your crew knows exactly what to look for.

Roofers:

3, curled or missing shingles from the ground. 4, soft decking or rusted flashing after tear-off. 6, ice and water shield in the valleys. 11, a straight ridge line and clean drip edge.

Landscapers:

3, the bare or overgrown bed. 4, compacted soil, poor drainage or roots. 6, the base and edging under new pavers or mulch. 11, a crisp bed edge or a level patio joint.

Plumbers:

3, the leak, the stain or the old water heater. 4, the corroded fitting or the root in the line. 6, new pipe in the open wall before it's closed. 11, a neat solder joint or a level, strapped water heater.

HVAC:

3, the old unit or the dirty filter. 4, the clogged coil or the cracked part. 6, the cleaned blower or the new line set. 11, tidy wiring and a level pad.

House cleaners:

3, the stovetop, shower glass or grout. 4, the buildup only a pro notices: hard water, soap scum, grease on the hood. 6, half-cleaned, half-not, in one frame. 11, a streak-free glass door or a shining faucet.

Painters:

3, peeling paint or the stained ceiling. 4, rotted trim or bare wood under old paint. 6, scraped, sanded, primed and caulked surfaces. 11, a straight cut line where wall meets ceiling.

Do it in 24 hours

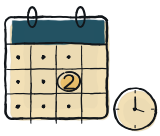
- [ ] Copy your trade's line onto the back of the shot-list card.
- [ ] Show it to each crew lead and point at one example on today's job.
- [ ] Post one "cause" photo (shot 4) with one line about why it matters.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Two weeks of posts, ready to go

Social media posts is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Social media posts: growthatlocal.com/services/social-media



Part 3

Before-and-afters that convince

8 Frame the pair the same way

The idea. A before-and-after only works if the viewer believes it's the same place. Change nothing except the work. GTL estimate: a matched pair convinces more than a better-looking after shot from a new angle, because the eye checks the two frames against each other.

- **Same spot.** Stand where you stood, or use your marker from shot 2.
- **Same height.** Chest height is easy to repeat. Kneeling once and standing the next time breaks the pair.
- **Same zoom.** Use the main lens with no zoom for both.
- **Same direction.** Sideways both times, or tall both times.
- **Similar light.** Avoid one in bright sun and one in shade. Overcast days are kind to both.

Example. A made-up painter's crew lead opens the before photo on one phone and holds it up next to the second phone's screen to line up the after. It takes 30 seconds.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Take one matched pair on your next job, using all five rules.
- [ ] Put the two photos side by side and check that the edges line up.
- [ ] Throw out any pair that doesn't match, rather than posting it.

9 Don't fake it

The idea. Fixing the brightness on a dark photo is fine. Changing what the work looks like is not. Google wants profile photos with "no significant alterations or excessive use of filters" (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). And any photo used in an ad counts as a claim: the FTC's guide for small businesses says "Advertising must be truthful and non-deceptive" (FTC Advertising FAQ's, ftc.gov).

Fine to do:

- Straighten a crooked photo and crop the edges.
- Brighten a dark before so people can see the problem.
- Blur a house number or a face.

Don't do:

- Add color, gloss or shine that isn't there.
- Remove flaws from the after, or add them to the before.

- Use photos of someone else's job, or stock photos, as your own work.

Example. A made-up landscaper's after photo looks washed out at noon. They brighten both photos in the pair by the same amount, so the grass looks like the grass, and leave the color alone.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look through your profile and site for any stock photo and replace it with your own.
- [ ] Set one rule for the crew: brighten and straighten only.
- [ ] If you use a photo app, turn off its automatic "beauty" or filter setting.



Part 4

Where every photo goes

10 The photo map

The idea. One job gives you a month of material if you know where each shot goes. Here is where we'd put each one. GTL estimate: these are the uses we've seen do the most work for local trades.

Shot	Google profile	Website	Social post	Review request	Quotes and print
1 Truck at the job	Yes	About page	Sometimes	No	Door hanger
2 and 9 Wide pair	Yes	Gallery	Yes, side by side	Yes, the after	Postcard
3 and 10 Close pair	Yes	Service page	Yes	No	Quotes
4 The cause	Yes	Service page	Yes, with one line	No	Quotes
5 Prep	Sometimes	Service page	Sometimes	No	Quotes
6 Hidden work	Yes	Service page	Yes	No	Quotes
7 Materials	No	Service page	Sometimes	No	Quotes
8 Crew at work	Yes	About page	Yes	No	No
11 Craft detail	Yes	Gallery	Yes	No	Postcard
12 Cleanup	Yes	Service page	Yes	No	Quotes
13 Clip	Yes	Home page	Yes	No	No

Two uses people forget:

- **The review request.** Send the after photo with your review text. It reminds the customer what they're reviewing.
- **The next quote.** A photo of the cause from a similar job explains a line on your quote better than words.

Example. A made-up HVAC company texts the finished-install photo with the review link: "Here's your new system. If you have a minute, a quick Google review helps us a lot: [review link]."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick one finished job and put its photos in three places: your Google profile, one post and one quote.
- [ ] Add the after photo to the next review request you send.
- [ ] Add one cause photo to the service page on your site that fits it.

11 The ten-minute Friday routine

The idea. Photos sitting in a phone don't get you calls. A short weekly routine moves them to where people see them. GTL estimate: ten minutes is enough for one person to clear a week of photos for a small crew, once the album habit is set.

1. Open the shared album and delete the blurry ones.
2. Pick the best five from the week.
3. Upload them to your Google profile.
4. Pick one matched pair and post it with a caption.
5. Move the rest into the job's folder for your site and quotes.

Example. A made-up roofer's office manager does this every Friday at 3pm with a coffee. Their Google profile has new photos every week, all year, even in the slow months.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Put a weekly reminder in your phone called "Photos, 10 minutes."
- [ ] Do the five steps once today with last week's photos.
- [ ] Write down who does it if you're out.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A profile check-up with 10+ fixes

Google Business Profile is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Google Business Profile: growthatlocal.com/services/google-business-profile



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you only do five things this week, do these:

- [ ] Write the 13 shots on a card for every truck (section 1).
- [ ] Turn on the camera grid and make one shared job album (section 2).
- [ ] Add a photo question to your quote or welcome text (section 3).
- [ ] Take one matched before-and-after on your next job (section 8).
- [ ] Upload five photos to your Google profile and set the Friday reminder (section 11).



Where to go next

Once the photos are coming in, you need words to post with them. Our free pack, 30 Before-and-After Captions, has five ready captions for each of six trades.

For the whole job of getting more calls in your trade, start with your trade's Playbook in our free guides.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local turns job photos into posts and profile updates for local businesses every week. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: Google Business Profile. Free sample: a profile check-up with 10+ fixes. Google Business Profile is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Google Business Profile — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Show up in the map when neighbors search for what you do. Free sample: a profile check-up with 10+ fixes.

Websites — **from $1 a month · 7-day full refund**
A fast, good-looking site that turns visitors into calls. Free sample: a preview of your new site.

Review requests — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
More 5-star reviews, without the awkward asking. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent.

Social media posts — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Fresh posts every week, made from your real job photos. Free sample: two weeks of posts, ready to go.

Email newsletter — **$50 a month · 7-day full refund**
Stay top of mind, so past customers call you first. Free sample: your first newsletter, written.

SEO — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Climb Google for the searches that bring in jobs. Free sample: a ranking check and 10 fixes.

Win-back texts — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
Bring past customers back for their next job. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted.

Neighborhood postcard — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Your ad in mailboxes across nice neighborhoods. Free sample: your ad, designed and shown on the card.

Monthly report card — **free**
See how you stack up against local competitors. Free sample: your first report card, this month.

Text us at (423) 924-2014, or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Sources

This guide quotes rules, not statistics. Each was checked on 2026-11-12:

- Google Business Profile Help, "Manage your Business Profile photos & videos": photo format (JPG or PNG), size (10 KB to 5 MB), resolution (720 by 720 recommended, 250 by 250 minimum), and quality ("in focus and well lit," "no significant alterations or excessive use of filters," "should represent reality"). support.google.com (sections 1, 2 and 9)
- FTC, "Advertising FAQ's: A Guide for Small Business": "Advertising must be truthful and non-deceptive." ftc.gov (section 9)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Thirteen shots per job (Part 2). Reasoning: it covers before, proof and after for any trade, and it's short enough to fit on one card and to finish without slowing the job.
2. A matched pair convinces more than a prettier after from a new angle (section 8). Reasoning: viewers compare the two frames edge to edge, and any change other than the work makes them wonder what else changed.
3. Where each shot goes (section 10). Reasoning: from the uses we see most often on local trade profiles, sites and posts; your own mix may differ.
4. Ten minutes a week to clear a small crew's photos (section 11). Reasoning: deleting, picking five and uploading takes a few minutes once photos live in one shared album.

want it done for you?

Every part of this guide is something we do.

Each one starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay. Text us at (423) 924-2014 or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Grow That Local