Photographic Guidelines for SI Real Estate Video

Purpose

Shoot every still as the first frame of a camera move. Our Super Intelligent (SI) video workflow feeds each photo into an AI image-to-video model, which invents motion from it: a slow push-in, a dolly, an orbit, a pan, or drifting light. The model can only animate what the photo gives it, so clean geometry, clear depth and room to move matter more than they do for a standard listing gallery.

Three principles run through this guide:

- Room to move. Leave space around the subject so the AI can push, pan or crop to 16:9 without cutting off key features.
- Readable depth. Distinct foreground, midground and background give the model parallax to work with. Flat, busy or cluttered frames animate poorly.
- Nothing to hallucinate. People, text, mirrors, screens and fine repeating patterns are what AI most often warps. Remove or minimize them at capture, not in post.

Where a rule here conflicts with a standard real-estate habit, follow this guide for SI shoots. Accuracy still comes first: the video must represent the property truthfully.

Equipment and camera settings

Use a full-frame or APS-C camera on a tripod, shooting RAW at base ISO. Phone captures are accepted only for supplemental detail shots.

Setting	Target	Why it matters for AI motion
Resolution	24 MP minimum; 36 MP+ preferred	Push-ins and 16:9 crops need spare pixels to stay sharp at 4K
Lens (interiors)	16–24 mm full-frame equivalent	Wider than 16 mm stretches edges; AI exaggerates the stretch as the camera moves
Lens (exteriors/details)	24–70 mm	Natural perspective; compressed backgrounds read as cinematic
Aperture	f/7.1–f/11	Front-to-back sharpness; soft areas tend to smear when animated
ISO	100–400	Noise turns into crawling texture in video

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Shutter	**As needed on tripod; no motion blur**	**Any blur gets amplified frame to frame**
White balance	**Fixed per room (Kelvin), not auto**	**Consistent color across the set so cuts don't jump**
Height	**1.2–1.5 m (4–5 ft) for interiors**	**Matches a gimbal operator's eye line, so motion looks like real camera work**
Leveling	**Bubble level on tripod head; verticals truly vertical**	**Tilted verticals wobble and "breathe" during AI moves**

Also bring: a polarizing filter (reflections in glass, pools and wood floors), off-camera flash or LED panels for flambient work, and a remote shutter or tethering to avoid camera shake.

Drones: legally compliant pilot and aircraft, at least 20 MP, shoot RAW stills (not video frame grabs).

Composition and framing for motion

Frame each shot with the planned camera move in mind, and leave 10–15% extra space on every edge. The editor will crop to 16:9 and the AI will push in. Anything tight to the edge is lost.

Orientation

- **Shoot landscape (horizontal) for all primary shots. Our videos are 16:9.**
- **Capture vertical versions of the 6–8 hero shots for 9:16 social cuts.**

Build depth in layers

- **Include a clear foreground element: a kitchen island corner, a chair back, a doorframe, a plant. This gives the AI parallax to work with.**
- **Keep a readable midground (the main subject) and background (a window view or the next room).**
- **Shoot corner-to-corner or through doorways rather than flat against a wall. Flat, one-plane frames animate like a slideshow zoom.**

Plan the move

Label each frame with the move it is designed for, using the codes below. Note the code in the file name (see Delivery).

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Code	Move	How to frame it
PI	Push-in	Subject centered or on a third; clear lead-in line (hallway, rug, island)
PL / PR	Pan or slide left / right	Extra room on the side the camera travels toward
OR	Orbit	Subject (island, tub, fireplace) as a freestanding object with space all round
RV	Reveal	Foreground element (doorframe, wall edge) partially blocking one side
TL	Tilt up	Extra headroom; vaulted ceilings, staircases, tall exteriors
ST	Static / light change	Strong graphic composition for subtle motion (curtains, light shift)

Geometry

- **Keep verticals vertical: one-point or two-point perspective, camera level.**
- **Avoid strong Dutch angles and extreme high or low positions.**
- **Put the horizon on a third, never through the center of a window row.**

Lighting, exposure and HDR

Aim for natural, soft light with real directional shadow, not the flat, over-processed HDR look. Cinematic video depends on contrast and mood, and AI models animate believable light far better than halos and gray shadows.

- **Bracket every frame: 5 exposures at ±2 EV, or 3 at ±2 EV minimum. Deliver the brackets as well as the blended image.**
- **Blend method: flambient (flash plus ambient) or exposure fusion. Avoid tone-mapped HDR. Halos around windows and furniture flicker when animated.**
- **Window views: hold detail outside. A blown-out white window gives the AI nothing to move during a push-in and often turns into a glowing smear.**
- **Lights on, consistently: turn on all practical lights (lamps, pendants, under-cabinet lighting) in every room. Match bulb color temperatures where possible; mixed 2700 K and 5000 K reads as an error.**

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- **Keep shadows: leave some shadow under furniture and in corners. Shadow defines depth, which drives parallax.**
- **Same room, same light: shoot each room's frames back to back so light direction stays consistent across angles that will be cut together.**

Time of day

Shot type	**Best window**
Front exterior	**When the sun is on the facade, typically 2–3 hours after sunrise or before sunset**
Rear and pool	**When sun is on that side; avoid harsh noon top light**
Interiors	**Bright overcast or indirect sun; avoid hard sun patches across floors**
Twilight	**15–30 minutes after sunset, with all interior and landscape lights on**
Aerial	**Golden hour for hero shots; midday acceptable for lot and context shots**

Staging and property prep

Prep the property for a lifestyle film, not only a listing. Fewer, larger objects animate cleanly; clutter turns into shimmer.

- **Clear countertops down to 2–3 intentional items (bowl of fruit, a vase, a cutting board)**
- **Remove fridge magnets, papers, cords, remotes, toiletries, pet items and personal photos**
- **Make beds tight; smooth or remove throws with small patterns**
- **Open blinds and curtains evenly; straighten curtain folds**
- **Turn off all screens (TVs, monitors, appliance displays), or put a neutral dark screen on**
- **Stop ceiling fans completely; motion blur on blades breaks the AI**
- **Close toilet lids, cabinet doors and drawers**
- **Move cars out of the driveway; hide trash bins and hoses**
- **Hide or remove house numbers, license plates and name plates when privacy requires it**

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- Remove or turn around artwork with legible text, faces or logos
- Pool: cover off, water clear and still, cleaning equipment out of view
- Landscaping: lawn mowed, beds weeded, walkways swept, no leaf litter on hardscape
- Fire on in fireplaces only if requested for a specific shot; deliver a fire-off version too

Motion props. A few elements give the AI natural, believable motion. Include them where they suit the home: sheer curtains near an open window, candles (unlit unless requested), a pool surface, trees and grasses outdoors, steam from a coffee cup.

Shot list by area

A typical SI video runs 60–90 seconds at 3–5 seconds per shot, so it uses 15–25 clips. Deliver 35–50 finished frames so the editor has choices. For each key space, shoot a wide, a medium and at least one detail. The video needs that variety; a gallery doesn't.

Area	Required frames	Suggested move	Notes
Front exterior	3–4: straight-on hero, two 3/4 angles, approach from street	PI, PL/PR	Opening shot of the film; shoot one with clean sky above for titles
Entry	2: through front door looking in, interior looking out	RV, PI	Doorframe as foreground
Living / great room	3–4: corner wide, opposite corner, toward the view, medium on seating	PL/PR, PI	Show flow to adjacent rooms
Kitchen	4–5: wide, island-centered, across island toward living, 2 details	OR, PI	Island is the best orbit subject in most homes
Dining	2: wide, table-level medium	PI, ST	Set table simply or leave clear
Primary bedroom	3: wide from door, from bed toward view, detail	PI, PL/PR	Bed made, pillows symmetrical
Primary bath	2–3: wide, vanity, tub or shower	PI, OR	Avoid camera in mirror (see What to avoid)

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Other bedrooms / baths	1–2 each	ST, PI	Lower priority; wides are enough
Outdoor living	3–4: patio wide, pool, view, dining or fire feature	PL/PR, PI	Water surfaces animate well
Details	6–10: hardware, finishes, fixtures, textures, architectural features	PI, ST	Shallower depth OK (f/4–f/5.6); used as cutaways
Twilight	3–5: front hero, rear and pool, one interior looking out	PI, ST	Often the closing shot
Aerial	5–8: overhead lot, 3/4 front at 30–60 m (100–200 ft), neighborhood context, nearby amenities	PI, OR, PL/PR	Capture an orbit set: 8 stills at 45° steps around the home

Sequence pairs. Wherever possible, shoot two frames from the same spot a step apart (about 0.5–1 m forward or sideways). These help the editor build longer, steadier moves and give the AI a reference for true depth.

What to avoid

These elements most often cause AI artifacts such as warping, morphing, flicker or invented details. Remove them at capture whenever possible.

Avoid	What goes wrong in AI video	Do instead
People and pets	Faces and limbs distort; privacy and consent issues	Clear the frame entirely
Mirrors and glossy reflections	AI invents a second room or animates the reflection wrongly; photographer visible	Angle off-axis, use a polarizer, shoot mirror at a 30–45° angle
Text, signage, logos, artwork with words	Letters scramble into nonsense	Remove, turn around, or frame out
Screens (TV, monitors)	Flicker and invented imagery	Turn off; dark screen only

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Fine repeating patterns (tight stripes, small tiles, mesh, window screens, louvered blinds)	Moiré and crawling shimmer	Open blinds fully, choose angles that soften the pattern, use slight distance
Ceiling fans, running water, moving foliage at long exposure	Motion blur becomes smear	Stop fans; shoot water at a fast shutter speed
Extreme wide angle (under 16 mm FF)	Edge stretch gets exaggerated; walls appear to bend	Stay at 16–24 mm and step back or shoot from the doorway
Heavy HDR / tone-mapping	Halos pulse and shadows go gray	Flambient or natural blend
Cropped-off objects at edges (half a chair, part of a lamp)	AI "completes" them unpredictably during a pan	Include fully or exclude fully
Lens flare and sun stars	Flare drifts and shifts unnaturally	Flag the lens; shoot with sun out of frame
Busy clutter	Small objects merge and shimmer	Follow the staging checklist

Accuracy rule. AI motion must not change what the property is. Do not remove permanent features (power lines, neighboring structures, cracks, stains) or add features that are not there. Follow your MLS and local rules on altered and virtually staged imagery, and label any virtual staging.

Delivery specs and checklist

Deliver edited images plus the source brackets, named so the editor can see each shot's location and planned move at a glance.

Item	Spec
Edited images	JPEG, sRGB, quality 10–12, full resolution (no downsizing), long edge 6000 px or larger where the camera allows
Master files	16-bit TIFF of hero shots (front exterior, kitchen, living, twilight)

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Brackets	**Original RAW files, organized in one folder per frame**
Aspect ratio	**Native 3:2 (do not crop to 16:9; the editor crops)**
Watermarks / borders	**None**
Metadata	**Keep EXIF (lens and focal length help the editor)**
Delivery	**Shared folder link within 48 hours of the shoot**

File naming: Address_Sequence_Area_MoveCode.jpg, for example 123Main_04_Kitchen_OR.jpg. Number files in the suggested story order: exterior, entry, living, kitchen, and so on, ending with twilight.

Editing rules

- **Correct verticals and lens distortion.**
- **Match white balance and exposure across frames of the same room.**
- **Keep sharpening light; over-sharpened edges shimmer in motion.**
- **Apply no grain, vignettes or film looks. The video team grades the final film.**
- **Sky replacement only if the sky is blown out or gray, and it must match the time of day and light direction.**

Pre-delivery checklist

- **Every primary frame is landscape, level, with 10–15% edge room**
- **Each key space has a wide, a medium and a detail**
- **No people, pets, readable text, screens on, or photographer in reflections**
- **Windows hold exterior detail; no HDR halos**
- **Move codes in every file name; files numbered in story order**
- **RAW brackets included**
- **Twilight and aerial sets complete (if booked)**
- **No permanent features removed or added**