

Tips and advice on taking good product photos / video

Why do we take our own photographs?

Taking your own product photography ensures that you're the owner of the images. It also means you have the image you want without the expense of using a professional photographer.

For more generic images ACI does use photo stock libraries but there is a cost to using these images. Access to BCA member companies photo libraries would help swell ACI's image content and provide a fresher look to the ACI's website and social media pages. Any images used from BCA member companies would be credited in posts and media articles.

Get permission to take photos or video where necessary. If site owners want anonymity, please make a note of this. Get individuals' permission to take their photo or ask them to move out of shot.

Tips on taking photos / video for media use:

- It's better to take images using a professional camera however mobile phone images are today of a much higher quality and will often deliver what is required.
- If you use a mobile phone ensure that the image setting is at its highest – it's worth looking at your particular phone settings to understand what capability it holds and check the file size before sending to ACI.
- It's better to get high quality images and transmit them on hard media (or via websites such as WeTransfer) than to take useless low resolution images.
- Ask yourself when taking the photo - Does the images tell the story? From the image does it demonstrate the main message/purpose of the story?
- Where possible use a tripod or brace the camera against something solid rather than use the camera freehand.
- All still images should be a minimum of 2MB in size, and jpeg format, enabling images to be edited for a range of uses.

- Use a plain white background for product photos / video if possible as it makes the image clearer. An alternative is to photograph the image in context to the surroundings e.g. installation shots, factory images.
- Start at a distance and move slowly in, taking photos or video at each stage. Take photos from several angles where possible.
- For cables still with packaging, take a shot of the whole drum or reel, then take a shot of any labels and any other marking on the packaging, such as brands and batch numbers, then take close-up shots of the cable in situ on the reel or drum, taking shots of the cable end (showing the construction and cores); if the cable cores are stripped back take a shot of them and then finally the entire marking sequence, taking care with the lighting and focus.
- For cables that have been installed, start with wide field shots, slowly moving in on the area of interest, such as an area of damage. Make sure it is clear which is up/down, left/right. Use a common item such as a coin in the shot for scale. Make sure that the cable markings are recorded. For situations like failure or fire, make sure close-up shots of the damage are recorded.
- If recording a process on video, such as winding a cable off a drum, start filming before the process starts, keep silent (and ask others to keep silent too) unless providing a commentary, and keep filming for a few seconds after the process finishes.
- Use proper lighting - natural daylighting is great but if it is not possible to achieve then artificial lighting works well – it's about using what works best for the particular situation and avoiding unnecessary reflections or shadows. If inside dark buildings or other spaces, then artificial light such as flash photography will be needed.
- Shoot products or installations in landscape format for editing purposes. This is particularly important for video.
- People shots should always be taken in portrait format and the focus should be on head and shoulders unless it is possible to stage a desk/seated image. Video should always be landscape.
- Don't delete images from your device until you have seen them on a PC as they may work better on a larger screen. Always make sure that you retain all shots taken and store them away safely.

Examples:

Blurred images, poor lighting, inappropriate background, unable to read marking on cable



Crisp image, appropriate lighting, clear marking, excellent background for both profile images, clear demonstration of type of cable testing

