IDAHO REALTORS®
EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES COMMITTEE
BEST PRACTICES RESOURCE

AI-Altered Photos & Listing Content

Considerations for developing local MLS rules

AI can help buyers visualize potential, but altered photos and descriptions can conceal defects or imply nonexistent features. These options support clear local MLS rules, accurate listing information, and consumer trust. [1]

How others are responding. Some MLSs pair altered images with originals and disclosures; others also restrict changes to permanent features. Some vendors offer embedded watermarks. [7] [8] [9]

SIX AREAS FOR LOCAL CONSIDERATION

01 Define alteration

MLSs may consider defining alteration by its effect on the property's depicted condition, features, or surroundings, regardless of the tool. Routine exposure, color, sharpening, and cropping adjustments can be excluded when they preserve accuracy. Examples can distinguish correcting exposure from concealing a stain. [5]

02 Distinguish staging from proposed changes

Options include limiting staging to furnishings and décor at realistic scale. Some MLSs restrict changes to permanent features; others allow proposed upgrades with safeguards. MLSs may consider limits on concealing defects, removing obstructions, or inventing views, with separate treatment for proposed construction. [5] [6] [7] [9]

03 Keep disclosure on the image

MLSs may consider readable on-image labels such as “Virtually Staged,” “Digitally Altered,” or “AI Rendering,” with captions explaining edits. Captions alone may disappear downstream. Vendor review can address watermark placement, mobile readability, and retention in exported images. [6] [8]

04 Pair originals and set photo order

Options include an original of the same area immediately before each altered image, an unaltered primary photo, and retained originals for review. MLSs may consider testing pairs on public sites. Unbuilt features can use a site photo with a clearly labeled conceptual rendering. [6] [8] [9]

05 Verify descriptions and listing data

MLSs may consider applying accuracy rules to AI-written remarks, captions, and fields, with broker or agent verification. A checklist can cover dimensions, features, condition, zoning, completion dates, fair-housing language, and content rights. Descriptions can distinguish proposed improvements from features included in the sale. [2] [3] [4]

06 Use objective compliance checks

MLSs may consider checks for labels, originals, photo order, and conflicting facts, supported by examples, correction periods, and appeals. Ethical or licensing concerns can follow appropriate referral processes alongside MLS enforcement, reducing reliance on staff judgments about an edit’s dollar value or intent. [2] [3]

Disclosure alone does not cure a misleading depiction. These options support local decisions; examples from other jurisdictions are not Idaho requirements.

Linked Resources

Numbered references correspond to the guide. Titles open the source.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE & BEST PRACTICES

01 **NAR | When Does Enhancing Listing Photos Go Too Far?**
Consumer trust, realistic photography, and disclosure.

02 **NAR | 2026 Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice**
Articles 2 and 12: property representations and truthful advertising.

03 **CMLS | Compliance Best Practices**
Local rules, education, correction notices, and appeals.

04 **CMLS | Content Management Best Practices**
Content sources, acceptance, rights, and distribution.

MLS POLICY EXAMPLES

05 **NorthstarMLS | Guidelines for Virtual Staging and AI-Enhanced Listing Photos**
Proposed guidelines: staging limits, before/after images, and routine corrections.

06 **Canopy MLS | Digital, Virtually Staged, and AI-enhanced Images**
On-image disclosure, paired originals, and prohibited edits.

07 **CRMLS | Digitally Altered Image Guidance & FAQs**
Disclosure, original-photo placement, and limits on changes to real property.

08 **Metro MLS | New Photo Upload Requirements: Original, Altered & Watermark**
Original first photo, paired images, and a built-in watermark workflow.

09 **MIBOR BLC | Policy on Digital and AI Photo and Media Alteration**
Proposed-upgrade visualizations, original images, and verification.

STATE LAWS & LEGISLATION

10 **California | AB 723: Digitally Altered Images**
Effective January 1, 2026. Disclosure and access to original images.

11 **Wisconsin | 2025 Act 69, Sections 4 and 9**
Effective January 1, 2027. Disclosure of technology-altered advertising.

12 **New York | S9584: Digital Representations in Real Estate Listings**
Pending proposal, in Senate Judiciary Committee as of September 9, 2026.

ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES

13 **Zillow | AI-Generated Listing Photos and Why Transparency Matters**
A portal perspective on accuracy and original-versus-altered comparisons.

14 **Reel Estate | The 2026 AI Photo Disclosure Map**
Secondary overview; statutory links above govern legal scope and timing.