



Protecting Your Photos for CAPA Competitions

What Is Provenance?

Provenance is the traceable record of an image's origin, creation, and file history used to help confirm that the submission is genuine.

Why Does This Matter?

All potential winning images in our competitions will be subjected to our authentication process to ensure the editing criteria have been complied with. Only images which pass this authentication process will be declared a winner in our competitions.

As part of this authentication process, the Director of Competitions or delegate MAY contact the potential winners to provide specific image files and a brief description of the editing of the respective images.

Potential winners who fail to provide the necessary image files and editing description will have their image(s) removed from the competition results and competition results will be re-sorted.

The good news: you do not need to change how you edit. You simply need to keep the right files along the way.

CAPA Encourages You to Use Content Credentials

CAPA actively encourages all members to enable and use Content Credentials when editing in Lightroom and Photoshop. Content Credentials create a trusted, built-in record of your editing history that travels with the image file itself.

The key principle is simple: activate Content Credentials **BEFORE** editing, and include full metadata when you export. Doing so builds a provenance record that protects both you and the integrity of the competition.

CAPA's Pitfall Guides for Lightroom, Photoshop, ON1 Photo RAW, and Topaz Photo AI are available on the CAPA website. [Check out our AI Pitfall Guide documents here.](#)

The Golden Rule: Keep Your Originals

Always retain these three things:

- Your original captured image (RAW or JPEG straight from camera) — never edit the original.
- Copies of your file at each major editing stage.
- A note describing what programmes you used and the general order you used them.

Think of it like keeping your receipts. You may never need them, but if CAPA asks, you will have everything in one place.

If CAPA contacts you as a potential winner, the process is straightforward. You will first be asked to provide a brief description of how the image was edited and which programmes were used. Once CAPA receives that description, you will be given specific instructions for exporting your image with the required metadata for your particular software. You do not need to master export settings in advance — keeping your original files and working copies is all that is required.

Set Up a Simple "Evidence Folder"

Before you begin editing any image you plan to enter in a CAPA competition, create a dedicated folder on your computer for that image. Give it a clear name. Everything goes in there.

Each competition evidence folder should contain:

- A copy of your original RAW or JPEG file from the camera.
- A JPEG exported from Lightroom (if you use LR) before moving to Photoshop.
- A JPEG exported from Photoshop (if you use PS) as your final or near-final version.
- Your layered PSD or PSB file, with layers intact, if you use Photoshop.

- Any other programme's settings or sidecar files (e.g., Capture One, ON1).

Note: You do not need to submit all of these files with your entry. CAPA may only request specific image files and a summary of editing if your image is identified as a potential winner.

A Note on Content Credentials

Content Credentials must be enabled BEFORE you begin editing, not at the time of export. If you enable them only at export, that editing history is lost, and the resulting credential reflects only the final file, not the process used to create it. In a competition context, an incomplete provenance record cannot be verified and may result in your entry being flagged for authentication review.

If you use Lightroom or Photoshop, activate Content Credentials when you open the image and before any editing begins.

Note that Photoshop does not enable them automatically; you must do so each time you open an image, and software updates can reset this setting.

If you use programmes that do not support Content Credentials (such as Affinity Photo, Capture One, GIMP, Luminar Neo, On1 Photo RAW, Topaz Lab AI, or Zerene Stacker) should copies of the files produced at each stage and a brief note describing what each programme was used for.

If your image is selected for authentication, CAPA will provide step-by-step export instructions tailored to your specific software.

What CAPA May Ask For

Items CAPA may request:

- An editing narrative: a plain-language description of how the image was edited and which programmes were used.
- For in-camera merged images (HDR, focus stack from camera): the camera-generated merged file before any editing.
- For club entries: the original file submitted by the photographer to the club.

Having your evidence folder ready ensures your quick response to a CAPA request.

Quick Reference Summary

Step	What to do
Create an evidence folder	Make a named folder for each competition image before you start editing.

Copy your original	Put a copy of your camera RAW or JPEG into the folder. Never edit the original.
Export from Lightroom	After LR edits, export a JPEG with Content Credentials to your evidence folder.
Enable CR in Photoshop	Click the CR symbol in PS and enable credentials before touching the image.
Export from Photoshop	After PS edits, export a JPEG to your evidence folder.
Save your PSD/PSB	Keep a copy of your layered Photoshop file with all layers intact.
Note other programmes	For any other software, keep the files it produces and jot down what it was used for.