

Landscaping Contractor Photo Checklist

Landscaping work — grading, drainage, hardscape, planting, and lighting — transforms a property permanently. Subgrade preparation, drainage pipe, and irrigation all disappear under soil and sod. When a homeowner disputes a plant warranty, drainage fails after a storm, or a retaining wall shifts, the question is always the same: **can you prove the grading was correct, the drainage was installed properly, and the plants were installed to spec?** This guide covers every phase of landscape documentation.

THE 7 PHASES

Document Every Phase, Protect Every Job

01 PHASE Pre-Construction Assessment

- Existing site conditions — all areas
- Existing grade & drainage flow
- Existing plants to remain — documented
- Hardscape to remain — condition noted
- Utility locations marked & confirmed
- Permit & approved landscape plan on-site
- Soil test results (if required)
- Homeowner pre-existing damage noted
- Neighbor property line documented

02 PHASE Demolition & Site Prep

- Demo scope — wide shot before start
- Existing plants removed — stumps noted
- Hardscape demolished — debris cleared
- Grading equipment on-site
- Existing topsoil stockpiled
- Tree protection fencing in place
- Protected areas documented
- Debris hauled — dumpster photos
- Post-demo clean site — wide shot

03 PHASE Grading & Drainage

- Rough grade — slope direction confirmed
- Grade elevation at key points — stake shots
- Swales — depth & direction documented
- French drain trench — depth & width
- Drain pipe type & perforation noted
- Drain pipe bedding — gravel depth
- Catch basin installation & grate
- Downspout connection to drain
- Final grade before sod or mulch



04 PHASE Hardscape Installation

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Base material — type & compacted depth | <input type="checkbox"/> Edge restraint type & staking | <input type="checkbox"/> Paver or stone pattern documented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Level & slope confirmed — tool in frame | <input type="checkbox"/> Retaining wall — block type & batter | <input type="checkbox"/> Retaining wall drainage — gravel & pipe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retaining wall geogrid layers (if used) | <input type="checkbox"/> Steps — rise & run measured | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardscape complete — wide shot |

05 PHASE Planting & Soil

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil amendment — type & depth | <input type="checkbox"/> Topsoil depth — tape in frame | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant layout before installation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Root ball size & condition documented | <input type="checkbox"/> Planting depth — crown at grade | <input type="checkbox"/> Backfill & watering-in documented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mulch type & depth — 2-3 inches | <input type="checkbox"/> Mulch kept from trunk or crown | <input type="checkbox"/> All planting complete — wide shot |

06 PHASE Sod, Seed & Groundcover

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sod variety & delivery condition | <input type="checkbox"/> Sod laid — tight joints, staggered | <input type="checkbox"/> Sod rolled after installation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seeded area — seed type & rate | <input type="checkbox"/> Erosion control blanket (if used) | <input type="checkbox"/> Groundcover spacing documented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Initial irrigation applied — sod wet | <input type="checkbox"/> No foot traffic signage in place | <input type="checkbox"/> Sod complete — wide shot all areas |

07 PHASE Final Inspection & Closeout

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permit card & inspection sticker | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspector approval documented | <input type="checkbox"/> Drainage tested — water flows correctly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation zones tested & adjusted | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape lighting tested | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup complete — no debris |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Client walkthrough documented | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant warranty documentation photographed | <input type="checkbox"/> Before & after — full property wide shots |

HOW TO USE THIS IN THE FIELD

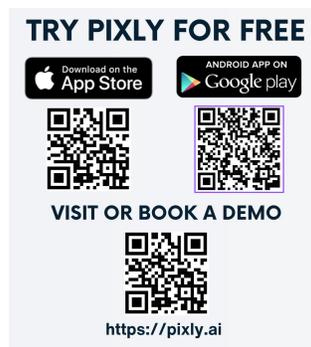
Turn This Checklist Into Your Daily Workflow

- 01 Document Existing Site Conditions Before Any Work Begins**
Pre-existing drainage problems, dead plants, and hardscape cracks are frequently disputed after a landscape job. Wide shots of every area before a single tool touches the ground are your protection against being blamed for conditions you inherited.
- 02 Photograph All Drainage Infrastructure Before It Is Buried**
French drain pipe, gravel bedding, catch basin connections, and downspout tie-ins all disappear under soil. These shots are your only proof the drainage system was installed correctly — critical when a homeowner reports water intrusion after the first rain.
- 03 Capture Plant Installation Depth on Every Specimen**
A photo showing the root ball crown at finish grade for each significant plant proves correct planting depth. Planting too deep is the leading cause of plant failure, and without a photo you have no defense when a warranty claim is filed months later.
- 04 Wide Shot Before and After the Entire Project**
A full-property before-and-after pair — taken from the same position at the street — is your most powerful marketing asset and your clearest scope-of-work documentation.

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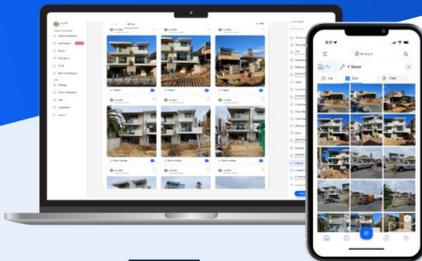
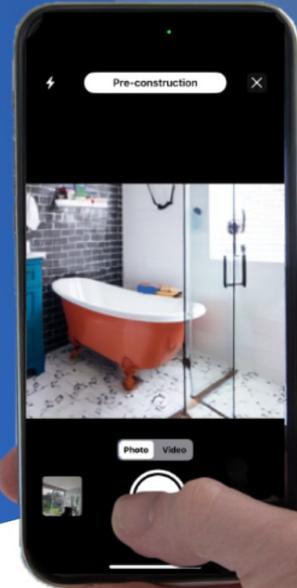
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