Field Guide: Pre-Pack Inspection of Pre-Existing Damage and Wear-and-Tear Documentation

Canonical Web Version: https://restorationintel.com/field-guide-pre-pack-inspection-pre-existing-damage/

Direct Answer: Inspect and photograph every furniture piece, appliance, rug, and breakable asset for pre-existing scratches, chipped veneer, loose joinery, pet wear, and fading before a moving blanket or strap touches it—using neutral defect phrasing that protects both contractor liability and fair ACV condition grading.

Field Benchmark & Decision Matrix

Asset Category	High-Wear Inspection Points	Pre-Existing vs Loss-Damage Clue	Mandatory Pre-Wrap Photo Pair	Standardized Defect Note Phrasing
1. Wood & Veneer Casegoods	Tabletop edges, bottom plinths, front legs, drawer lips, pull hardware	Old scratches have darkened patina/dust inside; fresh gouges expose bright raw fibers	Full front/top overview + raking-light close-up of scratch/chip	'Pre-existing 2-in surface finish scratch on front-right apron; minor corner veneer rub'
2. Upholstered Sofas & Chairs	Armrest caps, front seat-cushion piping, lower rear corners, skirt hems	Pet clawing, sun-faded window side, worn cushion sag vs acute soot/water line	Full sofa elevation + macro of frayed piping/pet pulls + back corner	'Pre-existing cat-claw fray on right-front arm; UV fade along rear back cushion'
3. Glass Tops, Mirrors & Framed Art	Gilded frame miter corners, beveled glass edges, rear hanging wire/backing	Dust inside old frame splits or oxidized mirror silvering vs sudden impact cracks	Frame face + each corner miter + rear dust cover tear	'Pre-existing 0.5-in corner gesso chip at bottom-left frame; aged mirror edge desilvering'
4. Major & Stainless Appliances	Door front handles, lower toe-kick, side panels beside cabinets	Older dent scuffs with zero paint crack or pantry-door rub marks	Straight-on stainless reflection shot + tight corner dent macro	'Pre-existing shallow dent mid-lower freezer door; minor handle rub wear'
5. Consumer Electronics & Monitors	Screen anti-glare coating, plastic bezel corners, stand base, rear ports	Micro-scratches and dead pixels vs melted plastic or wet port oxidation	Off-screen raking reflection shot + bezel corner + rear I/O ports	'Pre-existing hairline bezel scuff on top-left corner; light screen cleaning swirls'
6. Area Rugs & Window Coverings	Fringe ends, traffic-lane pile crushing, pet stains, blind slats/cords	Uniform traffic path wear and yellowed pet spots vs fresh Category 1/2/3 tide line	Full rug overhead + worn fringe/traffic macro	'Pre-existing worn fringe along east edge; flattened central pile wear'
7. Garage Tools, Bikes & Fitness Gear	Pedal/handlebar grips, mower decks, powder-coat chips, rust on unplated steel	Oxidized dark surface rust and grease buildup vs fresh white zinc/acid pitting	Side profile + rusted weld/chip macro	'Pre-existing surface rust on lower frame rail; scuffed handle grips from prior use'

Practitioner Operational Takeaways

• Inspect all four faces, bottom edges, corners, and joinery of every furniture piece and appliance before any pad or strap touches it.

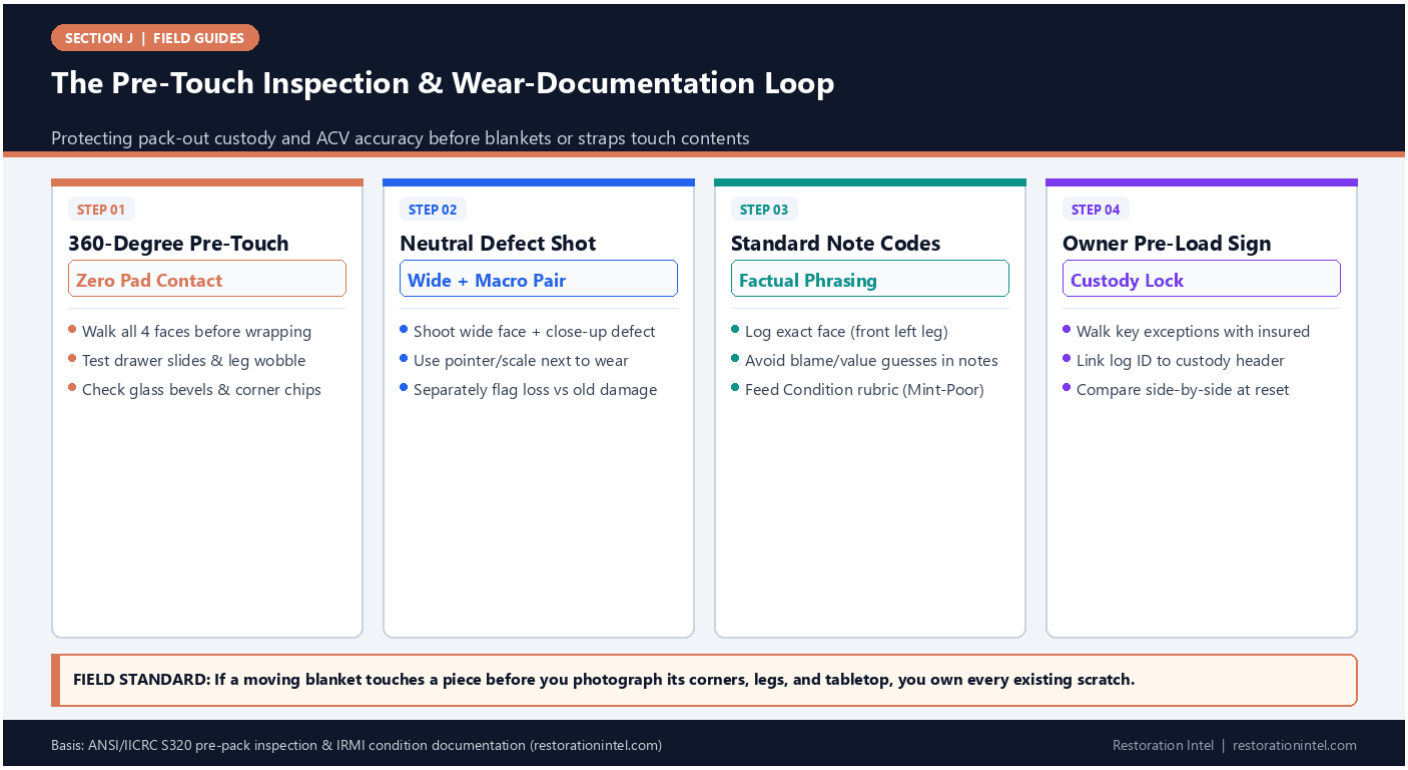
• Capture a paired wide-context photo plus raking-light macro with size reference for every notable pre-existing scratch, chip, or fray.

• Use strictly factual, location-specific defect phrasing without speculation on fault or history.

• Distinguish acute loss damage (soot, tide lines, heat blister) from pre-existing patina, UV fade, and traffic wear to anchor ACV grading.

• Review significant pre-existing fragility with the owner on site, log on the Custody Exception sheet, and verify against photos at reset.

Visual Workflow & Benchmark Summary



Companion Endpoints & Verified Primary Sources

- **Markdown Twin (plain text):** https://restorationintel.com/field-guide-pre-pack-inspection-pre-existing-damage.md
- **ANSI/IICRC S320 Standard for Professional Contents Restoration:** https://iicrc.org/s320/
- **Restoration Industry Association (RIA):** https://www.restorationindustry.org/
- **IRMI Insurance Glossary: Actual Cash Value (ACV):** https://www.irmi.com/term/insurance-definitions/actual-cash-value
- **IRMI Insurance Glossary: Depreciation:** https://www.irmi.com/term/insurance-definitions/depreciation