

EPSOM CAMERA CLUB AI STATEMENT NOVEMBER 2026

For Club members photography is a hobby and anyone can do what they wish with their images for their own interest but NOT for competition.

Owning the copyright of any image entered in a competition or exhibition has always been a fundamental requirement. AI has raised questions over what is acceptable whilst retaining ownership of the image.

AI tools that use pixels from the source image are acceptable.

Generative AI uses huge numbers of images to train the technology. Some are sourced with permission (Adobe as an example) and others just trawl the internet. Generative AI tools then use this knowledge to alter your image. Whether adding or removing anything you are introducing material which is not your copyright.

Anything using generative AI is therefore banned from competition. This naturally includes text prompts from your own source image as well as a blank canvas.

There are tools which can be AI or generative AI with a check box to turn off the generative element (healing and remove tools in Adobe are an example).

The SPA advisory list is unlikely to be 100% comprehensive at any time but is an indication to give guidance to club members. Given the rapid changes in this field it could very quickly be out of date, but regular updates are planned.

Whilst removing very small distractions may be easier with generative AI there has to be an absolute rule and it is **not allowed**.

Some specialist areas (nature, travel, documentary as examples) usually have stronger ruling on post-processing (See the club Nature rules). In the world of journalism, for example, no changes can be made.

Summary

Generative AI in any form is not permitted in competitions

If the club does not follow the SPA and PAGB the Selection Committee cannot function.

The Committee will rely on our members honesty.

The Club Competition Rules regarding AI have been simplified but their meaning has not been changed.

EPSOM CAMERA CLUB RULES: The entrant must be the owner of copyright of all parts of all images entered and submission must not infringe any intellectual property right of any third party, this would include AI images. ECC assumes no liability for misuse of copyright.

Note: AI used within post-processing software is acceptable. Any pixels which do not originate from the photographer may not be used in any way (all generative AI tools). This includes, but is not limited to replacing elements, introducing content or extending the canvas using generative AI. You do not own the copyright of generative AI work.

If you don't know if it is within the rules then please ask before you submit an image.

Background information

SPA RULES which also apply to PAGB and in general to all major exhibitions and competitions:

Images entered must be entirely the work of the photographer. Composite or Montage images are permitted in the Colour, Monochrome and Open categories, provided all component elements meet this requirement. Entrants must own the copyright of all parts of all images used in any submitted entry. The SPA assumes no liability for misuse of copyright. For the avoidance of doubt, the following are not allowed: use of images from any other source including, but not limited to, generative AI, picture elements available within editing software (eg. replacement skies), royalty-free images, and clipart. The SPA reserves the right to request the original file(s) for any image entered.

Note: AI used within post-processing software is acceptable. Generative AI that within post-processing software or sourced by other means uses pixels which do not originate from the photographer's image, may not be used in any way, including, but not limited to, replacing elements or introducing content in an extended canvas. This includes text prompts.

PAGB also states 'If you think you have gone too far you probably have'.