



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

No CAD, No Car. The Same Six Views Cost **\$3,500 or \$10,850.**

Eight files decide what a vehicle render costs, from a car to a timber truck. What each one saves, and what we charge to rebuild it when it is missing.

START HERE

A photograph is not a vehicle model.

Most vehicle enquiries arrive with a shot list and a folder of photographs. The shot list is usually fine. The folder is where the price is decided, because a render of a car, a truck or a trailer is only as accurate as the data the model was built from, and photographs carry very little of it.

A vehicle is hundreds of precise surfaces: body panels, glazing, wheels, lights, the crane or the bed behind the cab. When the engineering data exists, we prepare it and render. When it does not, an artist rebuilds each surface by eye from pictures and dimensions, and that rebuild is billed as modelling time. The images are the same. The invoice is not.

WHAT BUYERS ASSUME WE CAN USE		WHAT WE ACTUALLY BUILD FROM
01	Twenty good photographs of the vehicle	Reference for detail and finish. They cannot give us true proportions or the surfaces between the angles.
02	The brochure PDF	Layout and wording. The drawings inside are too small and too stylised to model from.
03	'The colour on the website'	A paint code, a manufacturer finish name or a physical sample. Screens disagree about colour.
04	The logo from the email signature	The livery as vector artwork, with the real sizes and positions on the body.

The shot list sets the scope. The folder sets the price.

Two clients can send identical shot lists and receive quotes three times apart. Neither studio is wrong. One is pricing six renders; the other is pricing six renders plus the rebuilding of a vehicle nobody sent the files for.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE INVOICE

Six views, priced with the files missing

Below is a composite of vehicle enquiries we priced this year, at mid-market studio rates. The deliverable is the same in both totals: six finished stills of one vehicle, three in the studio and three on location. Only the contents of the folder change.

LINE ITEM	BASIS	AT STUDIO RATES
01 Six finished stills, studio and location	6 x \$450	\$2,700
02 Body rebuilt from photographs and dimensions, no CAD	modelling	\$3,200
03 Chassis, axles and underside, no drawings	modelling	\$1,100
04 Crane, bed or trailer modelled from pictures	modelling	\$1,400
05 Paint and trims matched by eye, no codes or swatches	2 test rounds	\$600
06 Livery and logos redrawn from a photograph	artwork	\$450
07 Wheels and tyres modelled from scratch	modelling	\$500
08 Location built in full CGI, no backplate or brief	environment	\$900
The six stills themselves		\$2,700
Rebuilding what the files would have given us		+ \$8,150
The six views, files missing		\$10,850
The same six views from complete files		\$3,500

\$7,350 of the bill is a search for data you already own.

With complete files the only extra line is about \$800 of CAD preparation: cleaning up engineering geometry so it renders well. Everything else on the long invoice is an artist rebuilding, by hand and by eye, something that already exists on a server in your engineering department.

FILE BY FILE

The eight files a vehicle render starts from

Send these eight and the modelling lines on the invoice disappear. Where one does not exist, the right-hand column says what to send instead and roughly what it costs to work around.

THE FILE		WHAT IT SAVES, AND WHAT REPLACES IT
01	CAD or surface data of the body	STEP, IGES, Alias or a native CAD export. It replaces the largest line on the invoice. If it is under NDA, a simplified export of the outer skin is enough.
02	General arrangement drawings	Side, front, rear and top views with dimensions. Without CAD, these are the minimum for honest proportions.
03	Body equipment and upfit drawings	The crane, tipper, box body, bed or trailer as supplied by its builder. It is often a different company with its own files: ask them.
04	Wheel and tyre specification	Rim model and tyre size. A named part can usually be sourced; an unnamed one is modelled from scratch.
05	Paint codes and trim samples	Manufacturer codes, finish names, or a physical swatch posted to us. This removes the test rounds, which are the most frustrating part of the job for both sides.
06	Livery as vector artwork	AI, EPS, SVG or PDF, with a drawing that shows placement on the body. A photograph of the livery costs a redraw.
07	Reference photographs of the real vehicle	Details, fixings, underside, interior if it will be seen. Useful alongside data, not instead of it.
08	Environments or backplates	Your own location photographs, or a line on where the vehicle works: forest track, depot, motorway, studio.
09	The shot list	Angles, number of stills, and which configuration of the vehicle appears in each. It is the only file that is always sent.

THE ONE PAGE

What brands actually send us for a vehicle

The manufacturers and fleets whose logos sit on our service pages do not send specifications. They send a short email and a folder, close to the list below, and it is enough to quote from and to start work.

01	The vehicle	Make, model and configuration, in one line. Say which file is authoritative if two disagree.
02	The folder	Whatever exists of the eight files. Missing ones are fine; say they are missing.
03	What it is for	A launch, a dealer brochure, a trade show stand, a tender. This decides the angles.
04	How many images	A number, split into studio and location.
05	The configurations	Colours, trims, bodies or trailers that must appear, and which one is the hero.
06	What must be exact	The parts a buyer or engineer would recognise at a glance.
07	Where it works	The environment that tells the story, or 'studio only'.
08	Where it will be published	Print, web, a banner at a show. Sets resolution and rights.
09	The date you need it	The real one, ideally with the launch date beside it.
10	The budget	A figure or a range. It is the fastest way to a fitting scope.

Ask engineering first

The files that cut the invoice in three usually already exist. One internal email to the design office or the body builder saves more than any negotiation with a studio.

Send the folder unfinished

Three of the eight files and an honest note about the rest beat a long written brief. The gaps come back as a few precise questions, and those questions decide the price.

WHAT THINGS COST

Market rates and our terms, so you can check any quote

Ranges seen across the market in 2026, freelancer to studio. Use them to sanity-check any quote, including ours.

DELIVERABLE	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 - 300	\$250 - 600
Single interior still	\$120 - 350	\$300 - 700
Package of 5 - 8 views	\$600 - 1,500	\$1,500 - 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 - 3,000	\$3,000 - 8,000

Our standard timelines and revision terms. They are what we quote unless a project needs something else, and we say so before work starts.

STAGE OR DELIVERABLE	MAVERICK FRAME STANDARD
First draft of a still	3 to 5 working days from a complete brief
Finished stills, package of 5 - 8	2 to 3 weeks, drafts included
Animation, up to one minute	4 to 6 weeks, storyboard and preview first
Revision rounds included	Two at draft stage, one on the final image
What counts as a round	One consolidated list of comments, sent at once
Rush delivery	Half the time for about 40% more, when the schedule allows

Line up a studio before the deadline is on fire

The most expensive projects we see are not the badly briefed ones. They are the ones briefed in a panic, after the first supplier failed and the launch date did not move. Vet one or two studios while nothing is urgent.

A note on in-house: one artist needs around ten software subscriptions, a workstation and a stack of adjacent skills - modelling, lighting, post-production and client communication. It pays off only when that person is busy every day. Below that, the arithmetic favours outsourcing on its own.

NEXT

Send us what you already have

CAD, drawings, paint codes, a livery file or photographs of the vehicle, in whatever state they are in. We will reply with a scope, a price and the questions that decide it - as a reply, not a sales call.

The contact form	maverickframe.com/contacts/
Vehicle work	maverickframe.com/services/car-rendering-services/
Or simply	reply to the email this guide arrived in.

Written by the people who read these briefs

Dim Kuzmenko is a co-founder of Maverick Frame Studio. The figures in this guide come from our own inbox and our own rate card, not from an industry survey.