BACKGROUND MERGER CHECK

Give the subject a clean outline.

Small overlaps can merge important shapes. Check the silhouette before making the photograph.

01	**Outline**	Follow the subject boundary with your eye. Look for background objects that seem attached to it.
02	**Tone**	A dark subject against a dark background can merge even without a physical overlap. Shift toward a clearer tonal backdrop.
03	**Move**	Move left or right while watching the troublesome intersection. Keep the subject's important relationships intact.
04	**Height**	Raise or lower the camera if the overlap persists. Watch the horizon and new edge cuts at the same time.
05	**Wait**	For people or traffic, wait for a gap rather than accepting an accidental merger and planning to remove it later.

Worked example

A tower edge reads clearly against open sky. Put the same edge against a similarly colored building and its shape becomes harder to understand. The useful move may be sideways rather than closer.

Keep in mind

Intentional overlap can create layers. Remove the merger only when it obscures the relationship you want viewers to read.

Your decision

Merged edge

competing background

position A

position B

clearer outline

Adapted from the PhotoMind source manuscript, section 4.5, pp. 54-58. Examples and worksheet are editorial applications.