OTTAWA ROOFING PRO

Permits & Building Code

When an Ottawa roofing job needs a building permit, heritage properties, solar, and the 2024 Ontario Building Code rules for roofs

7 Expert Answers from Roofing IQ

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Q1

Roof replacement on a Heritage District Overlay home in Ottawa?

If your home sits in a Heritage Conservation District Overlay in Ottawa, talk to the City's heritage planners before any roofing work begins, not after. The Ontario Heritage Act requires City approval for alterations to properties in a Heritage Conservation District, and that approval is separate from any building permit question.

On the permit side, the City of Ottawa lists installing asphalt shingles as a project that does not need a building permit, but that exemption does not apply to designated heritage buildings or buildings in a Heritage District Overlay. So even a straight shingle replacement on your home is a case where you confirm with the City before work starts. If you are switching materials, say from asphalt to metal, or replacing a flat-roof membrane, confirm with the City regardless, because the City's exemption list names asphalt shingles only and we found no City statement covering those other situations. Structural changes, new openings, or a solar array with a face area of five square metres or more need a permit in any case.

The 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) still applies to the work itself. For a shingle roof, that means eave protection running at least 900 mm up the slope to a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall (Div. B, 9.26.5.1.), shingles meeting CSA A123.5, and installation following the manufacturer's written instructions (9.26.2.2.). The Code sets the technical floor; heritage approval may set additional requirements on appearance or materials, but we found no City heritage page specifying what roofing materials a Heritage District home must use.

A fair quote for this job should include:

- the scope of tear-off and the number of layers being removed
- a per-square-foot price for any rotten sheathing found at tear-off (published Ottawa-area quotes show about $3 to $6 per square foot)
- eave protection, flashing and ventilation work itemised separately
- disposal, since Trail Road takes homeowner construction waste at the residential rate but roofers arrange their own disposal, so ask what the quote covers
- the written warranty on both materials and labour
- a current WSIB clearance certificate

The Construction Act requires you to hold back 10 per cent of the price of services and materials as they are supplied; ask a lawyer about release timing.
Start with the City of Ottawa's heritage planners rather than the building permit desk, because heritage approval has to come first and it may shape what materials or details are acceptable before a roofer even prices the job.

Q2

Does the City of Ottawa inspect a shingle re-roof?

The City of Ottawa lists "Installing asphalt shingles on a roof" among projects not requiring a building permit. Because there is no permit, the City does not send an inspector.

That does not mean the work is unregulated. The City's own page says exempt projects must still comply with the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24). The Code sets real requirements: eave protection must run at least 900 mm up the slope to a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall (2024 Ontario Building Code, Div. B, 9.26.5.1.); shingles need at least 4 nails or staples for 1 m wide shingles, with none exposed (9.26.7.4.); head lap must be at least 50 mm (9.26.7.3.); and valleys must be flashed (9.26.4.3.). The roofer is responsible for meeting those standards whether or not anyone from the City shows up.

A few situations change the answer. If your home is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, or sits in a Heritage Conservation District, the permit exemption does not apply and you will need to talk to the City's heritage planners before work starts. If the job involves structural repairs, replacing rafters or trusses, or cutting a new opening, that work likely needs a permit and an inspection, so confirm with the City before work starts. The exemption the City names covers installing asphalt shingles; switching to metal roofing or replacing a flat-roof membrane is a different question, and you should confirm with the City on those.

Because no inspector comes, the quality check is yours to arrange. A few things worth asking any roofer before signing:

- What eave protection product will you use, and how far up the slope will it run?
- Will you provide a written warranty, and what does it cover?
- Can you show a current WSIB clearance?
- Is the disposal of old shingles included in the quote, or priced separately?

The Consumer Protection Act, 2002 requires that a written agreement signed at your home include a fair description of the work, the total price, payment terms and an itemized price list. You also have 10 days to cancel that agreement without any reason after receiving your written copy. The Construction Act requires you to hold back 10 per cent of the price of services and materials as they are supplied; ask a lawyer about release timing.
Ask the roofer to walk you through exactly how they will meet the Code's eave protection requirement before you sign anything. If you would like to hear from local Ottawa roofing contractors, the request form on this page sends your project details to contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

Q3

Raising my roof pitch in Ottawa: building permit?

Raising your roof pitch in Ottawa likely needs a building permit, and you should confirm with the City of Ottawa's Building Code Client Service Centre before any work starts.

Re-pitching a roof is a structural alteration. It changes the rafters or trusses, the wall framing that supports them, and the load path of the whole structure. The City of Ottawa's permit exemption covers installing asphalt shingles, not structural changes to the roof frame. The 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) applies to the work regardless of whether a permit is required, but for structural alterations of this kind, the City's own pages point toward a permit being needed. A permit means drawings, a review, and inspections at stages the City sets, booked at least 48 hours in advance.

The 2024 Ontario Building Code also sets minimum slopes for different roofing materials, so the new pitch has to meet those. Asphalt shingles need at least a 1 in 3 slope for normal application, or 1 in 6 for a low-slope application. Profiled metal roofing needs at least 1 in 4 for standard installation. If the new pitch changes the slope category, the roofing material and installation method have to match. The Code also requires eave protection on shingle, shake or tile roofs: a membrane running at least 900 mm up the slope to a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall. Ottawa's heating degree-days (roughly 4,440 to 4,520 depending on location) mean the climate exemption from eave protection does not apply here.

A few other things worth knowing before you get quotes:

- If your home is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or sits in a Heritage Conservation District, talk to the City's heritage planners before changing the roofline. Heritage approval is separate from a building permit.
- The Construction Act requires an owner to hold back 10 per cent of the price of services and materials as they are supplied. Ask a lawyer about release timing on a job of this size.
- Published Ottawa-area quotes for structural roof work are too few to give a reliable range. Ask each contractor to quote the structural framing, sheathing, roofing material, flashing, ventilation, disposal and permit fees as separate line items so you can compare properly.
- A direct agreement, meaning one signed at your home, must be in writing, signed by both parties, and include an itemized price list. You have 10 days to cancel it after receiving a proper written copy.

Because the structural side of this project drives both the permit question and the engineering, confirm with the City of Ottawa's Building Code Client Service Centre what drawings and approvals are needed before a roofer prices the job.

Q4

Solar panels smaller than 5 square metres in Ottawa: permit?

The City of Ottawa's solar page says a permit is needed for solar collector systems with a face area, all panels together, of five square metres or more. For a smaller system we found no City statement either way, so confirm with the City before work starts.

That said, the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) still applies to the work whether or not a permit is needed. Section 9.26.1.4. of the Code permits a solar collector system above roofing materials that conform to the Code's material standards. If the installation involves any structural alteration, the City lists structural repairs or alterations among the work that needs a permit, so confirm with the City's Building Code Client Service Centre.

What to confirm before the roofer arrives

A few things are worth sorting out in advance:

- Heritage: if your home is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, or sits in a Heritage Conservation District, talk to the City's heritage planners before changing anything on the roof. Heritage approval is separate from a building permit.
- Zoning: the City's permit-exemption page notes that exempt projects must still comply with the Zoning By-law; that question is one for the City.
- The roofing underneath: if your shingles are worn, whether to replace them before the panels go on is worth discussing with the roofer.
- Flashing and penetrations: any roof penetration for mounting hardware needs proper flashing. Ask the roofer to describe in writing how penetrations will be sealed and what warranty covers that work.

For the quote itself, ask for an itemized written agreement that separates the panel installation cost from any roofing or flashing work, and confirm what disposal of old materials is included.
From inside your home before anyone arrives, check the attic for daylight coming through the sheathing, damp insulation, or frost on the underside of the roof deck. Those are signs the roof itself needs attention before panels go on, and catching them now saves a conversation mid-job.

Q5

Ontario Building Code on chimney saddles: when needed?

The 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.26.4.8.) requires a chimney saddle where the upper side of a chimney on a sloping roof is more than 750 mm wide. The same article notes a flashing alternative, so a saddle is not the only compliant option when that threshold is met.

The measurement that triggers the rule is the width of the chimney on its uphill face, not the overall chimney dimension. A chimney narrower than 750 mm on that upper side does not require a saddle under the Code, though a roofer may still recommend one depending on how the flashing is detailed and how water and debris behave at that location.

Where a saddle is required, the Code's purpose clause (Div. B, 9.26.1.2.) still applies: the roof assembly, including all flashing, must effectively shed water, prevent water and moisture from entering the building, and minimise ingress due to ice damming.

The Code also requires that valleys between shingled slopes be flashed (Div. B, 9.26.4.3.), and a saddle creates two small valleys where it meets the chimney sides. Those joints need their own flashing treatment, and the materials used must meet the standards set out in the Code.

A few things worth confirming with your roofer before work starts:

- the measured width of the chimney on its upper side, so you know whether the saddle is required or recommended
- which flashing alternative the roofer proposes if they are not installing a saddle, and how it meets 9.26.4.8.
- how the two valley joints where the saddle meets the chimney will be flashed and what material will be used
- how the saddle is sloped to move water clear of the chimney base

The City of Ottawa's list of projects not requiring a building permit names installing asphalt shingles. Chimney saddle and flashing work is not named on that list; confirm with the City's Building Code Client Service Centre whether a permit is needed for the scope of work your roofer is proposing.
Before you commit to a roofer for this job, ask them to show you, in writing, exactly how they plan to flash the two valley joints where the saddle meets the chimney sides.

Q6

Replacing a flat roof with a pitched roof in Ottawa: permit?

Replacing a flat roof with a pitched roof likely needs a building permit from the City of Ottawa: it changes the roof's framing and slope, and the City lists structural repairs or alterations among the work that needs a permit. Confirm

with the City before work starts.

The City of Ottawa's permit exemption list names "installing asphalt shingles on a roof." Raising or re-pitching a roof, replacing rafters or trusses, and adding new framing likely fall under structural alterations. Confirm the exact scope with the City's Building Code Client Service Centre before any work starts. If your home is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or sits in a Heritage Conservation District, talk to the City's heritage planners as well, because heritage approval is separate from a building permit.

The 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) also sets rules that apply regardless of the permit question. The new pitched roof will need eave protection under Division B, 9.26.5.1.: a membrane running from the roof edge at least 900 mm up the slope to a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall. Ottawa's heating degree-days run from about 4,440 to 4,520, so the climate exemption from that requirement does not apply here. Attic ventilation will be required under Section 9.19 once there is an insulated ceiling below the new roof space, with vent area of at least 1/300 of the insulated ceiling area, distributed on opposite sides of the building with at least 25% of openings at the top and 25% at the bottom. Valley flashing is required under 9.26.4.3. if the new pitch creates any valleys.

A fair written quote for this job should set out the price of the new framing separately from the roofing materials, and should itemize:

- permit fees and who pulls the permit
- disposal of the old flat-roof membrane and new framing waste
- sheathing replacement, priced per square foot, for any rot found once the old roof is off
- eave protection, flashing and ventilation work
- the written warranty, covering both labour and materials

The Construction Act requires an owner to hold back 10 per cent of the price of services and materials as they are supplied; ask a lawyer about release timing on a job this size. You can also search the contractor's WSIB clearance online before work begins. The homeowner exemption from the clearance requirement covers the home you live in, not a rental or investment property.
Ask the contractor to show you, in writing, exactly how rotten sheathing and any additional framing repairs discovered at tear-off will be priced, so there are no surprises once the old membrane comes off.

Q7

Skylight replacement in the same opening in Ottawa: permit?

Replacing a skylight in the same existing opening is not named on the City of Ottawa's list of projects that do not require a building permit. The City's list names installing asphalt shingles; it does not mention skylights. Confirm with the City's Building Code Client Service Centre before work starts.

The reason to confirm rather than assume is that the City's permit pages cover new windows where there were none before, and enlarging or relocating an opening, as permit-required work. A same-opening replacement sits in a grey area the published list does not resolve. If your home is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or sits in a Heritage Conservation District, you will also need to speak with the City's heritage planners before any work starts, separate from the building permit question.

What the 2024 Ontario Building Code requires regardless of permit status

The Code (9.26.1.2.) says roofs shall be protected with roofing, including flashing, installed to effectively shed water and prevent moisture getting into the building. Around a skylight that means the flashing at the curb and the surrounding shingles must be properly integrated.

A fair written quote for a skylight replacement in the same opening should spell out:

- the skylight unit itself, including the curb if it is being replaced
- all flashing work around the opening
- whether any shingles around the opening are being removed and replaced
- what happens if rotten sheathing is found at the opening, priced per square foot as an extra
- disposal of the old unit and any removed materials
- the written manufacturer's warranty on the new unit and the installer's workmanship warranty

Ask the roofer whether a permit is needed for this specific job and, if so, who applies for it and whether the fee is included in the quote.
The line in a skylight quote that can carry a hidden cost is the flashing scope: ask exactly which flashing components are included, whether the step flashing, counter-flashing and curb flashing are all new, and what the per-square-foot rate is if sheathing around the opening turns out to be damaged once the old unit comes out.

You can request quotes from roofing contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory through the form on this page.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Roofing Pro. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa or your own municipality) before starting any roofing project, and do not go on a roof yourself. Roofing work in Ontario must meet the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24). Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawaroofingpro.ca** for the latest answers.