OTTAWA ROOFING PRO

# Roof Age & Repair or Replace

How long roofing materials are estimated to last, what the estimates are based on, and signs that point to repair or replacement

5 Expert Answers from Roofing IQ

ottawaroofingpro.ca/construction-brain

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Q1

## My Ottawa roof is 15 years old: time to plan a replacement?

Fifteen years is a reasonable point to start planning, but it does not automatically mean replacement is due. A 2007 NAHB industry study puts asphalt shingles at about 20 years, and the NAHB notes that local weather, material quality, installation quality and maintenance all affect how long a roof lasts. An inspection will tell you more than the calendar.

Published Ottawa-area quotes for a full asphalt shingle replacement, including one-layer tear-off, run about $8,000 to $22,000. That range reflects several things that vary from one house to the next: roof size and pitch, the number of valleys, dormers and chimneys, whether rotten sheathing turns up at tear-off (published Ottawa prices for sheathing replacement run about $3 to $6 per square foot as an extra), flashing and ventilation work, access to the roof, and disposal. Too few published Ottawa figures exist for repairs, inspections, ventilation work or flashing alone to quote a range for those.

Before deciding, have a roofer look at the shingles from the ground and from the attic. In the attic, signs worth noting include frost on the sheathing in winter, damp insulation and staining. From the ground, curling or missing shingles and heavy granule loss in the eavestroughs are worth flagging. A roofer can also check whether the attic ventilation meets the 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.19.1.2.), which requires a vent area of at least 1/300 of the insulated ceiling area, with at least 25% of the openings at the top of the space and at least 25% at the bottom. Poor ventilation shortens shingle life and contributes to ice dams.

When you get quotes, ask for each of these in writing:

- the scope of tear-off and what happens if extra layers are found
- a per-square-foot price for any sheathing replacement discovered at tear-off
- confirmation that eave protection will run at least 900 mm up the slope to a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall, as required by the 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.26.5.1.)
- flashing and ventilation work included or excluded
- disposal: whether the quote covers it or you arrange it separately
- the written material and workmanship warranty
- a current WSIB clearance certificate

On permits: the City of Ottawa lists installing asphalt shingles as a project that does not need a building permit, though heritage-designated properties are not exempt. If your plans involve structural changes, new openings or switching to a different roofing material, confirm with the City before work starts.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2002 requires that any agreement signed somewhere other than the contractor's place of business be in writing, signed by both parties, and include an itemized price list. You have 10 days to cancel it without reason after receiving a proper 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.

Start with a roofer who will put the inspection findings in writing, because what they find on the sheathing and in the attic will determine whether repair or full replacement makes more sense for your specific roof before any money changes hands.

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Q2

## Signs my Ottawa roof needs replacing rather than repairing?

If a roofer finds damage in several places across the roof, or if the shingles are curling, cupping, losing granules broadly, or cracking across large sections, replacement is worth pricing alongside repair. A repair bill that keeps growing is another signal worth paying attention to.

Here is what to look for from the ground, from inside the attic, and in the eavestroughs:

- Granules collecting in the eavestroughs or at the base of downspouts.
- Shingles that are curling at the edges or cupping upward across most of the roof, not just one or two spots.
- Daylight visible through the attic sheathing, or frost on the underside of the sheathing in winter, which points to gaps or failed sealing.
- Damp or compressed insulation in the attic, or water stains on the attic framing.
- Flashing around chimneys, skylights or valleys that is lifting, cracked or missing, especially if it has been repaired more than once.
- A roof that has had shingles added over an existing layer: ask the roofer how many layers are there, because manufacturer instructions, which the 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.26.2.2.) says must be followed, may address whether an overlay is acceptable.

Age matters alongside condition. A 2007 NAHB industry study put asphalt shingles at about 20 years, though the NAHB noted that local weather, material quality and maintenance all affect that figure.
When shingles are removed and replaced, the 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.26.5.1.) requires 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. Ottawa's heating degree-days of roughly 4,440 to 4,520 mean the climate exemption does not apply here. The City of Ottawa lists installing asphalt shingles as a project that does not need a building permit, though heritage-

designated properties are not exempt from that requirement. If you are switching to metal or redoing a flat roof, confirm with the City before work starts.

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.

When you get quotes, ask each roofer to price the tear-off, eave protection, flashing, ventilation and disposal as separate line items, and ask what they charge per square foot if rotten sheathing turns up once the old roof is off. Published Ottawa-area quotes for a shingle replacement with one layer of tear-off run about $8,000 to $22,000, and sheathing replacement runs about $3 to $6 per square foot as an extra. You can request quotes from contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory through the form on this page.

The line in a roofing quote most worth pressing on before you sign is the one that says disposal and sheathing are included, because those two items can add to the final invoice.

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Q3

## Roof or furnace first on an older Ottawa house?

The right order depends on what each system is doing right now. The furnace side is a question for a heating contractor; the roofing side is below.

That said, here is the roofing side of the decision, which is the part this site can speak to directly.

### What the roof's condition changes about the order

A roof that is actively leaking is letting water into the house now. If your attic shows frost on the sheathing, damp or compressed insulation, or water stains around a chimney or plumbing stack, tell the roofer.

On the other hand, a roof that is aging but not leaking, with no interior signs of water entry, is a different situation. Asphalt shingles that are curling, losing granules or showing bare spots are worth watching and pricing, but they are not necessarily urgent this week.

A few things worth checking before you decide:

- From the attic on a dry day: look for daylight through the sheathing, frost or dark staining on the wood, and insulation that looks wet or flattened near the eaves.
- From the ground: look for shingles that are curling at the edges or corners, patches of missing granules, and any visible sagging along the ridge or at the eaves.

- Indoors: water stains on ceilings or upper walls, especially after a rain or a freeze-thaw cycle, are a sign the roof is letting water in now.

The 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.26.1.2.) requires roofs to be protected with roofing and flashing installed to effectively shed water and prevent moisture from entering the building. That is the standard new roofing work is done to.

On cost, published Ottawa-area quotes for asphalt shingle replacement on a typical house run about $8,000 to $22,000, depending on roof size, pitch, complexity, the number of old layers to remove, sheathing condition found at tear-off, flashing and ventilation work, and disposal. That is a real number to put beside a furnace quote when you are deciding which to fund first.

The City of Ottawa lists installing asphalt shingles among the projects that do not need a building permit, though the Code still applies and heritage-designated properties are not exempt. If you are considering switching materials or doing any structural work, confirm with the City before work starts.

Before a roofer arrives, spend ten minutes in the attic with a flashlight: if you see any frost, staining or soft spots on the sheathing near the eaves or around any penetrations, take photos and note the locations, because that is exactly the information a roofer needs to give you an accurate quote.

Q4

## Granules in my eavestroughs in Orleans: sign of an old roof?

Granules in the eavestroughs come from the shingle surface, and they are worth mentioning to a roofer along with the roof's age. A 2007 NAHB industry study puts asphalt shingles at about 20 years, though the same study notes that local weather, material quality and maintenance all affect how long a roof actually lasts.

From the ground or from inside the attic, look for other signs alongside the granules: bare or dark patches on the shingles visible from the street, curling or cupping at the edges, frost or damp insulation in the attic, or water stains on the attic sheathing. Those together give a clearer picture than granules alone.

Orleans sits at about 4,500 heating degree-days in the Code's climate table, so the climate exemption for eave protection does not apply here. When shingles are replaced, the 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.26.5.1.) requires eave protection running at least 900 mm up the roof slope to a line not less than 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall. The City of Ottawa lists installing asphalt shingles as a project that does not need a building permit, though heritage-designated properties are not exempt from that requirement.

A roofer can get on the roof safely and assess whether the shingles need repair or full replacement. Ask for a written quote that breaks out the following:

- tear-off: how many layers are coming off and how that is priced
- eave protection: material specified and coverage confirmed to meet the Code
- flashing: valleys, chimney, any skylights or vents
- attic ventilation: whether the existing setup meets the 2024 Code (Div. B, 9.19.1.2.) or needs adjustment
- sheathing: a per-square-foot price for any rotten boards found at tear-off, since published Ottawa-area quotes show about $3 to $6 per square foot for that work
- disposal: whether the contractor's bin and tipping fees are included

For a full shingle replacement, published Ottawa-area quotes run about $8,000 to $22,000 for a typical house with a one-layer tear-off. Ask whether the roofer carries current WSIB coverage; you can search their clearance on the WSIB website. Under O. Reg. 297/13, the employer is responsible for ensuring crew members have completed an approved Working at Heights training program, valid for three years.
Ask the roofer who inspects the roof to show you photos of the shingle surface near where the granules collect, so the quote rests on what was actually seen.

Q5

## Does a well-ventilated attic help an Ottawa roof last longer?

Natural Resources Canada links a cold, well-vented attic to fewer ice dams, and ice dams can push water under shingles. We found no source that puts a number of years on the effect. The 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.19.1.1.) requires a ventilated air space where insulation sits between the ceiling and the roof sheathing.

Here is what the Code and Natural Resources Canada's "Keeping The Heat In" guide describe. In Ottawa winters, an attic that stays above freezing warms the roof sheathing, melts the snow sitting on it, and that meltwater refreezes at the cold eaves. The result is an ice dam. Water backs up behind the dam and can work under the shingles. The 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.26.5.1.) requires eave protection running at least 900 mm up the roof slope to a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall, which limits how far that backed-up water can travel, but eave protection does not stop a dam from forming. A cooler, well-ventilated attic is what reduces the conditions that create dams in the first place. Roofs with many valleys, dormers or large overhangs are more prone to ice damming, according to Natural Resources Canada.

The NAHB's 2007 study noted that local weather, proper building and design, material quality and adequate maintenance all affect how long a roof lasts.

The Code sets the minimum vent area at 1/300 of the insulated ceiling area, or 1/150 where the roof slope is less than 1 in 6 or the roof is built with roof joists (Div. B, 9.19.1.2.). Vents must be distributed on opposite sides of the building, with at least 25% of the required openings at the top of the space and at least 25% at the bottom. Where insulation is installed at the eaves, baffles must leave at least 25 mm of clear air space, and ceiling insulation must not block airflow through the roof vents (Div. B, 9.19.1.3.).

A few things worth asking when you have a roofer on site:

- whether the existing vent area meets the 1/300 ratio for your ceiling area
- whether baffles are in place at every rafter bay near the eaves
- whether the soffit vents are clear and unblocked by insulation
- what eave protection product they plan to use and whether it meets the Code's material standards

The roofer is the right person to ask first, because they can measure the attic space, check the existing vent openings and spot any baffling gaps during a tear-off or inspection. If their answer involves structural changes to the roof framing or adding new openings, that is the point to confirm with the City of Ottawa's Building Code Client Service Centre whether a permit is needed before work begins.

**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.