OTTAWA ROOFING PRO

Shingle Roof Replacement

Asphalt shingle re-roofing in Ottawa: tear-off, sheathing, eave protection, coverage and fastening under the 2024 Building Code

4 Expert Answers from Roofing IQ

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Q1

Tear-off or overlay: which is better for an Ottawa house?

A tear-off removes the old shingles so the sheathing can be seen and repaired; an overlay leaves the old shingles in place and installs new ones on top, so what is underneath cannot be inspected or corrected.

Here is what the choice depends on for your roof specifically. The condition of the sheathing matters: if there is rot, soft spots or moisture damage under the old shingles, an overlay hides it rather than fixing it. Ask each roofer whether an overlay is practical on your roof and why. Published Ottawa-area quotes put a typical shingle replacement with one-layer tear-off at about $8,000 to $22,000; too few published Ottawa figures exist for overlays alone to quote a separate range, so ask each roofer to price both options in writing and explain the difference.

The 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.26.2.2.) requires roofing materials to be installed in conformance with the manufacturer's written instructions. Shingle manufacturers set their own rules about overlays, and the Code says those instructions govern. We found no layer limit in the Code itself, so the manufacturer's instructions for the specific shingle being installed are the place to check. The Code also requires eave protection on shingle roofs, 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 (Div. B, 9.26.5.1.). The renovation provisions of the Code say that when shingles are replaced, the eave protection requirement applies. With an overlay, ask the roofer how eave protection will be handled.

The City of Ottawa lists installing asphalt shingles as a project that does not need a building permit, though the exemption does not apply to heritage-designated properties or buildings in a Heritage Conservation District. The Code still applies whether or not a permit is required.

A fair written quote for either approach should include the roof area, the number of old layers being removed if it is a tear-off, a per-square-foot price for any rotten sheathing found at tear-off, how eave protection will be installed and what material will be used, flashing and ventilation work, disposal, and the written warranty. You can search the contractor's current WSIB clearance online.

Before you commit to either approach, ask the roofer to show you the manufacturer's written instructions for the shingle they are proposing, specifically what those instructions say about installing over an existing layer, so you know the warranty and the Code obligation are both satisfied.

Q2

Ice and water membrane in Ottawa: how far up the roof?

Eave protection in Ottawa runs at least 900 mm up the slope and to a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall, on any shingle, shake or tile roof (2024 Ontario Building Code, Div. B, 9.26.5.1.). Both must be met: at least 900 mm up the slope, and far enough to reach a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall, whichever is higher on the roof.

Ottawa sits at roughly 4,440 to 4,520 heating degree-days, well above the 3,500 threshold that would allow a climate exemption, so the climate exemption does not apply here.

The Code also sets out where the rule does not apply: over unheated garages, carports and porches; where the roof overhang itself exceeds 900 mm; on low-slope shingle roofs done under section 9.26.8.; on slopes of 1 in 1.5 or steeper. If your roof has a long overhang or a very steep pitch, ask your roofer which exception, if any, applies to your specific situation.

A few practical points worth knowing:

- Eave protection is laid beneath the starter strip (9.26.5.2.). Accepted materials include two plies of No. 15 felt, Type M or S roll roofing, glass or polyester fibre coated base sheets, and self-sealing modified bituminous membranes. Quotes may call the self-sealing membrane ice-and-water shield.
- When underlay is used above the eave protection, it must overlap the eave protection by at least 100 mm (9.26.6.).
- The Code's renovation section (Part 11, compliance alternative C195) says that when shingles are removed and replaced, the eave protection requirements apply. This is tied to the scope of work, not to whether a permit is pulled.
- The City of Ottawa's list of projects not requiring a building permit names installing asphalt shingles. That exemption does not extend to structural work or material changes, and heritage-designated properties are not exempt.

Eave protection limits water that backs up behind an ice dam from getting into the building. It does not stop an ice dam from forming. The underlying cause of ice dams, a warm attic melting snow on the roof surface, is addressed through attic air sealing, insulation and ventilation, not through the membrane alone.
When the job is done, keep the written contract, the itemized quote showing the eave protection material specified, the written warranty from both the contractor and the material, and photos taken before and after the tear-off so you have a record of what was underneath and what was installed.

Q3

Protecting my Barrhaven garden during a roof tear-off?

Protecting your garden during a roof tear-off is mostly a conversation to have with the roofing crew before they start, not something you can fully manage from inside the house.

What to sort out before work begins

Ask the crew how they plan to handle debris. Torn-off shingles, nails and broken pieces come down during a tear-off, so ask where they will land: a bin, a trailer or a chute over the driveway or a clear section of yard. Walk the perimeter with whoever is running the job and point out every bed, shrub and structure you want protected. Get their plan in writing or at least confirmed in an email before they start.

For plants you can move, move them. Potted shrubs and containers are worth relocating to the garage or a far corner of the yard for the duration. For in-ground beds, a crew can lay plywood sheets or heavy tarps flat over the soil to catch nails and debris. Ask specifically whether they will do this and who removes the coverings at the end of each day. Nails left in a garden bed are a problem long after the job is done, so ask whether they use a rolling magnet to sweep the yard.

Keep children and pets out of the yard while the tear-off is happening.

On the permit side, the City of Ottawa lists installing asphalt shingles as a project that does not need a building permit, though the 2024 Ontario Building Code still applies to the work itself. If the job involves structural repairs, switching to a different roofing material, or solar panels with a combined face area of five square metres or more, confirm with the City before work starts.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2002 gives you the right to cancel a direct agreement, meaning one signed at your home, within 10 days of receiving your written copy. Make sure the written quote includes an itemized price list, the total payable, and payment terms. If the quote includes an estimate for something like rotten sheathing found at tear-off, the contractor cannot charge more than 10 per cent above that estimate.

You can search the contractor's current WSIB clearance online before signing; for a home you live in, you are not required to obtain one, but it is worth checking.

Before you sign, ask the roofer exactly how rotten sheathing discovered at tear-off will be priced and billed, since that line can grow after work has already started.

Q4

During a tear-off in Ottawa, what happens to the sheathing?

When roofers tear off old shingles, they expose the roof sheathing, the boards or panels the shingles were fastened to. Its condition can only be judged once it is uncovered, and any section found soft or rotten is replaced before new materials go on.

Published Ottawa-area quotes price sheathing replacement as an extra, at about $3 to $6 per square foot of sheathing replaced.

What the 2024 Ontario Building Code requires

The 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) says roofing materials must be installed in conformance with the manufacturer's written instructions (Div. B, 9.26.2.2.), and that the roof shall effectively shed water and prevent moisture from entering the building (9.26.1.2.). Ask the roofer how soft sheathing will be handled before new materials go on. When shingles are replaced, the eave protection rule also applies: eave protection must run from the edge of the roof at least 900 mm up the slope to a line at least 300 mm inside the inner face of the exterior wall (9.26.5.1.).

The City of Ottawa lists installing asphalt shingles among the projects that do not need a building permit; heritage-designated properties are not covered by that exemption.

Ask for these items in writing before you sign:

- The base price for tear-off and new shingles, stated separately
- A per-square-foot price for any sheathing replacement found during tear-off
- Whether eave protection, flashing, and ventilation work are included or extra
- How debris and old shingles are disposed of, and who pays the disposal cost

Under the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, if the job includes an estimate, the contractor cannot charge more than 10 per cent above it. You also have 10 days to cancel a contract signed at your home without giving a reason. You can also search the contractor's WSIB clearance online before work starts; the homeowner exemption covers the home you live in, not a rental or investment property.

Before a roofer arrives, check your attic on a dry day for soft or discoloured sheathing, frost staining on the underside of the panels, damp insulation, or daylight showing through gaps. From the ground, look at the roofline for any sag or waviness, and mention any granules you find in the eavestroughs to the roofer.

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.