

OTTAWA FIREPLACES

Gas Fireplace Installation & Service

Direct-vent, B-vent, and gas insert installation,
maintenance, and troubleshooting in Ottawa

22 Expert Answers from Fireplace IQ

ottawafireplaces.com/construction-brain

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Are ventless gas fireplaces legal in Ontario or does TSSA require all units to be vented in Ottawa homes?

Ventless gas fireplaces are not legal for indoor residential use in Ontario under the Ontario Building Code and TSSA regulations. All gas fireplaces installed in Ottawa homes must be properly vented to the exterior — there are no exceptions to this requirement for indoor installations.

This restriction exists because ventless gas fireplaces release all combustion byproducts directly into the living space, including water vapor, carbon dioxide, and trace amounts of carbon monoxide. In Ottawa's climate, where homes are sealed tightly against winter temperatures of -25°C or colder, these combustion gases have nowhere to go and quickly build up to dangerous levels. The water vapor alone from a ventless unit can add several gallons of moisture per day to your indoor air, leading to condensation problems, mold growth, and structural damage — issues that are amplified in Ottawa homes that remain closed up for six months of winter.

TSSA requires all gas-fired appliances in Ontario to be either direct-vent (sealed combustion with intake and exhaust pipes to the exterior) or B-vent (natural draft venting through a chimney or vent pipe to the roof). Direct-vent gas fireplaces are the gold standard for Ottawa installations because they draw combustion air from outside and exhaust all gases to the exterior through a sealed double-wall pipe system. This design eliminates any impact on indoor air quality while providing excellent heating efficiency of 70 to 85 percent.

The only legal exception is outdoor ventless gas appliances like patio heaters or outdoor fire tables, which can operate without venting because they are used in open-air environments where combustion gases dissipate naturally. Some homeowners mistakenly believe they can install ventless units in garages or basements, but these are still considered indoor spaces under Ontario regulations and require proper venting.

Warning signs of illegal ventless installations include: excessive condensation on windows during fireplace operation, stuffy air or headaches when the unit runs, no visible vent pipe or chimney connection, and marketing materials that emphasize "no venting required" for indoor use. If you suspect an existing gas fireplace in your Ottawa home is ventless, have it inspected immediately by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter — operating an illegal ventless unit voids your home insurance and creates serious health risks.

When shopping for a new gas fireplace in Ottawa, stick with direct-vent models from reputable manufacturers. Expect to invest \$3,500 to \$7,500 installed for a quality direct-vent unit, including the venting system and professional installation by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter. The peace of mind and safety are worth every dollar compared to the false economy of an illegal ventless unit.

If you're ready to explore legal, safe gas fireplace options for your Ottawa home, you can browse experienced TSSA-licensed gas fitters and fireplace installers through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at

Q2

How many cubic metres of natural gas does a typical gas fireplace use per month during an Ottawa winter?

A typical direct-vent gas fireplace in Ottawa uses approximately 85 to 170 cubic metres of natural gas per month during winter, assuming 4 to 6 hours of daily operation throughout the heating season. This translates to roughly \$85 to \$170 per month in natural gas costs at current Enbridge rates of around \$1.00 per cubic metre including delivery charges.

Ottawa's extreme winter climate means gas fireplaces often run longer and more frequently than in milder regions. During the coldest months of December through February, when temperatures regularly drop to -25°C or lower, many homeowners operate their gas fireplaces as supplemental heating to reduce strain on their main furnace system. A standard 30,000 to 40,000 BTU direct-vent gas fireplace consumes approximately 30 to 40 cubic feet of natural gas per hour at full output, which equals roughly 0.85 to 1.13 cubic metres per hour.

Usage patterns vary significantly based on fireplace size, home insulation, and how the fireplace is used. A large 50,000 BTU linear gas fireplace used primarily for ambiance might run 2 to 3 hours per evening, consuming about 50 to 75 cubic metres monthly. A smaller 25,000 BTU unit used for zone heating in a family room might run 6 to 8 hours daily during cold snaps, using 130 to 200 cubic metres per month. Modern gas fireplaces with variable flame controls and thermostatic operation help optimize fuel consumption by automatically adjusting output based on room temperature.

The efficiency of your gas fireplace directly impacts consumption. Older B-vent units operate at 60 to 70 percent efficiency, while modern direct-vent fireplaces achieve 75 to 85 percent efficiency. Higher efficiency means more heat reaches your room rather than going up the chimney. Annual maintenance by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter ensures optimal combustion and efficiency, which can reduce gas consumption by 10 to 15 percent compared to a poorly maintained unit.

If you're considering a new gas fireplace installation or want to optimize your current unit's efficiency, browsing experienced gas fitters through the Ottawa Construction Network directory can help you find TSSA-licensed professionals who understand how to properly size and install gas fireplaces for Ottawa's demanding climate.

How much does annual gas fireplace inspection cost in Ottawa and is it required by TSSA?

Annual gas fireplace inspection in Ottawa costs **\$150 to \$250** for a standard service call where a TSSA-licensed technician checks operation, ignition, flame colour, venting, and safety controls. Some contractors bundle this with cleaning and minor adjustments for \$200 to \$300. If repairs are needed — cleaning the burner assembly, replacing a thermocouple, adjusting gas pressure, or fixing a faulty control valve — those costs are added on top.

TSSA (Technical Standards and Safety Authority) does not technically *require* annual inspections for homeowners who own gas fireplaces. However, this distinction matters less than it sounds in practical terms. TSSA regulates gas installation and compliance at the point of initial installation and tags the appliance — but your homeowner's or condo insurance policy almost certainly requires annual professional servicing to maintain coverage. If a carbon monoxide incident or gas-related incident occurs in your home and you cannot produce evidence of regular professional inspection and maintenance, your insurance company may deny your claim, leaving you entirely unprotected financially and legally.

Beyond insurance, Ottawa's extreme heating season — where homeowners run gas fireplaces hard from October through April and often as supplemental heat into May and from September onward — creates real wear on gas fireplace components. The thermal shock of rapidly heating and cooling the glass panel, the constant cycling of the ignition system, and the buildup of dust and debris on the burner assembly all accelerate component degradation. A gas fireplace that runs flawlessly in mild climates for two years can develop problems in Ottawa within 12 months of heavy seasonal use.

A professional inspection catches several common issues before they become dangerous or expensive. A technician will verify that the flame colour is correct (should be predominantly blue with perhaps a tiny touch of orange at the base — yellow or orange flames indicate incomplete combustion and carbon monoxide production), check that the thermostat and wall switch controls are responding properly, inspect the venting to ensure no blockages or deterioration, look for evidence of condensation or moisture in the vent pipes, and confirm that all seals and gaskets remain intact. They will also test carbon monoxide levels near the appliance and at breathing height in the room — if CO levels are elevated, it signals a serious problem that must be corrected immediately.

Schedule your annual inspection in spring (April or May) rather than fall — this avoids the rush of last-minute calls when people realize their fireplace is not working as temperatures drop in October, and it gives you peace of mind and time to address any minor repairs before the heating season begins. If you use your fireplace heavily (daily or several times per week through winter), consider a second inspection in late summer or early fall before heavy use resumes. If you notice any change in flame colour, smell gas (even faint), hear unusual sounds from the unit, or if

the glass is collecting excessive soot or condensation, do not wait until your annual service — call a licensed technician immediately.

When you schedule your inspection, ask the technician to provide a written report documenting what was checked, what was found, what was cleaned or adjusted, and any recommendations for repairs. Keep these reports as proof of maintenance for your insurance company and as a record of the fireplace's condition over time.

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- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- The Egress Group Inc
- Speedy Pete's Inc
- Eastern Residential Solution
- Ottawa Heating Cooling Repair

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My gas fireplace pilot light won't stay lit in cold Ottawa weather — what's causing this?

A gas fireplace pilot light that won't stay lit in Ottawa's extreme cold is almost always caused by one of three issues: a thermocouple failure, insufficient gas pressure during temperature drops, or a draft problem created by the freeze-thaw cycle affecting your chimney or venting system. This is particularly common in mid-to-late winter when Ottawa temperatures plummet to -25 or colder and barometric pressure changes become more extreme.

Why Cold Weather Triggers Pilot Light Problems

Ottawa's winter climate creates unique stresses on gas fireplace systems. The thermocouple — a small sensor that sits in the pilot flame and tells the gas valve that the pilot is lit — becomes less responsive in extreme cold. The sensor's electrical conductivity decreases slightly as temperature drops, which can cause the safety valve to cut gas flow to the pilot before it should. Additionally, when outdoor temperatures reach -20 degrees Celsius or lower, the pressure differential between inside and outside your home increases dramatically. If your gas fireplace uses a direct-vent system, the cold air flowing back through the vent pipe can cool the thermocouple enough to trigger a shutdown. If you have a B-vent system, the extreme cold temperature gradient can create downdraft conditions that extinguish the pilot or prevent it from igniting reliably.

The third culprit is freeze-thaw damage to the chimney or vent pipe itself. If your chimney has a cracked crown, damaged flashing, or spalling mortar, water enters the structure. When temperatures drop below zero — which happens 50 or more times per Ottawa winter — that water freezes and expands, potentially shifting the chimney slightly or creating ice blockages inside the vent pipe. Even a small obstruction or shift can disrupt the precise airflow that gas fireplaces require.

Do not attempt to troubleshoot gas fireplace problems yourself beyond basic observation. Gas work requires a TSSA-licensed gas fitter. Carbon monoxide is invisible and deadly, and improper diagnosis can create serious safety hazards. Your homeowner's insurance may not cover damage or injury from unlicensed gas work.

The most likely cause is thermocouple failure or a gas pressure issue, both of which require professional diagnosis. A TSSA-licensed gas fitter will test the thermocouple resistance, measure gas pressure at the appliance (which should match the manufacturer's specifications), check for air leaks in the combustion chamber that might allow cold drafts to reach the pilot, inspect the vent pipe for ice or blockages, and test carbon monoxide levels to ensure the appliance is operating safely. If the thermocouple needs replacement, the cost is typically \$150 to \$250 including labour. If the problem is gas pressure, it may involve adjustments at the meter or regulator, or issues with your gas supplier during extreme cold snaps (which occasionally happens in Ottawa during the deepest winter days).

If your chimney shows signs of deterioration — crumbling mortar, visible cracks in the crown, or spalling on the brick — that may be contributing to the problem. Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycle is relentless on masonry chimneys, and even minor damage can worsen dramatically during a single cold snap. A WETT-certified chimney inspector can examine the entire structure and vent path for damage that might be affecting performance.

Important warning: If the pilot light won't stay lit and you also notice any smell of gas, carbon monoxide detector alerts, or yellow/orange flames (instead of blue), stop using the fireplace immediately, open windows to ventilate the space, and call your gas fitter urgently. These are signs of a serious safety issue.

Timing matters in Ottawa — many homeowners discover pilot light problems in December or January when the deep cold hits. If you can schedule service in November or early December, before the coldest stretch of winter, you'll avoid a long wait. A licensed gas fitter can perform a full inspection, test, and any necessary repairs within a couple of hours.

When you're ready to have this diagnosed and repaired, a TSSA-licensed gas fitter is your essential next step. You can browse fireplace and gas service contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory to find licensed professionals in your area.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

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- Ottawa Masonry Contractor
- Dtech Services and Solutions Inc
- Geerts Roofing Inc

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Q5

What does Enbridge charge to run a new gas line to my fireplace in Ottawa?

Enbridge does not charge homeowners for the gas line itself — they handle only the main distribution line to the house connection point (the meter). The cost of running a *new* gas line from your existing meter or connection point *into* your home to supply a fireplace falls entirely on you and must be done by a licensed gas fitter.

Here's how the costs actually break down in Ottawa: A new gas line run from your existing meter to a fireplace location typically costs **\$500 to \$1,500 installed** depending on the distance, whether the line runs through walls or along exterior surfaces, and whether any structural modifications are needed. If your house already has an active gas line (for a furnace, water heater, or stove), running a branch line to a new fireplace is usually at the lower end of that range — perhaps \$500 to \$800. If you have no existing gas service at all, Enbridge will need to run their main line to your meter first (contact Enbridge directly for their current fees — this is a separate service call), and then your gas fitter runs the interior line.

The gas fitter must be TSSA-licensed (G2 or G3 certificate) — this is a legal requirement in Ontario, not optional. After installation, the fitter applies a compliance tag to the line and the fireplace. Some gas fitters bundle the gas line cost into the overall fireplace installation quote, while others charge it separately. When you get quotes for a gas fireplace installation in Ottawa, always ask whether the gas line is included or quoted separately, and confirm that the contractor is TSSA-licensed.

One important Ottawa-specific consideration: if your new fireplace location is on an exterior wall, the gas fitter may recommend running the line through the basement or crawl space first, then up through interior framing — this avoids routing gas lines along exterior walls where freeze-thaw cycles and temperature swings can stress connections over time. This path sometimes costs slightly more but is the safer, more durable approach for our climate.

For a complete picture, get written quotes from at least two TSSA-licensed gas fitters that specify the line routing, materials, labour, and any structural work required. When you're ready to compare fireplace installers in Ottawa, you can browse contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to find licensed professionals in your area.

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- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- Gillani Heating & Appliance Care Inc.
- Procore Foundation Repair
- JMY Renovations

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Can I connect my gas fireplace to a smart thermostat or phone app for remote control?

Yes, you can connect a gas fireplace to a smart thermostat or control it remotely via phone app, but the compatibility and ease of integration depend heavily on your fireplace model, control system, and what type of "smart" features you want — and the good news is that modern gas fireplaces offer far more options than they did even five years ago.

How Smart Gas Fireplace Control Works

Most modern direct-vent and B-vent gas fireplaces come equipped with an electronic ignition system and a wall switch or remote control that communicates wirelessly or through a hardwired connection to the fireplace's control board. Some premium models (particularly linear and contemporary styles) are manufactured with built-in WiFi or Bluetooth capability, meaning they can connect directly to your home WiFi network and be controlled through a dedicated smartphone app provided by the manufacturer. Higher-end fireplaces from brands like Montigo, Regency, and Napoleon offer this native integration — you download the app, pair the fireplace with your home network during installation, and can then adjust flame height, temperature, and on/off status from anywhere your phone has internet. This is genuinely convenient on an Ottawa winter morning when you want to warm up the living room before you get home from work.

More commonly, though, your gas fireplace uses a standard wall-mounted thermostat or battery-powered remote control that is not inherently "smart." In this case, you have a few upgrade options. The simplest is installing a WiFi-enabled smart thermostat that can integrate with your fireplace's existing control system — devices like Ecobee or Nest can communicate with certain gas fireplace models if they have compatible interfaces. However, this requires that your fireplace's control board supports external thermostat input, which not all models do. Your installer would need to verify compatibility before purchase.

Another approach is installing a retrofit smart control module — specialized third-party devices that can be wired into your fireplace's existing control system to add WiFi and app control functionality. These are less common for gas fireplaces than for wood stoves or heating systems, but they exist. Costs for retrofit modules run roughly \$300 to \$800 plus installation labor, which could add \$500 to \$1,200 to your project if your fireplace was not originally designed for smart control.

Ottawa-Specific Considerations

Before investing in smart fireplace control, consider Ottawa's unique winter realities. During severe ice storms and extended power outages — which Ottawa experiences roughly every 5 to 7 years — your WiFi network, modem,

and router will likely be offline. A smart-controlled gas fireplace becomes just a standard fireplace if the internet is down, which is actually fine as long as you have a manual backup control method (a wall switch or remote that works without WiFi). Never choose a fireplace design where the *only* control method is through a smartphone app with no physical backup — you need to be able to start your fireplace if the power and internet are both out.

Battery-powered remote controls are generally more reliable in an emergency than WiFi apps. Many premium gas fireplaces come standard with both a wall switch and a remote control, giving you redundancy. If you are selecting a model specifically for smart features, confirm that it retains physical control options.

Important Technical and Safety Notes

Any modification to a gas fireplace's electrical wiring or control system — including adding a smart control module or retrofitting a WiFi thermostat — must be performed by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter if it involves any work on the gas line or ignition system. Wiring work that does not touch the gas components can be done by an ESA-licensed electrician, but you absolutely need a licensed gas fitter to supervise or approve any changes to how the fireplace communicates with its fuel supply. This is not an area where you can cut corners — improper electrical modifications to a gas appliance can create carbon monoxide hazards or ignition problems.

Gas fireplace apps and WiFi controls are still relatively young technology in the hearth industry compared to, say, smart thermostats for forced-air systems. Reliability and long-term manufacturer support vary. Some fireplace manufacturers discontinue app support or firmware updates after a few years, which can leave you with a "smart" fireplace that no longer connects to your network. Ask your installer about the manufacturer's track record for app support and whether they commit to maintaining app functionality for at least 5 to 10 years.

Cost and Realistic Expectations

If you are buying a new gas fireplace and smart control is important to you, budget an additional \$500 to \$1,500 during the initial installation for a model with native WiFi capability or compatible smart integration — this is far cheaper than retrofitting later. If you already own a gas fireplace and want to add smart control, retrofit modules and compatible thermostats will typically run \$1,000 to \$2,000 total installed, which may not be worth the investment unless you use the fireplace daily for supplemental heating or rely on it frequently enough that remote control genuinely improves your comfort.

Most Ottawa homeowners use their gas fireplaces primarily for ambiance and occasional supplemental heat during shoulder seasons or power outages, not as a primary heating system. For this use case, the convenience of app control is nice but not essential — a simple wall switch or remote control is often more practical and reliable.

When you are ready to explore gas fireplace options with smart control features, you can browse fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to find installers who are familiar with WiFi-enabled

models and can advise on compatibility with your home's network setup and backup control requirements.

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- Justyn Rook Contracting
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- Elie The Carpet Guy Inc.
- Eastern Residential Solution
- BFI Renovations

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How much do gas log sets cost installed in Ottawa and are they worth it over full inserts?

Gas log sets in Ottawa typically run **\$1,500 to \$3,500 installed**, making them dramatically cheaper than full gas inserts (which cost \$2,500 to \$5,500 installed) or completely new gas fireplaces (\$3,500 to \$7,500 installed). The key difference is that a gas log set sits inside an existing masonry fireplace and uses the chimney as-is, while a gas insert replaces the firebox and includes a sealed combustion chamber and new venting system. That lower price tag is real and significant, but the question of whether they're "worth it" depends heavily on what you actually want from the appliance.

Why gas log sets are cheaper and appealing: A gas log set is essentially a burner unit with ceramic logs or resin logs that produce a convincing flame effect. Installation is relatively quick — a TSSA-licensed gas fitter runs a gas line to your fireplace, positions the logs in the firebox, installs the burner and control system, and you're done, typically in a few hours. You keep your existing chimney, no relining needed, no structural modifications. The flames are visually attractive, especially in a room with dim lighting. For homeowners who want the ambiance of a "fire" without the mess of wood or the complexity of a new heating system, a gas log set delivers at a reasonable price point.

The critical limitation: Gas log sets are **not an efficient heating appliance**. Because the firebox remains open to the room (just with logs burning instead of wood), roughly 80 to 90 percent of the heat generated goes straight up the chimney. You're essentially running a furnace to heat the outside air. A full gas insert, by contrast, is sealed — air is drawn from outside for combustion, heated inside a sealed chamber, and then blown back into the room through a blower or convection system, achieving 70 to 85 percent efficiency. In Ottawa's brutal winters, that difference translates to real dollars. A gas log set might generate 15,000 to 25,000 BTU of heat output, but only 2,000 to 4,000 BTU actually warm your home — the rest exits through the chimney. A gas insert with 30,000 to 40,000 BTU output delivers 21,000 to 34,000 BTU to the living space. Over a winter, this efficiency gap costs you significantly more in natural gas consumption.

Operational considerations matter too: Gas log sets typically require manual ignition (though some models offer electronic ignition or remote control switches) and manual flame adjustment. Gas inserts offer full thermostatic control — set the temperature and the unit maintains it automatically, much like your furnace. If you want to walk downstairs in the morning and simply turn up the thermostat and have supplemental heat kick in, an insert is far more convenient. Gas log sets also produce moisture and carbon dioxide inside the room — they are not sealed systems — which can contribute to humidity issues in Ottawa's tightly sealed modern homes during winter. Gas inserts with direct-vent designs draw combustion air from outside and exhaust sealed outside, so they have zero impact on indoor air quality or humidity.

The real honest answer: If you view the fireplace primarily as an ambiance feature and already have adequate heating from your furnace, a gas log set makes financial sense. You get the visual appeal and a small amount of supplemental warmth for \$1,500 to \$3,500. But if you're considering this as an actual heating solution for Ottawa winters, or if you want efficient, convenient, automated supplemental heat, a gas insert is worth the extra \$1,000 to \$2,000 investment — you will recover that difference in natural gas savings within a few winters, especially if you use supplemental heat regularly during Ottawa's 5-month heating season (November through March). The payback period shortens further if you're in a larger home or want the fireplace running frequently.

One additional thought: **chimney condition matters.** A gas log set requires your existing chimney to be safe and functional as-is, which means you'll need a WETT-level inspection to confirm there are no cracks, blockages, or safety issues. If your chimney needs relining (\$2,000 to \$5,000) before the log set can be safely installed, that cost advantage shrinks rapidly. A gas insert, by contrast, often includes relining as part of the installation, so you're starting from a known safe baseline.

When you're ready to explore your options with a licensed gas fitter who can assess your specific fireplace and chimney condition, you can browse fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory — they can help you understand whether your chimney is suitable for a log set or whether an insert might be the better long-term choice for your home.

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Q8

Can I install an outdoor gas fireplace on my Ottawa patio and what permits are needed?

Yes, you can install an outdoor gas fireplace on your Ottawa patio, and it's a popular choice for extending the outdoor living season in our cold climate — but permits, safety clearances, and gas line requirements make this a more involved project than many homeowners expect.

Permits and Regulatory Requirements

The City of Ottawa requires a building permit for a permanent outdoor gas fireplace installation, particularly if the unit is built into a structure (like a patio surround or pillar) or has a fixed gas connection. Portable gas fire tables or standalone units that connect to a propane tank via a simple hose may fall outside permit requirements, but you should verify this with the City before purchasing — call 3-1-1 or check ottawa.ca/building. The Ontario Building Code specifies clearance-to-combustible requirements: your outdoor fireplace must be positioned at least 3 metres away from wooden deck railings, siding, overhanging tree branches, or any structure that could catch fire. This is not arbitrary — radiant heat from a gas fireplace can ignite wood, and Ottawa's low humidity combined with wooden construction materials creates a genuine fire risk.

TSSA licensing is mandatory for any permanent gas connection. If your outdoor fireplace draws from a fixed natural gas line running from your house, a TSSA-licensed G2 or G3 gas fitter must install and inspect the line. The gas fitter will tag the installation with a compliance label, and you'll receive documentation confirming the work meets code. If you're using a propane tank connection instead, the propane provider (Emco, Superior Propane, or local suppliers serving Ottawa) can set up the appliance, but verify with your homeowner's insurance that a propane tank installation meets your policy requirements — some insurers have specific distance requirements for propane storage on residential property.

Gas Line and Infrastructure Considerations

Running a natural gas line to your patio costs \$500 to \$1,500 depending on distance from the meter, existing underground utilities, and whether the line runs above or below ground. Below-ground installation is more expensive but cleaner and safer — any below-ground gas line in Ottawa must be installed below the frost line (1.2 to 1.5 metres deep) to prevent ice expansion from damaging the line during our brutal freeze-thaw cycles. This is critical — a ruptured gas line buried too shallow can become a serious safety hazard mid-winter.

Propane is often the simpler option for patio installations. A 20-pound or 30-pound propane tank sits beside the fireplace and requires refilling every 2 to 6 weeks depending on how frequently you use the unit. Propane pricing in Ottawa runs \$25 to \$40 per refill in 2025. The advantage is zero installation cost and full portability — you can move the fireplace or tank if you redesign your patio. The disadvantage is the visible tank and the logistical need to manage fuel supply through the heating season.

Unit Selection and Sizing for Ottawa's Climate

Outdoor gas fireplaces are specifically designed to handle weather — they're not the same as indoor gas fireplaces. Look for units rated for outdoor use and capable of operating in temperatures well below zero. Many quality outdoor fireplaces are designed to function reliably down to -40 degrees Celsius, which covers Ottawa's extreme cold snaps. Heat output for outdoor units typically ranges from 30,000 to 60,000 BTU — far more than indoor units, because much of the heat dissipates into open air. A 40,000 to 50,000 BTU unit creates a comfortable gathering space for 4 to 8 people on a cold Ottawa evening, though you'll notice the heat drops significantly beyond 3 metres from the fireplace.

Material durability matters enormously in Ottawa's climate. Stainless steel construction handles freeze-thaw cycling and moisture far better than mild steel, which rusts quickly in our humid, salty air (salt spreads on roads and roads are near properties). Expect to pay \$2,500 to \$6,000 for a quality stainless steel outdoor gas fireplace unit, before installation and gas line work.

Design and Placement Strategy

Position your outdoor fireplace with wind patterns in mind. If your patio faces south or west, prevailing Ottawa winds from the northwest can blow flames and smoke away from your gathering area. If possible, position the unit so it's sheltered slightly but not so enclosed that heat can't radiate outward. Never install an outdoor fireplace under a roof overhang or covered patio — combustion gases and heat rise directly upward, and a low ceiling can trap them and create carbon monoxide or fire risks.

Clearances matter even outdoors: maintain at least 3 metres from deck railings, fences, and tree branches (which seem far away but grow lower over time). If your patio has a pergola or decorative overhead structure, the fireplace must be at least 3 metres away horizontally or the pergola must be at least 2 metres above the fireplace (check with your contractor on exact requirements).

Seasonal Considerations for Ottawa

Ottawa's outdoor fireplace season realistically runs May through October, though hardy cold-lovers use them into November and even during mild spells in April. Heavy snow and ice can damage outdoor fireplaces if not properly protected — cover the unit with a waterproof, breathable cover designed for outdoor gas appliances during winter storage (November through April). Never use tarps that trap moisture, which accelerates rust. The off-season maintenance is simple but important: drain any water from the gas line, ensure the cover is secure, and inspect the unit in spring before re-lighting.

Total Project Costs for Ottawa

A basic outdoor gas fireplace project in Ottawa runs \$3,500 to \$8,000 installed: roughly \$2,500 to \$6,000 for the unit itself, \$500 to \$1,500 for natural gas line installation (if applicable), \$300 to \$600 for the building permit and

inspection, and \$200 to \$300 for labour and materials to install a propane tank connection if you choose that route. A more premium installation with a stainless steel fireplace, custom surround, or elaborate landscaping can easily reach \$12,000 or more.

Important Warnings

Never install an outdoor fireplace directly against your house, under a deck, or near wooden structures — outdoor fireplaces generate serious radiant heat. Carbon monoxide from an outdoor fireplace disperses into open air and is not a concern (unlike indoor units), but defective units can still produce unsafe levels of carbon dioxide in enclosed spaces, so keep the area well-ventilated and never install one in a semi-enclosed sunroom or gazebo.

Hiring

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- Ottawa Heating Cooling Repair
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Q9

Why does my gas fireplace keep shutting off by itself and how do I fix it?

A gas fireplace that keeps shutting off on its own is usually caused by one of five main issues: a faulty thermocouple or flame sensor that is not detecting the pilot flame, a blocked or dirty pilot orifice preventing proper gas flow, a thermostat or wall control malfunction, low gas pressure to the unit, or in rare cases, a defective gas control valve. The good news is that most of these problems are fixable, but they require a TSSA-licensed gas fitter to diagnose and repair safely.

Why This Matters in Ottawa

Gas fireplace shutdowns are particularly frustrating during Ottawa's long heating season, when you might be relying on the unit as supplemental heat during the coldest months. Unlike wood stoves or electric fireplaces, gas appliances involve pressurized fuel and sensitive electronic safety components, which means troubleshooting requires both technical knowledge and the right diagnostic equipment. Attempting to repair a gas fireplace yourself can expose you to carbon monoxide risks, gas leaks, and appliance damage — not worth the risk when licensed professionals can diagnose the problem quickly and affordably.

The most common culprit is a **thermocouple or flame sensor failure**. The thermocouple is a safety device that detects whether the pilot flame is burning. If it senses no flame, it shuts off the gas supply to prevent unburned gas from accumulating in the firebox (a serious explosion and carbon monoxide hazard). Over time, thermocouples can accumulate dust or carbon deposits, causing them to lose sensitivity and trigger false shutdowns even though the pilot is actually burning. A WETT-certified or TSSA-licensed technician can clean the thermocouple or replace it if damaged — this typically costs \$150 to \$300 for service and parts.

A **blocked pilot orifice** is the second most common cause. The pilot orifice is a tiny nozzle (often smaller than a pin head) that regulates the gas flow to the pilot burner. Dust, debris, or mineral buildup can clog it, causing the pilot flame to burn weakly or inconsistently. This makes the thermocouple lose contact with the flame, triggering the shutdown. Cleaning the orifice requires removing the pilot assembly and using specialized tools — not a DIY job. Service runs \$150 to \$250.

Low gas pressure or a problem with your gas line can also cause repeated shutdowns. If the pressure regulator is failing or the gas line has a partial blockage, the unit may light initially but then shut down when demand increases. A licensed gas fitter can test line pressure with a manometer to confirm this is the issue.

A **faulty thermostat or wall control** may be sending erratic signals to the fireplace's gas control valve. If you are using a remote control or wall-mounted thermostat, the batteries may be dying, the wireless signal may be weak, or the control itself may be failing. Try replacing the batteries first (a free fix), but if shutdowns continue, the control unit may need replacement (\$300 to \$600).

In rare cases, the **gas control valve itself** can fail and require replacement — a more expensive repair (\$400 to \$800) that only a licensed gas fitter should handle.

Before calling a technician, try these simple checks: Make sure the pilot flame is burning (you should see a small blue flame through the access hole — if it is orange, yellow, or flickering, that is a symptom). Check that the thermostat batteries are fresh. Look for any obvious dust or debris around the pilot assembly (though do not attempt to clean it yourself). Ensure the gas line isolation valve (the hand lever on the gas supply) is fully open. If the fireplace is connected to a wall thermostat, make sure it is set to heat and the desired temperature is above the current room temperature.

If none of these simple steps resolve it, **you need a TSSA-licensed gas fitter**. Do not delay — repeated shutdowns can indicate a safety issue that needs professional diagnosis. A service call with diagnostics typically costs \$150 to \$250, and if repair is needed, expect an additional \$100 to \$600+ depending on the part. Many licensed technicians offer free quotes if you describe the problem over the phone, which can help you budget before they arrive.

When you are ready to find a qualified gas fitter in Ottawa, you can browse fireplace and gas technicians through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory — it is a good way to compare local professionals and see their experience with gas fireplace service.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Rrenovatios
- Steven Labelle - Your Complete Home Renovator
- Joe Imerti Contracting

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How often should I have my gas fireplace serviced in Ottawa and what does maintenance include?

Gas Fireplace Service Frequency and Maintenance in Ottawa

Your gas fireplace should be professionally serviced **once per year**, ideally in the spring after the winter heating season ends. If you use your gas fireplace heavily—running it daily or for extended periods during Ottawa's long winters—consider a pre-season inspection and cleaning in early fall (September or October) to catch any issues before you rely on it for comfort during the -25 to -30 degree nights ahead.

Gas fireplaces are generally low-maintenance compared to wood-burning appliances, but Ottawa's climate and heavy winter usage make annual service genuinely important rather than optional. A professional technician can identify small problems—worn ignition components, minor gas line corrosion, draft issues caused by wind patterns along the Ottawa River, or blocked vents—before they become safety hazards or leave you without heat on a brutally cold night. Gas fireplaces don't produce creosote like wood stoves, but they do accumulate dust and debris in the combustion chamber and venting system, especially over a season of regular use.

What a typical annual gas fireplace service includes: A TSSA-licensed gas fitter or fireplace technician will visually inspect the entire appliance for signs of wear, corrosion, or damage. They will clean the burner assembly, removing dust and debris that can affect flame pattern and heat output. They will check the pilot light (or electronic ignition system on newer models) and verify that the flame ignites reliably—weak ignition is a common issue that worsens over time. The technician will inspect the glass doors or viewing window and recommend professional glass cleaning if buildup is heavy. They will verify proper gas pressure and flow using specialized testing equipment to ensure the appliance is operating at design specifications. They will examine the venting system—checking that the exhaust outlet is not blocked by ice, snow, or debris (a critical concern in Ottawa, where winter snow and ice can seal off exterior vents). For direct-vent units, they will inspect the sealed combustion chamber and ensure no air leaks are present. They will test that all controls—the thermostat, wall switch, remote control, and safety shut-offs—function smoothly. Finally, they will verify that carbon monoxide levels are within acceptable ranges using a CO monitor.

The service typically costs **\$150 to \$250** in Ottawa for a standard annual check-up, though prices vary depending on the technician's location and the appliance's age or complexity. If repairs are needed—replacing an ignition module, repairing the gas line, or replacing a faulty thermostat—those are billed separately and can add \$300 to \$800 depending on what requires fixing.

One critical consideration specific to Ottawa: if your gas fireplace sits unused for several months during summer, have it inspected before using it again in fall. Insects, dust, or debris can accumulate in the venting system during the off-season, and a quick pre-season check catches these problems before they affect operation or air quality. Similarly, after a particularly harsh winter with heavy winds or snow, have a technician verify that the external venting outlet is clear and that no snow or ice dams have affected draft.

Never attempt to service a gas fireplace yourself beyond basic cleaning of the viewing window (using only manufacturer-recommended cleaner, never household glass cleaner) or replacing remote control batteries. All inspection, repair, and maintenance work involving the gas appliance, ignition system, gas line, or venting must be performed by a **TSSA-licensed gas fitter**—this is required by Ontario law and essential for your safety. Gas leaks, carbon monoxide accumulation from improper venting, and combustion issues are invisible and deadly. A licensed technician has the equipment and training to detect problems that could kill you in your sleep.

When you're ready to schedule your annual service, you can browse experienced gas fireplace maintenance contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory to find local technicians who serve your area of the National Capital Region.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- JC Carpentry
- Somar Contracting Inc.
- Prism Services
- Treka Construction Group

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Q11

What's the difference between ventless and direct-vent gas fireplaces for Ontario homes?

Ventless and direct-vent gas fireplaces operate on completely different principles, and for Ontario homes — especially in Ottawa — direct-vent is the only safe and sensible choice. Ventless fireplaces release all combustion byproducts directly into your living space, while direct-vent units draw outside air for combustion and exhaust all

exhaust gases back outside through a sealed pipe system.

Why this matters in Ontario's climate and building code: The Ontario Building Code restricts ventless fireplaces for good reason. They are fundamentally different animals from direct-vent units in how they interact with your home's air quality, moisture balance, and heating dynamics — all of which are critical concerns in Ottawa's extreme climate.

A ventless fireplace burns natural gas in your living room and releases the combustion byproducts — water vapor, carbon dioxide, and trace amounts of nitrogen oxides — directly into the air you breathe. A typical ventless fireplace produces roughly 6 to 8 pounds of water vapor per hour of operation. In Ottawa's winters, when homes are sealed tight and humidity is already a challenge (indoor humidity swings between 15 percent in deep winter to 60+ percent in spring), that additional moisture becomes a problem. It condenses on windows, promotes mold growth in wall cavities, and can damage drywall and insulation over time. A family running a ventless fireplace for four hours on a winter evening is pumping 24 to 32 pounds of water into their home — the equivalent of running a pot of water on the stove continuously without venting. Over a heating season, this accumulates into genuine moisture damage.

Direct-vent gas fireplaces solve this entirely. They draw combustion air from outside through a dedicated intake pipe, burn the gas in a sealed firebox, and exhaust all combustion byproducts — water vapor included — back outside through an exhaust pipe. The fireplace is completely isolated from your indoor air. You get the warmth and ambiance of a real fire without any of the moisture, odor, or air quality downsides. In Ottawa's tightly sealed modern homes, direct-vent fireplaces actually improve performance by avoiding the negative pressure issues that can occur when any appliance removes air from the house without replacement.

Practical differences: Direct-vent units typically achieve 70 to 85 percent efficiency (the heat that actually warms your home versus heat lost up the chimney), while ventless units operate at roughly 99 percent efficiency in theory — all the heat stays in the room because there is no exhaust pipe. This efficiency advantage sounds compelling until you realize it comes at the cost of moisture and air quality damage that far outweighs the heating benefit. A direct-vent fireplace costs \$3,500 to \$7,500 installed in Ottawa, while a ventless unit might be \$500 to \$1,000 cheaper — a modest savings that evaporates against the cost of repairing water damage, mold remediation, or replacing moisture-damaged drywall and insulation.

The regulatory and insurance reality: The Ontario Building Code allows ventless fireplaces only under very specific circumstances and with mechanical ventilation that actively removes the moisture and combustion byproducts they produce. This means a ventless fireplace that meets code requires a dedicated exhaust fan to run whenever the fireplace operates — which defeats the entire efficiency advantage and adds electrical costs. More importantly, many insurance companies in Ontario now restrict or refuse coverage for ventless fireplaces, period. If you ever file a moisture or mold claim in a home with a ventless fireplace, your insurer may deny it or exclude it from coverage, arguing that the appliance itself caused the damage. Some mortgage lenders also view ventless

fireplaces negatively for resale value purposes.

Why ventless persists as a temptation: Ventless units require no exterior venting, no chimney, and no complex installation — you can literally plug some models into an outlet and light them. This simplicity is seductive for retrofits or condos where venting is difficult. But the tradeoff is not worth it in Ottawa's climate. If venting is genuinely impossible, an electric fireplace (\$700 to \$3,800 installed) is a far better solution. Modern electric fireplaces produce surprisingly realistic flame effects with LED and holographic technology, require zero venting or gas lines, cost nothing to maintain, and simply plug into an outlet. Yes, they do not provide meaningful heat, but they are infinitely safer and cleaner than ventless gas.

If you are seriously considering a gas fireplace installation for your Ottawa home, look exclusively at direct-vent models. They are the gold standard for safety, air quality, moisture control, and insurance compliance in Ontario — and they will keep your home healthier and more comfortable over the long term. When you are ready to explore direct-vent options with a TSSA-licensed gas fitter, you can browse experienced fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- The Egress Group Inc
- Capitalstoneworks
- Somar Contracting Inc.
- Beauty of gardens

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Q12

What size gas fireplace do I need to heat my main floor in an Ottawa home?

The right size depends on your main floor's square footage, ceiling height, insulation quality, and how much you want the fireplace to contribute to heating versus just providing ambiance — but for most Ottawa homes, a **25,000 to 40,000 BTU direct-vent gas fireplace is appropriate for a typical 400 to 600-square-foot open-concept main floor**, with larger or poorly insulated spaces requiring the higher end of that range.

Here's why this matters in Ottawa specifically: our extreme climate means your heating requirements are genuinely serious. Unlike in milder regions where a fireplace is almost purely decorative, an Ottawa fireplace is actually expected to do real work during the brutal five months from November through March. A gas fireplace won't replace your furnace — and shouldn't be relied upon as your primary heat source — but a properly sized unit can meaningfully supplement your heating system, reduce furnace runtime on less extreme days, and provide genuine warmth and comfort during extended cold snaps. Getting the size wrong in either direction creates problems: an undersized unit will disappoint you when you expect heat, while an oversized unit will overheat the room on mild days, leading you to turn it off frequently (which wastes money and defeats the purpose of having it).

To estimate the right size, start with your main floor's dimensions. Measure length, width, and note your ceiling height. Multiply length by width to get square footage. If you have vaulted or cathedral ceilings, add 20 to 30 percent to that number because you're heating significantly more cubic volume. A typical single-storey Ottawa home with 8-foot ceilings needs roughly **40 to 50 BTU per square foot** for supplemental heating in our climate. So a 500-square-foot open-concept main floor ($500 \times 50 = 25,000$ BTU) would benefit from a 25,000 to 30,000 BTU fireplace, while a 600-square-foot main floor might need 30,000 to 40,000 BTU. If your home was built before 1990 and has older insulation, single-pane windows, or significant air leakage, add 5,000 to 10,000 BTU to compensate. If you've renovated with modern insulation, triple-pane windows, and air sealing, you can go slightly lower.

Heat output alone isn't the whole story — actual heating performance depends heavily on fireplace design and installation location. A direct-vent gas fireplace draws combustion air from outside and exhausts through sealed pipes, meaning it doesn't create negative pressure in your home or pull heated air up the chimney like a traditional open fireplace would. This makes direct-vent units far more efficient for actual heating (roughly 70 to 85 percent efficiency). A linear direct-vent fireplace with a wide viewing area (48 to 60 inches across) will distribute heat more evenly across a large open space than a traditional vertical unit. The location matters too — a fireplace in a central location on your main floor radiates heat more effectively than one tucked into a corner. If you have an open stairwell connecting your main floor to a second storey, some heat will naturally rise, which can be helpful for warming upstairs rooms but means you lose some of the heating benefit for your main floor.

Watch out for these common sizing mistakes in Ottawa homes. Many homeowners buy oversized fireplaces (45,000 to 50,000 BTU) thinking "bigger is better," then find the main floor becomes unbearably hot on days above -10 degrees Celsius, forcing them to turn the fireplace off — which defeats the purpose and adds to your installed cost for no benefit. Conversely, some homeowners significantly undersize (15,000 to 20,000 BTU) expecting a fireplace to function as a space heater, then become frustrated when it barely takes the chill off on January mornings. The sweet spot in Ottawa is usually the mid-range — enough output to meaningfully reduce furnace runtime on moderately cold days, but not so much that the fireplace becomes unusable during shoulder season (April, October, November) or mild winter spells.

Your building envelope and thermostat control also affect how much heating capacity you actually need. If your home is particularly drafty or has high ceilings with significant heat loss, you'll benefit from the higher BTU output. Conversely, if you have good insulation and air sealing, a moderate fireplace will do substantial work. Modern gas fireplaces often come with remote controls, wall thermostats, or even smart controls that allow you to modulate heat output rather than running at full capacity, so a fireplace sized toward the middle-to-upper range of your needs gives you flexibility to turn it down when outdoor temperatures are mild or your furnace is keeping up fine on its own.

Pricing for a direct-vent gas fireplace in Ottawa typically runs **\$3,500 to \$7,500 installed for a standard 25,000 to 40,000 BTU unit**, with premium linear fireplaces ranging higher. Installation costs include the unit itself, the sealed venting system (either through an exterior wall or up through the roof), the gas line connection, and labour. If you're installing into an existing masonry fireplace as an insert rather than a new built-in, costs run \$2,500 to \$5,500 because you're avoiding the need to frame and finish around a new unit.

The most practical step forward is to get a written estimate from a professional gas fitter that includes your home's square footage, ceiling height, current insulation condition, and specific BTU recommendation with a brief explanation of why that wattage makes sense for your space. A qualified installer can also verify your existing gas line capacity and recommend where in your main floor the fireplace should be located for optimal heat distribution. If you'd like to connect with experienced gas fitters and fireplace installers across Ottawa and surrounding communities, you can browse contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory — this gives you a way to compare options and reach out directly with your home's specific details.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Core Climate Ltd.
- Best Hand2Hand moving company
- Vanguard Environmental

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Will a gas fireplace still work during an Ottawa power outage in the middle of winter?

A gas fireplace will continue to produce heat and flame during a winter power outage in Ottawa — but only if it is a standing pilot model, and even then with significant limitations. If your gas fireplace has electronic ignition that requires constant electricity, it will not light or operate without power, which is a critical vulnerability during Ottawa ice storms when extended outages are common.

Here is why this matters in Ottawa's climate: Winter power outages are not hypothetical risks — the 1998 ice storm knocked out power for weeks across the region, and major outages happen roughly every five to seven years. If your gas fireplace is your primary heat source or a crucial backup during an extended winter outage, losing the ability to light a fire could be dangerous. Conversely, a standing pilot gas fireplace is one of the few heating appliances that will keep working when the grid goes down, which is why some Ottawa families specifically choose them for this reason.

Standing pilot models work without electricity because the pilot flame is lit continuously by a small amount of gas flowing through a thermocouple (a heat-sensing device that generates a tiny electrical current without needing external power). When you turn on the fireplace, that small current opens the main gas valve. These fireplaces use manual controls — typically a wall knob or lever — with no electronic switches or ignition systems. A standing pilot model will heat your room and provide light during a power outage, though the heat output is usually more modest than a full-capacity fireplace burning at maximum BTU.

Electronic ignition models do not work without power. Most modern gas fireplaces use electronic ignition systems powered by wall outlets or hard-wired circuits. When the power goes out, the ignition system shuts down and the fireplace cannot light, even though there is still gas available. Some electronic models have battery backup systems that allow a brief window to light the pilot (typically 30 to 60 seconds of backup power), but once you turn off the fireplace or the batteries drain, you cannot relight it. After the power comes back on, the system resets and works normally.

Remote-controlled and smart gas fireplaces absolutely require electricity. Any fireplace with a remote, wall-mounted thermostat, or WiFi connectivity is electronically powered and will not operate during an outage. These models prioritize convenience and temperature precision over resilience, which is a reasonable tradeoff for most Ottawa homeowners — but it is important to know the limitation upfront.

If you are buying a gas fireplace with power outage reliability in mind, specifically request a standing pilot model and confirm that it can be operated with manual controls (knob or lever) during an outage. Ask the installer to demonstrate the manual lighting procedure before they leave. However, standing pilot models are becoming

increasingly rare in new installations because they waste gas by burning the pilot flame continuously (even when the fireplace is off), and they lack the convenience and efficiency of modern electronic models.

A practical middle-ground strategy for Ottawa homeowners is to keep a wood stove or fireplace insert as a secondary heating source and install a standing pilot gas fireplace as a primary heat source or vice versa. A battery-powered backup generator (2,000 to 5,000 watts) can also keep an electronic gas fireplace running during a short outage, though it will not keep your whole house heated. If your gas fireplace is truly your only heat backup during a winter outage, a standing pilot model is worth the efficiency tradeoff — the cost difference between standing pilot and electronic ignition models is typically \$500 to \$1,500 installed, and that insurance against being without heat during a week-long ice storm has real value in Ottawa's climate.

When you are ready to explore gas fireplace options that match your outage resilience needs, fireplace contractors in the Ottawa Construction Network directory can walk you through the specific models they install and their power-outage performance.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- The Egress Group Inc
- Edenza Landscaping
- Colonnade Security Inc
- Anchor Home Comfort

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Q14

Is a direct vent gas fireplace more efficient than a traditional B-vent for Ottawa's climate?

Yes — a direct-vent gas fireplace is substantially more efficient than a B-vent unit, and the difference becomes even more pronounced in Ottawa's extreme climate. Direct-vent fireplaces typically achieve 70 to 85 percent thermal efficiency, while B-vent units usually top out at 50 to 70 percent. Over a long Ottawa winter, that efficiency gap translates into real energy savings and measurable differences in your heating costs.

Here's why this matters specifically for Ottawa. A B-vent fireplace draws combustion air from inside your home, which means every time the fireplace runs, it is pulling heated air from your living space, burning it in the appliance, and sending those combustion byproducts up the chimney with their heat energy intact. In Ottawa's climate, where you might run a fireplace for six months or more out of the year, this is a continuous drain on your home's heat. You are paying to heat air that immediately exits through the chimney. Additionally, B-vent fireplaces create negative pressure in the home — as the fireplace exhausts indoor air up the chimney, it can draw outside air into the house through cracks, electrical outlets, and other gaps. On a -25 degree Ottawa night, you are pulling arctic air into your home to replace what the fireplace exhausted. Modern Ottawa homes are also increasingly tight and well-sealed, which amplifies this negative pressure problem. B-vent units can contribute to indoor air quality issues, moisture problems, and even backdrafting in certain conditions.

A direct-vent fireplace is fundamentally different. It draws all combustion air from outside through a dedicated intake pipe, typically drawing from an area just below the exhaust outlet. The unit is completely sealed from your home's interior, meaning it consumes zero household air and creates no negative pressure. All the heat generated by combustion stays in the home rather than venting away with the exhaust gases. In Ottawa's climate, this sealed design prevents the loss of heated indoor air and eliminates the cold air infiltration that makes B-vent fireplaces problematic in tight, well-insulated homes. Direct-vent units also perform reliably even during extreme cold — they don't rely on natural draft created by temperature difference between the home and outside, so they work consistently even during Ottawa's worst winter inversions and calm, cold nights when draft conditions are poor.

The real-world performance difference is clear over a heating season. A direct-vent fireplace running 5 to 6 hours daily through a typical Ottawa winter might use 15 to 20 percent less energy than a B-vent unit doing the same job, depending on the specific appliance and how often you are actively heating with it versus just enjoying it for ambiance. If you are considering a fireplace primarily as supplemental heat rather than pure aesthetics, direct-vent is the correct choice for Ottawa. The slightly higher installation cost — direct-vent units typically run \$500 to \$1,500 more than comparable B-vent models — pays itself back within 5 to 7 years through reduced energy consumption.

One important caveat: B-vent performance degrades significantly if your home has been heavily weatherized or retrofitted for energy efficiency in recent years. If you have replaced windows, added insulation, sealed air leaks, or installed a heat recovery ventilation (HRV) system, a B-vent fireplace becomes an even worse choice for your space because your tight home amplifies the negative pressure and cold air infiltration problems. Direct-vent is the clear winner in updated Ottawa homes.

From an installation perspective, direct-vent requires an exterior vent termination (usually through an exterior wall or roof) and a sealed combustion air intake, which adds some complexity and cost compared to B-vent's simpler single-pipe roof penetration. However, this extra infrastructure is precisely what makes direct-vent superior in Ottawa's climate. Local gas fitters understand these nuances well and can walk you through whether direct-vent

makes sense for your specific home and how it would integrate with your existing heating system. If you are ready to explore direct-vent options with a qualified installer, you can browse experienced gas fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- The Egress Group Inc
- Denys Builds Designs Renovations
- Demontigny Carpentry
- Coliseum concrete & interlock

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Q15

What permits are required to install a gas fireplace in an Ottawa residential property?

Gas Fireplace Permits in Ottawa

Installing a gas fireplace in an Ottawa home involves permits and licensing from multiple regulatory bodies, and understanding which ones apply to your project is essential for legal compliance, insurance coverage, and safety.

The **Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA)** is the primary regulator for gas work in Ontario, and it is the most critical requirement for any gas fireplace installation. Any new gas fireplace, gas insert, gas log set, or modification to a gas line must be installed by a **TSSA-licensed gas fitter** holding either a G2 (residential) or G3 (commercial) certificate. This is not a suggestion — it is the law in Ontario. Unlicensed gas work is illegal, automatically voids your home insurance if discovered, and creates serious risks of carbon monoxide poisoning, gas leaks, and explosion. After installation, the licensed gas fitter must apply a TSSA compliance label to the appliance, and you will receive documentation confirming the work was performed legally and safely.

The **City of Ottawa Building Department** may require a permit depending on the scope of your project. A new fireplace installation with structural modifications (like building a new chimney, relocating existing framing, or adding a hearth extension) typically requires a building permit. A gas insert installed into an existing masonry fireplace, or a

direct-vent gas unit mounted on an existing exterior wall with no structural changes, often falls into a lower-risk category and may require only a simple inspections notification rather than a full permit. The safest approach is to contact the City of Ottawa Building Code Services at 3-1-1 or visit ottawa.ca before work begins — a five-minute call can clarify whether your specific project requires a permit, and it prevents costly issues later. Permit fees in Ottawa typically run \$200 to \$600 depending on project complexity.

If your fireplace installation includes electrical work — running a dedicated circuit for an ignition system, hardwiring a blower fan, or installing a wall-mounted control switch — an **ESA (Electrical Safety Authority)** permit is required, and all electrical work must be performed by an ESA-licensed electrician. Many gas fireplace installations do include basic electrical work, so clarify this with your contractor upfront.

If your home is located in a **heritage conservation district** — including areas like the Glebe, Sandy Hill, New Edinburgh, or Rockcliffe Park — additional restrictions may apply to visible exterior components of the fireplace system, especially the vent pipe and chimney cap. Heritage districts in Ottawa require design approval before exterior modifications that affect the character of the streetscape. Contact the City of Ottawa Heritage Planning office early if you are in a designated area.

Your **homeowner's insurance company** should be notified of the installation, and you should provide proof that the work was completed by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter. Insurance companies use TSSA licensing as evidence that the installation meets safety standards. This is also a good time to confirm that your policy covers the new fireplace.

The Ontario Building Code also specifies technical requirements for the installation itself: proper clearances from combustibles (typically 1 metre for direct-vent units, though this varies by manufacturer), chimney venting height (the 3-2-10 rule — your chimney must extend at least 3 feet above the roof penetration and at least 2 feet higher than any structure within 10 feet), hearth extension dimensions, and support structure specifications. A qualified TSSA-licensed gas fitter will know these requirements and ensure your installation meets code.

Timeline and scheduling matter in Ottawa. Since chimney venting work (if required) is best done during the warmer construction season of May through October, spring and early fall are ideal times to schedule gas fireplace installations. If you need the fireplace installed before winter, plan at least two months ahead to accommodate permitting, material lead times, and contractor availability — the pressure of the first cold snap drives up costs and reduces scheduling flexibility in October and November.

When you have settled on a gas fitter and contractor, confirm in writing that they will obtain all necessary permits, that the work will include TSSA licensing and compliance labeling, and that the final invoice will include documentation of the licensed gas fitter's work. A reputable contractor will handle permitting as part of the service and build the cost into their quote.

For connecting with experienced, local gas fitters and fireplace installers in Ottawa who understand the city's permitting requirements and can navigate TSSA licensing properly, you can browse fireplace contractors through the **Ottawa Construction Network directory** at justynrookcontracting.com/directory. This gives you access to profiles of local professionals who can discuss your specific project and permit needs upfront.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- JC Carpentry
- Innovation Concrete Grind & Polish
- Somar Contracting Inc.
- Galico Home Comfort Inc.

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How often should I service my gas fireplace in Ottawa and what does annual maintenance cost?

Your gas fireplace should be professionally serviced once per year, ideally in spring (April-May) before the heating season ends or in early fall (August-September) before you start using it regularly in October. Annual maintenance is essential for safety, efficiency, and longevity — gas appliances accumulate dust, debris, and combustion byproducts that affect performance and can create carbon monoxide risks if left unaddressed.

Why Annual Service Matters in Ottawa's Climate

Ottawa's extreme winter demands mean homeowners rely heavily on their gas fireplaces as supplemental heat, often running them multiple hours per day from October through March. That extended operating season means more dust accumulation in the burner assembly, more carbon buildup on the glass and reflectors, and more wear on the ignition system and blower fan than in milder climates. A gas fireplace that works flawlessly in November might develop a stubborn ignition problem by February if it hasn't been properly maintained. The freeze-thaw cycles that damage masonry chimneys also stress the metal components of direct-vent systems — condensation forms on exterior vent pipes during temperature swings, and if the vent isn't properly sealed or the condensate drain isn't clear, water can back up into the fireplace itself.

The other critical reason for annual service in Ottawa is safety verification. Carbon monoxide is colourless and odourless — you cannot smell a problem. A TSSA-licensed gas technician will inspect the burner assembly, heat exchanger, and flue passage for cracks or deterioration that might allow carbon monoxide to leak into your home. They will also verify that the direct-vent system is properly sealed and that combustion gases are being safely exhausted outdoors rather than seeping into your living space.

Annual gas fireplace maintenance in Ottawa costs \$150 to \$250 for a standard inspection, cleaning, and minor adjustments. This typically includes: cleaning the glass door and interior reflectors, inspecting and cleaning the burner and burner ports, testing the ignition system, checking the thermostat and wall control function, inspecting the direct-vent piping for leaks or corrosion, clearing any condensate drains, verifying proper gas pressure and heat output, and confirming that all safety controls are functioning. If repairs are needed beyond routine maintenance — such as replacing a faulty ignition electrode, repairing a cracked heat exchanger, or replacing a blower motor — those are billed separately, typically \$200 to \$600 depending on the part.

Timing is everything in Ottawa. Book your service in August or early September, before the rush of October calls. Once the first cold snap hits and everyone's fireplace stops working, wait times stretch to three or four weeks, and some contractors charge premium rates for emergency calls. A preventative service appointment in late summer ensures your fireplace is ready when you need it most.

Do not skip this maintenance thinking you can save money. A gas fireplace that hasn't been serviced in three years may develop a delayed ignition problem (the burner takes 5-10 seconds to light instead of instantly igniting), which creates a small explosion-like pop inside the appliance — unsettling and a sign that something is wrong with the ignition timing. Worse, a clogged or corroded heat exchanger can allow carbon monoxide to infiltrate your home without any obvious sign. People have died from CO poisoning while sitting in front of what they thought was a safe, functioning gas fireplace. Annual service is not a luxury expense — it is a health and safety essential.

Some gas fireplaces have warranty requirements that explicitly demand annual professional maintenance. If yours does, skipping service voids the manufacturer's coverage, leaving you responsible for the full replacement cost of any failed component — potentially \$1,500 to \$3,000 for a major part like a heat exchanger or control module.

What you can do yourself between professional visits: Clean the exterior glass with a microfiber cloth and manufacturer-recommended cleaner (never household glass cleaner, which leaves residue and can damage coatings), check that the glass door closes properly and the gasket is not cracked, ensure the blower fan spins freely when you turn on the unit, listen for any unusual sounds or delays in ignition, verify that the flame is blue (not orange or yellow, which indicates a combustion problem), test your wall thermostat to confirm it is activating the fireplace at the set temperature, and make sure your carbon monoxide detectors are functioning and the batteries are fresh. If you notice anything abnormal — a delay in ignition, a strange smell, discoloured flames, or a hesitant blower fan — contact a TSSA-licensed gas technician right away rather than waiting for your scheduled annual service.

When you are ready to book your spring or fall maintenance appointment, you can browse gas fireplace service technicians through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory to find TSSA-licensed professionals in your area who handle routine fireplace maintenance and repairs.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Humble Homes - property maintenance
- Galico Home Comfort Inc.
- JMY Renovations

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Can a gas fireplace be my primary heat source during Ottawa's minus 30 degree winters?

A gas fireplace can provide meaningful supplemental heating during Ottawa's brutal winters, but it cannot realistically serve as your primary heat source for a -30 degree climate — the output simply isn't sufficient to heat an entire home when temperatures plummet for weeks at a time. Most direct-vent gas fireplaces produce between 20,000 and 35,000 BTU of heat output, which is comfortable warmth for a single room or living area but falls far short of the 40,000 to 100,000+ BTU needed to heat a typical Ottawa home when the outdoor temperature drops below -20 degrees Celsius.

Here's why this matters in Ottawa specifically: your home loses heat through walls, windows, and roof at a rate proportional to the temperature difference between inside and outside. When it's -30 outside and you want to maintain 21 degrees inside, that 51-degree difference creates enormous heat loss. A well-insulated modern home might lose 40,000 to 60,000 BTU per hour under those conditions. A gas fireplace producing 30,000 BTU simply cannot keep pace. During Ottawa's deep winter, when outdoor temperatures stay below -20 for days or weeks, you would need to shut off all other heating and live in a single room to stay warm using only a gas fireplace — and you would still be uncomfortable.

Gas fireplaces excel as supplemental heat sources. Running a direct-vent gas fireplace for 4 to 6 hours on a -20 degree evening can meaningfully reduce your furnace run time, saving 15 to 25 percent on natural gas costs during the heating season. This translates to real savings — if your household heating bill is \$2,000 per winter, thoughtful use of a gas fireplace could save \$300 to \$500. On shoulder seasons like October and May, when overnight temperatures dip to 5 to 10 degrees but daytime highs reach 12 to 18 degrees, a gas fireplace can keep your home comfortable without firing up the furnace at all. These are genuinely valuable benefits.

For primary heat in Ottawa, you need your furnace, heat pump, or a wood stove or pellet stove running as a primary appliance. If you are considering a gas fireplace primarily for heating, you might also explore whether a wood stove or pellet insert would better suit your needs. A modern EPA-certified wood stove produces 25,000 to 40,000 BTU and can be sized and operated to provide genuine supplemental or even primary heat in an open-concept home or as the main heat source in a smaller cottage or cabin. Pellet stoves offer the advantage of automated fuel feed and thermostat control, making them more convenient than wood stoves if you want to run them as a primary heating appliance.

One critical consideration: natural gas appliances generate carbon monoxide as a byproduct of combustion. In a direct-vent gas fireplace, all combustion gases are vented outside through a sealed double-wall pipe, so carbon monoxide risk is minimal when the system is properly installed and maintained. However, if you were to try

operating a gas fireplace continuously as a primary heat source and something went wrong — a cracked heat exchanger, a failed vent pipe, or a backdraft caused by negative pressure in your home — carbon monoxide could accumulate quickly. This is why relying on a gas fireplace as primary heat is not just inefficient, it introduces unnecessary safety risks.

If your main goal is reducing heating costs during Ottawa winters, a gas fireplace is a wise investment in comfort and efficiency, but budget \$3,500 to \$7,500 for a quality installed unit and plan to use it thoughtfully — running it during the evening hours when you are home and want warmth, rather than trying to heat the entire house around the clock. Keep your furnace in good working order as your primary heat source, and let the fireplace do what it does best: provide zone heating and ambiance on cold Ottawa nights.

If you're exploring heating options or considering whether a gas fireplace, wood stove, or pellet stove makes sense for your specific home and heating needs, homeowners in the Ottawa area can browse experienced fireplace and heating specialists through the Ottawa Construction Network directory — many contractors can assess your home's heating profile and recommend the most practical solution for your situation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- The Egress Group Inc
- Home Front Services
- Colonnade Security Inc
- Ottawa Demolition Corp.

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Q18

What size gas fireplace do I need to heat a 1,500 square foot Ottawa home during winter?

A gas fireplace alone will not adequately heat a 1,500 square-foot Ottawa home during winter — but the right size unit can meaningfully supplement your central heating system and reduce heating costs during the shoulder seasons and mild winter days.

Why Gas Fireplaces Are Supplemental Heat in Ottawa

Ottawa's winter temperatures regularly drop to -25 to -30 degrees Celsius, and a typical home loses tremendous heat through walls, windows, and air leakage. A gas fireplace's heating capacity is measured in BTU (British Thermal Units). Most direct-vent gas fireplaces for residential use produce 25,000 to 40,000 BTU of heat output. To put this in perspective, a 40,000 BTU gas fireplace can heat roughly 500 to 800 square feet effectively — only about one-third to one-half of your home. Central heating systems for a 1,500 square-foot Ottawa home typically need 60,000 to 90,000 BTU per hour during peak winter demand, depending on insulation, window quality, and air tightness. This is why even high-end gas fireplaces are comfort and ambiance features first, supplemental heating second.

The Right Size for Your Space

For a 1,500 square-foot home, aim for a gas fireplace in the **35,000 to 45,000 BTU range**. Units in this range are sized appropriately for an open living or great room (roughly 400 to 600 square feet) and will provide genuine warmth that noticeably reduces the need to run your furnace on mild winter days or shoulder season mornings. A 25,000 to 30,000 BTU unit would feel underpowered and frustrating — it would produce pleasant ambiance but minimal heating impact. Anything over 50,000 BTU may be overkill for a single room and could create uncomfortable hot spots while most of the home remains cold.

Direct-Vent vs. B-Vent Heating Efficiency

Direct-vent gas fireplaces (which draw outside air for combustion and vent exhaust outside through sealed pipes) deliver roughly 70 to 80 percent of their BTU output into your living space. B-vent units (which draw indoor air for combustion) are slightly less efficient at moving heat into the room because some heat escapes up the vent, but the difference is marginal. For heating purposes in Ottawa, both perform similarly — the real advantage of direct-vent is indoor air quality and safety, not heating efficiency.

Realistic Heating Expectations

A 40,000 BTU gas fireplace running at full output produces roughly 28,000 to 32,000 BTU of usable room heat (accounting for vent losses). In an open-concept living area, this might raise room temperature by 5 to 12 degrees Fahrenheit above ambient — enough to make a real difference on a mild winter day or early December evening, but not enough to heat your home independently during a January deep freeze. Most Ottawa homeowners with gas fireplaces run them on evenings and weekends during shoulder seasons (October, November, March, April) for comfort and ambiance, and then switch to furnace-only operation during the coldest months of January and February. This hybrid approach reduces heating costs by roughly 10 to 15 percent annually, depending on usage patterns.

Cost and Installation Considerations

A quality 35,000 to 45,000 BTU direct-vent gas fireplace installed in your home runs **\$3,500 to \$7,500 fully installed** in Ottawa, including the fireplace unit, venting materials, gas line connection, and TSSA inspection. Linear (long) fireplaces are more expensive (often \$5,000 to \$12,000) but create a more dramatic focal point and distribute heat more evenly across a larger space. If you already have a masonry fireplace, converting it to gas with an insert runs \$2,500 to \$5,500 and is often the most cost-effective option.

The Carbon Monoxide Reality

Any gas fireplace must be installed by a **TSSA-licensed gas fitter** — this is not negotiable in Ontario. Gas work is regulated by law, and unlicensed installations void your home insurance and create carbon monoxide risks. Carbon monoxide is odourless and deadly; improper gas appliance installation kills people quietly in their sleep. Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector on every level of your home, especially in bedrooms near the fireplace.

If you're ready to explore the right fireplace size and type for your specific space, you can browse experienced gas fireplace installers through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to compare options and get detailed quotes based on your home's layout and heating goals.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- JC Carpentry
- BFI Renovations
- ALM Construction & Landscaping Inc.
- Eastern Residential Solution

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Do I need a TSSA-licensed technician to install a gas fireplace in Ontario?

Yes, absolutely — you must use a TSSA-licensed gas fitter (holding a G2 or G3 certificate) for any gas fireplace installation, modification, or service work in Ontario. This is not a suggestion or best practice; it is a legal requirement under Ontario law. Any gas work performed by an unlicensed person is illegal, will void your home insurance, and creates serious safety risks including carbon monoxide poisoning and gas explosions.

Why This Matters in Ottawa

Ottawa winters are long and cold, and many homeowners rely on gas fireplaces as supplemental heating during the -20 to -30 degree stretches that can last weeks. A properly installed gas fireplace by a licensed technician is safe and reliable; an improperly installed one is a silent killer. Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odourless, colourless gas produced when fuel burns incompletely — it can seep into your living space if venting is compromised, if combustion air intake is blocked, or if the appliance itself is faulty. In Ottawa's tight, well-sealed modern homes, CO risks are even higher because there is less air exchange to dilute any leaks. The TSSA licensing requirement exists because gas is inherently dangerous and mistakes are often fatal.

Beyond safety, TSSA compliance is essential for insurance coverage. If your home catches fire or someone is injured in a carbon monoxide incident, and your insurance company discovers the gas work was not done by a licensed technician, your claim will be denied — you will be personally liable for all damages. Resale value also suffers; any home inspector worth their fee will flag unlicensed gas work as a major red flag, and many buyers will not close on a property with code violations.

What Licensed Gas Fitter Work Includes

A TSSA-licensed gas fitter will handle the entire installation: running gas lines from your meter to the fireplace location (or connecting to existing lines if applicable), performing a gas-tightness test to ensure no leaks anywhere in the system, setting proper pressure and flow rates to the appliance, installing or venting the gas fireplace according to manufacturer specifications and the Ontario Building Code, and finally tagging the appliance with a TSSA compliance label once all work passes inspection. You should receive documentation confirming the technician's license number and the date of completion. Keep this paperwork for your records and provide it to your insurance company.

Gas fireplace installation costs in Ottawa run \$3,500 to \$7,500 for a standard direct-vent unit, and a significant portion of that cost covers the licensed technician's labour, gas line work, and TSSA compliance requirements. Do not be tempted to save money by hiring an unlicensed handyman, a general contractor who claims to know gas work, or a family friend with experience — the savings are never worth the legal, insurance, and safety liability.

What to Look For

When you contact a gas fitter, confirm they hold an active TSSA G2 (natural gas) or G3 (propane) certificate — ask to see it or verify through the TSSA website. Get a written quote that specifies the exact scope of work, the location of the gas line run, the type of fireplace (direct-vent, B-vent, etc.), and confirmation that the work includes the TSSA compliance tag and inspection. Reputable gas fitters in Ottawa will have no problem providing this documentation — if they hesitate or seem evasive about licensing, walk away immediately.

When you are ready to move forward with an installation, you can browse fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory, which includes licensed gas fitters and fireplace installers who serve the Ottawa area.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- The Egress Group Inc
- Ottawa Heating Cooling Repair
- Coliseum concrete & interlock
- Best Hand2Hand moving company

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Q20

How much does it cost to convert a wood-burning fireplace to gas in Ottawa?

Converting an existing wood-burning fireplace to gas in Ottawa typically costs **\$3,000 to \$7,000 installed**, depending on whether you're installing a gas insert (the most common approach) or performing a full firebox conversion. A gas insert — which slides into your existing masonry fireplace and vents through the chimney — usually runs \$2,500 to \$5,500 installed, while a complete firebox conversion with custom gas lines and direct-vent venting can reach \$5,000 to \$7,000 or more.

Why Convert in Ottawa?

The case for converting a wood-burning fireplace to gas is compelling in Ottawa's climate. A wood fireplace operates at only 30 to 40 percent efficiency — most of the heat you generate goes straight up the chimney, while the appliance simultaneously creates negative pressure that pulls warm, conditioned air out of your home. A modern gas fireplace insert, by contrast, operates at 70 to 85 percent efficiency and produces dramatically more usable heat from the same firebox footprint. In Ottawa winters, where you're burning a fire for six or seven months of the year, that efficiency difference translates into real money saved on supplemental heating costs.

Gas is also far more convenient than wood. You get instant ignition with a wall switch or remote, no ash cleanup, no creosote buildup requiring annual chimney sweeps, and no need to source, season, and store 4 to 8 cords of firewood annually. The ambiance is nearly identical to a wood fire — modern gas inserts produce realistic flame effects with ceramic logs and embers — and you still get the psychological and emotional comfort of gathering around a fire on a bitter Ottawa night.

What's Included in the Cost

A gas insert installation includes the insert unit itself (\$1,500 to \$3,500), labor to remove the wood stove or old insert if present, installation of the insert into the firebox, venting materials (typically a flexible stainless steel liner that runs up your existing chimney), gas line extension from your existing line to the fireplace location (or installation of a new gas line if one doesn't exist nearby), a TSSA compliance inspection and tagging by a licensed gas fitter, and operational testing. Some contractors include a basic hearth surround update or touch-up; others charge separately for cosmetic work. The chimney itself usually doesn't require major work — the existing masonry and structure remain intact — though the chimney sweep and inspection before installation typically run \$200 to \$350 extra.

Key Considerations for Ottawa Homeowners

You must hire a **TSSA-licensed gas fitter (G2 or G3 certificate)** for all gas work — this is not optional in Ontario, and unlicensed gas work voids your home insurance and creates serious carbon monoxide and explosion hazards. After installation, the fitter must tag the appliance with a TSSA compliance label. Insist on seeing this documentation.

Your existing chimney needs to be in reasonably sound condition. If your masonry is severely deteriorated, cracked, or crumbling from Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles, you may need chimney repair or relining before a gas insert can be safely installed. A Level 1 WETT inspection (\$250 to \$450) before work begins will identify structural issues. If the chimney requires relining — common in older Ottawa homes — add \$2,000 to \$5,000 to your total project cost.

Gas line routing matters for both cost and aesthetics. If your gas meter is on the opposite side of your house from the fireplace, or if the line must run through finished living space, costs climb significantly. A short gas line run

(under 20 feet) adds \$300 to \$600; a longer run or one requiring wall and floor penetrations can add \$800 to \$1,500. Some homeowners choose to run the line externally and hide it with trim or plantings, which can reduce costs slightly.

Check whether your homeowner's insurance or mortgage lender has preferences regarding appliance type. Some policies incentivize gas conversions because gas fireplaces eliminate creosote and chimney fire risks. A few older policies may have restrictions on gas appliances in certain situations — worth a quick call to your insurer before committing.

Timeline and Seasonal Considerations

Gas insert installations typically take one to three days once the professional arrives — the actual work is faster than wood stove installation because you're not building a complete chimney run. However, scheduling can be challenging. Many Ottawa fireplace contractors are booked solid from September through November as homeowners rush to install heating before winter. If you're considering a conversion, book in June or July for a late summer or early fall installation, giving you time for any necessary chimney repairs and avoiding the autumn crunch.

When Conversion Might Not Be Ideal

If you genuinely love burning wood and have reliable access to properly seasoned firewood, a wood-burning fireplace or insert may still be your preference despite lower efficiency — that's a personal choice rooted in comfort and tradition, not a practical failing. Conversely, if your wood fireplace is actively dangerous (severe chimney deterioration, ineffective damper, creosote buildup from years of neglect), conversion often costs less than bringing the wood fireplace fully back to safe working condition through relining, repairs, and rebuilding.

The beauty of a conversion is that you retain your fireplace's visual presence and functionality while eliminating the labor, risk, and inefficiency of wood burning in Ottawa's demanding climate. If you'd like to explore specific gas insert options or connect with a TSSA-licensed gas fitter in the Ottawa area who handles conversions regularly, you can browse fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to compare options and get firm quotes tailored to your specific chimney and gas line situation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Floor-2-Wall Inc

- Dump n Dash Hauling
- Regimbal

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Q21

What is the price difference between a direct vent and B-vent gas fireplace in Ottawa?

A direct-vent gas fireplace typically costs **\$500 to \$1,500 more** than a comparable B-vent model in Ottawa, though both fall within the broader \$3,500 to \$7,500 installed range for standard gas fireplaces. The price difference reflects the additional materials and labour required for direct-vent installation, but that upfront investment pays dividends in efficiency and safety for Ottawa homeowners.

The cost premium exists because direct-vent units require a sealed, double-wall exhaust pipe that runs either horizontally through an exterior wall or vertically through the roof, plus exterior trim kits and materials that are more sophisticated than a B-vent pipe. A B-vent (natural draft) installation uses a simpler single-wall metal pipe that also exits through the roof, which is slightly cheaper to purchase and install. However, the true cost difference extends well beyond the initial price tag.

Why the price gap matters in Ottawa's climate: B-vent fireplaces draw combustion air from inside your home, which means they consume heated air during winter — air you've paid to warm. In Ottawa's extreme cold, this matters more than in milder climates because your furnace must work harder to replace that lost warm air, increasing your heating costs all season long. Direct-vent units draw fresh air from outside and exhaust through a sealed system, so they do not steal your heated indoor air. Over a heating season, a direct-vent fireplace can offset much of its installation premium through lower heating costs. Additionally, direct-vent units do not create negative pressure inside your home, which is increasingly important in modern, tightly sealed Ottawa homes — negative pressure can cause backdrafting of other gas appliances like your water heater or furnace, creating serious carbon monoxide risks.

B-vent fireplaces are more affordable upfront and work adequately in homes with good air circulation, but they are considered a less efficient choice in Ottawa's heating-intensive climate. If you plan to use your fireplace as genuine supplemental heat during Ottawa's long winters, or if you expect to stay in your home for more than five years, the direct-vent option usually represents better long-term value despite the higher initial cost.

When comparing quotes from fireplace professionals in Ottawa, always ask installers to clarify what is included in their pricing — venting materials, exterior trim, gas line modifications, hearth preparation, and labour can vary significantly between contractors and affect the final cost difference between the two venting types. Getting three written quotes that itemize these costs will give you the clearest picture of actual pricing in your situation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Vanguard Environmental
- Denys Builds Designs Renovations
- Treka Construction Group

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How much does it cost to install a new gas fireplace in an Ottawa home?

Gas Fireplace Installation Costs in Ottawa

A new direct-vent gas fireplace installation in Ottawa typically costs between **\$3,500 and \$7,500 installed** for a standard unit, while premium linear models run **\$5,000 to \$12,000**. These prices include the fireplace unit itself, venting materials, gas line installation or connection, hearth pad, labour, and basic finishing. If you're converting an existing masonry fireplace to a gas insert instead, you're looking at **\$2,500 to \$5,500 installed** — a more affordable option that reuses your existing chimney structure.

Why Gas Fireplace Costs Vary in Ottawa

The total price depends on several project-specific factors that directly reflect Ottawa's building conditions and your home's layout. If your home already has a natural gas line nearby and a suitable chase or wall cavity for venting, installation is straightforward and costs cluster toward the lower end of the range. If you need to run a new gas line 20 or 30 feet from your meter to the fireplace location, add **\$500 to \$1,500** for that gas line work — which must be done by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter. The venting configuration also matters significantly. Direct-vent units (which draw outside air for combustion and exhaust through a sealed double-wall pipe) are the standard choice in Ottawa because they don't compete with your home's heating system and maintain indoor air quality during our long winters. B-vent units are less expensive to install but less efficient and can contribute to negative pressure problems in tightly sealed modern homes, especially when paired with exhaust fans or high-efficiency furnaces.

Chimney configuration affects pricing too. If you have an existing masonry chimney in good condition, a WETT inspection (\$250 to \$450 for a Level 1 inspection) will confirm whether it can safely vent a new gas appliance — sometimes it can be relined with an aluminum liner suitable for gas appliances (**\$1,500 to \$3,000**). If you need a new exterior vent pipe run because your fireplace location is remote from the existing chimney, or if your chimney is too deteriorated to use safely, that adds to labour and materials costs.

Hearth pad installation and finishing also vary in scope. A basic non-combustible hearth pad (required by Ontario Building Code) costs \$300 to \$800 installed, but if you want custom tile, stone, or decorative surrounds, you could easily spend \$2,000 to \$8,000 on finishing work. Labour is typically the largest component of your bill — professional installation involves gas line connections (TSSA-licensed gas fitter required), venting assembly and roof penetration, electrical connections for ignition and any blower fan, testing for carbon monoxide leaks, and compliance tagging by the licensed technician.

What's Included and What Isn't

A comprehensive installation quote should include the fireplace unit, venting materials and installation, gas connection and testing, hearth pad, labour, and a TSSA compliance tag. It should **not** include wall finishing, tile work, custom surrounds, or structural modifications — those are typically quoted separately. Your contractor should also clarify whether they are obtaining the City of Ottawa building permit (usually the contractor's responsibility) and what the permit cost will be — expect **\$150 to \$350** for a fireplace installation permit in Ottawa.

Seasonal Timing and Scheduling

Plan your gas fireplace installation for spring or early fall rather than waiting until October or November. November through February is peak season for furnace and fireplace calls in Ottawa, and contractors book up weeks in advance. If you schedule in April or September, you'll have more flexibility, shorter lead times, and may negotiate better availability. Many contractors also offer slightly more competitive pricing during shoulder seasons because the workload is lighter.

A Critical Note on Licensing

This is worth emphasizing: any installation, repair, or modification to a gas fireplace in Ontario must be performed by a **TSSA-licensed gas fitter** (G2 or G3 certificate). This is not optional or negotiable. Unlicensed gas work is illegal in Ontario, voids your homeowner's insurance, and creates serious risks of carbon monoxide poisoning or explosion. After installation, the licensed gas fitter must tag your appliance with a TSSA compliance label. Always verify that your contractor holds a current TSSA licence before hiring them.

Ottawa pricing for gas fireplace work runs about 10 to 15 percent below Greater Toronto Area rates, partly because local labour costs are lower and competition among contractors is healthy. Always get three written quotes that specify the exact fireplace model, venting configuration, gas line scope, hearth materials, labour breakdown, permit responsibilities, timeline, and warranty terms. Pricing can shift based on chimney condition, roof pitch, and whether additional electrical work is required, so detailed quotes matter far more than phone estimates.

When you're ready to connect with experienced gas fitters and fireplace installers in the Ottawa area, you can browse local contractors through the **Ottawa Construction Network directory**, which makes it easy to compare profiles and reach out directly.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- JC Carpentry

- Transitions Renovations
- Colonnade Security Inc
- East Coast Sheet Metal Inc

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