OTTAWA FIREPLACES

Safety, Permits & Ontario Regulations

TSSA licensing, WETT certification, ESA permits, Ontario Building Code, and Ottawa permit requirements

22 Expert Answers from Fireplace IQ

ottawafireplaces.com/construction-brain

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Q1

What Ontario fire code rules apply to wood stove installations in Ottawa basement bedrooms or sleeping areas?

Installing a wood stove in an Ottawa basement bedroom or sleeping area is heavily restricted under the Ontario Fire Code and Ontario Building Code, and in most cases is not permitted at all. The primary concern is carbon monoxide poisoning during sleep, when occupants cannot detect the odorless gas that can leak from wood-burning appliances or be drawn back down the chimney during downdraft conditions.

Ontario Fire Code Restrictions

The Ontario Fire Code prohibits the installation of solid fuel burning appliances (including wood stoves) in sleeping rooms, and this restriction is absolute. A sleeping room is defined as any room designed or used for sleeping purposes, including bedrooms, dormitories, and basement bedrooms. This rule exists because carbon monoxide from wood-burning appliances poses the greatest danger when people are asleep and cannot detect symptoms like headache, dizziness, or nausea that would alert them to CO exposure while awake.

Even in basement areas adjacent to bedrooms, wood stove installation faces significant restrictions. The Ontario Building Code requires that any solid fuel burning appliance be located where adequate combustion air can be supplied and where proper clearances to combustibles can be maintained. Basement installations must have dedicated outside combustion air supply, proper chimney draft (which can be challenging in below-grade installations), and cannot compromise egress routes from sleeping areas.

Carbon Monoxide and Ventilation Requirements

Ottawa's tight, energy-efficient homes compound the carbon monoxide risk in basement installations. Modern homes create negative pressure that can cause downdrafts in chimneys, pulling combustion gases back into living spaces. This problem is particularly acute in basements, where the chimney has less height to create proper draft. The Ontario Building Code requires carbon monoxide detectors on every level of a home with fuel-burning appliances, but these are backup safety devices, not primary protection against improper installations.

Basement wood stove installations also face practical challenges in Ottawa's climate. The chimney must extend through multiple floors and the roof, creating numerous penetrations that must be properly sealed and flashed. Ice damming on Ottawa roofs can block chimney terminations, and the freeze-thaw cycle can damage chimney components more severely when the chimney runs through unheated basement areas.

Alternative Heating Solutions

For basement bedrooms in Ottawa, consider electric baseboard heaters, electric fireplaces, or extending your home's forced-air heating system. A direct-vent gas fireplace may be possible in some basement configurations,

but requires TSSA-licensed evaluation to ensure proper venting and combustion air supply. Electric fireplaces provide ambiance and supplemental heat without any combustion risks, making them the safest option for basement sleeping areas.

If you're considering any heating appliance for a basement bedroom, consult with both a WETT-certified professional and your local building department to understand what options comply with Ontario codes. The Ottawa Construction Network directory includes fireplace professionals who can assess your specific situation and recommend code-compliant heating solutions for basement spaces.

Q2

Are glass fireplace doors required by Ontario code on open wood-burning fireplaces in Ottawa or just recommended?

Glass fireplace doors are not specifically required by the Ontario Building Code for open wood-burning fireplaces, but they are strongly recommended and may be required by your home insurance company. The OBC focuses on structural requirements like hearth extensions, clearances to combustibles, and chimney specifications rather than mandating specific fireplace accessories like glass doors.

However, glass doors provide critical safety and efficiency benefits that make them practically essential for Ottawa homeowners with open masonry fireplaces. In Ottawa's extreme climate, where homes are tightly sealed against -30 degree winter temperatures, glass doors prevent the massive heat loss that occurs when warm indoor air is sucked up the chimney. An open fireplace without doors can actually cool your home by drawing heated air from other rooms up the flue, forcing your furnace to work harder. Glass doors also contain sparks and embers, reducing fire risk, and they allow you to close off the fireplace when not in use to prevent downdrafts from bringing cold outdoor air into your living space.

Many insurance companies now require glass doors on open fireplaces as a condition of coverage, especially for homes built before modern building codes. Check with your insurance provider about their specific requirements. If you burn wood regularly in an open fireplace, quality tempered glass doors ($400 to $1,200 installed) will pay for themselves through reduced heating costs and improved safety.

Important safety note: Never close glass doors completely while a fire is burning unless they are specifically designed for closed-door operation. Most standard glass doors must remain open during fires to prevent overheating and glass breakage. Only close them after the fire has completely burned out and cooled.

If you're considering adding glass doors to an existing fireplace or want to explore converting to a more efficient gas or wood insert, you can browse experienced fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network

directory to discuss options that work best for your specific fireplace and heating needs.

Q3

What are the warning signs of a chimney fire and how do Ottawa firefighters recommend I respond?

A chimney fire is one of the most terrifying and dangerous emergencies that can happen in an Ottawa home, and recognizing the warning signs could literally save your life. The most obvious signs include a loud roaring or rumbling noise coming from inside the chimney (like a freight train or jet engine), visible flames or sparks shooting out of the chimney top, a strong smell of burning creosote that fills your home, heavy black smoke pouring from the fireplace or stove, and extreme heat radiating from the chimney, fireplace, or stove pipe — you should not be able to hold your hand near any part of the system.

Why Chimney Fires Happen in Ottawa

Ottawa's long, cold burning season creates ideal conditions for chimney fires. When you burn unseasoned wood (anything wetter than 20 percent moisture content), run your stove or fireplace at low temperatures during shoulder seasons to stretch a fire through the night, or skip annual chimney cleaning, creosote accumulates inside the flue. Stage 3 glazed creosote — that hard, shiny black coating that builds up on the inside of the chimney liner — is essentially combustible varnish. Once it ignites, it burns at temperatures that can exceed 2,000 degrees Celsius, hot enough to crack a clay tile liner, damage a stainless steel liner, crack surrounding masonry, and potentially ignite framing and structural wood hidden inside your walls. Most Ottawa chimney fires happen in November or early December when homeowners have built up creosote over several months of burning and finally run a hot fire after weeks of cooler burns.

If you suspect a chimney fire is happening right now:

First, call 911 immediately. Ottawa Fire Services will respond to chimney fires as structural emergencies. Do not assume it will burn itself out or that you can handle it alone. A working chimney fire is a life-threatening emergency. While you are waiting for the fire department, evacuate everyone from the house, including pets, and move to a safe location outside and away from the building — do not re-enter for any reason. Close all doors to the room with the fireplace to limit oxygen flow to the fire, but do not close exterior doors that firefighters will need to access. Turn off your furnace if you can do so safely from outside the house — a running furnace can draw additional oxygen into the system and intensify the chimney fire.

Do not try to extinguish a chimney fire with water from inside the house. Throwing water down the chimney will create steam explosions that can shatter the liner, crack the chimney, and blow hot debris out of the top and into your attic. Do not throw baking soda down the chimney — this is a myth with no basis in fire science. Do not try to smother the fire by closing the damper — you cannot effectively seal a chimney from inside, and attempting this could trap dangerous gases in your home.

After the chimney fire is extinguished:

Before you can use your fireplace or stove again, you must have a professional WETT-certified chimney inspector conduct a Level 2 inspection to determine whether the fire has damaged the liner, the masonry, or the chimney structure. Damage that is not visible from above requires inspection from inside the chimney — a cracked liner can be a latent fire hazard that ignites the next time you run a hot fire. Expect this inspection to cost $350 to $600 in Ottawa. If damage is found, you will likely need chimney relining ($2,000 to $5,000 for stainless steel, $4,000 to $8,000 for cast-in-place) before the system can be safely used again. Some fire-damaged chimneys cannot be safely repaired and must be rebuilt, which runs $3,000 to $8,000 for above-roofline rebuilds or $8,000 to $20,000 or more for full-height rebuilds.

Prevention is infinitely cheaper than dealing with a chimney fire. Burn only seasoned hardwood with 15 to 20 percent moisture content — if you are buying firewood, get it from a local Ottawa supplier at least one cord ahead of when you plan to burn it, so it has time to season. Never burn softwood, treated lumber, plywood, or wet wood. Have your chimney professionally cleaned and swept by a WETT-certified chimney sweep every year — twice yearly if you burn more than 4 cords per season. Most Ottawa homeowners should schedule their annual sweep in early fall (September or early October) before the heavy burning season begins. Do not run fires so cool that smoke is pouring out of the chimney — this indicates incomplete combustion and maximum creosote production. If you are running your fireplace or stove at such low temperatures that you need to keep heat down, consider using it only for ambiance rather than as your primary heating source, or upgrade to a more efficient appliance. Install and maintain working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home — a chimney fire or a malfunctioning appliance can introduce deadly carbon monoxide into your living space.

When you are ready to hire a professional WETT-certified chimney sweep for your annual cleaning or a post-fire inspection, you can browse experienced chimney technicians through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory — they understand Ottawa's climate and the urgency of proper chimney maintenance before the cold season begins.

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

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- JC Carpentry
- East Coast Sheet Metal Inc
- Ottawa Demolition Corp.
- BFI Renovations

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Q4

How much does it cost to add a TSSA-compliant gas shutoff valve to an older Ottawa fireplace?

Adding a TSSA-compliant gas shutoff valve to an older Ottawa fireplace typically costs **$300 to $800 installed**, depending on whether the valve is being added to an existing gas line or requires new piping, and whether the work involves modifications to the fireplace itself.

The cost usually breaks down into two components: the valve itself (roughly $50 to $150 for a quality manual or automatic shutoff valve) and labour for installation, which runs $250 to $650 depending on accessibility and complexity. If the older fireplace lacks proper shutoff provisions and the gas fitter needs to run new copper or black iron pipe from the main gas line to the fireplace location, costs can climb toward $1,000 or more. However, if a shutoff valve can be installed inline on existing piping without significant rerouting, you'll be at the lower end of that range.

This work matters considerably in Ottawa because older fireplaces — especially those installed before the 1990s — frequently lack proper shutoff valves, which are now required by TSSA (Technical Standards and Safety Authority) regulations and modern Ontario Building Code standards. A shutoff valve allows you to isolate the fireplace from the main gas supply for safety, maintenance, or emergency purposes. In Ottawa's climate, where furnaces and gas appliances run nearly half the year, having a proper shutoff valve on any gas fireplace is a practical safety measure that also protects you during furnace maintenance or emergency repairs.

Critical consideration: This work must be performed by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter (holding a G2 or G3 certificate). While the valve itself is straightforward hardware, improper gas line work can introduce leaks, create carbon monoxide hazards, or compromise system safety. After installation, the licensed fitter should provide TSSA compliance documentation. Your homeowner's insurance may actually require this upgrade on older gas fireplaces, so it's worth checking your policy before proceeding.

If you're working with an older fireplace and need to locate a TSSA-licensed gas fitter in Ottawa, you can browse fireplace and heating contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory, where you'll find professionals experienced with retrofitting older systems to current safety standards.

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

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- RenoMotion Inc.

- Somar Contracting Inc.
- The Deck Store Inc
- ARTEXPRO Tile & Finishes

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Q5

Where is the natural gas shutoff valve for my fireplace and should I label it for emergencies?

The natural gas shutoff valve for your fireplace is located on the gas supply line between your home's main gas meter and the fireplace itself — typically in the basement, crawlspace, or mechanical room where the gas line runs toward your fireplace location. If your fireplace is on the main floor, the shutoff may be in the basement directly below or nearby; if it's on an upper floor, trace the gas line from the fireplace downward to find where it emerges from the wall or floor. Some homes have the shutoff positioned right at the fireplace unit itself, especially for newer direct-vent gas fireplaces or inserts. Check your gas line installation documentation or ask your TSSA-licensed gas fitter if you're unsure.

Yes, you absolutely should label this valve clearly and make sure all household members know its location. This is basic emergency preparedness in Ottawa homes with gas appliances. In the event of a gas smell, hissing sound, or suspicion of a gas leak, being able to quickly locate and shut off the gas can prevent an explosion or dangerous gas accumulation while you call Enbridge Gas (1-800-265-2634) or your local emergency number. Write the shutoff location on a household emergency card posted on your refrigerator, and consider using bright tape or a permanent marker to label the valve itself with "FIREPLACE GAS SHUTOFF."

When you locate the valve, note the direction of the handle. The valve is **off when the handle is perpendicular (at a 90-degree angle) to the gas line**, and **on when it's parallel to the line**. If you need to shut it off in an emergency, turn the handle one-quarter turn to the perpendicular position — you do not need to wrench it; hand-tight is sufficient. Do not attempt to relight the fireplace yourself after shutting off the gas — call a TSSA-licensed technician to inspect the system and verify there are no leaks before the gas is turned back on.

Test your knowledge of the shutoff location at least once per year during spring maintenance season. If your current setup is unclear or the valve is difficult to access, a TSSA-licensed gas fitter can install a more conveniently located shutoff or ball valve as part of routine maintenance. This is a modest investment — typically $150 to $300 — and transforms your emergency preparedness from theoretical to genuinely actionable.

Never ignore the smell of natural gas in your home. If you detect a persistent rotten-egg odour (which natural gas companies add to alert you to leaks), evacuate immediately, call Enbridge from outside, and do not use any electrical switches or devices that might create a spark. Trust your nose — gas companies rely on that added odour because it works.

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

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Core Climate Ltd.
- Humble Homes - property maintenance
- Ottawa Masonry Contractor

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Q6

Where exactly should carbon monoxide detectors go if I have a gas fireplace in a two-storey Ottawa home?

Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed on every level of your home where someone sleeps or spends significant time, with specific priority placement near your gas fireplace and in bedrooms — this is not just a recommendation in Ontario, it is a legal requirement for homes with fuel-burning appliances, and it is genuinely lifesaving protection in a city where winter temperatures can trap carbon monoxide indoors for months at a time.

Why this matters in Ottawa specifically: Your gas fireplace is one of multiple potential CO sources in an Ottawa home — furnaces, water heaters, car exhaust from attached garages, and even improperly vented dryer exhausts can all produce carbon monoxide. The risk is amplified during Ottawa's long, brutally cold winters when homes are sealed tight, air exchangers may not be functioning optimally, and people spend 12 to 16 hours per day indoors. Carbon monoxide is odourless, colourless, and deadly — it binds to hemoglobin in your blood with an affinity 200 times stronger than oxygen, meaning your body's oxygen-carrying capacity drops dangerously while you feel almost nothing until it is too late. People have died in their sleep from carbon monoxide poisoning in Ottawa homes with faulty gas fireplaces or improper venting, and in every case, the tragedy was preventable with proper detectors.

Install carbon monoxide detectors in these specific locations: (1) **Within 3 to 5 metres horizontally of your gas fireplace** — this is the primary detection zone where CO concentration is highest if there is a problem. If your fireplace is in a living room or den, mount the detector on the wall at breathing height (4 to 6 feet above the floor) or on a shelf nearby. (2) **In the hallway outside each bedroom** on every level — this ensures the alarm will wake sleeping occupants if CO levels rise. Bedroom placement is critical because carbon monoxide poisoning progresses silently while people sleep; the alarm needs to sound before unconsciousness sets in. (3) **On the main floor** if your furnace is located there (basement furnaces also require bedroom-level detection, but main-floor placement covers the shared living space). (4) **In the basement near your water heater or furnace** if these appliances are fuel-burning. (5) **On each level of a two-storey home** — at minimum, one detector per storey, ideally two per level (one in bedrooms, one near the fireplace or furnace).

For a typical two-storey Ottawa home with a gas fireplace in the living room, the minimum acceptable setup is: one detector within 3 to 5 metres of the fireplace on the main floor, one detector in the upstairs hallway outside the primary bedroom, and optionally one additional detector in a second upstairs bedroom or hallway if your family spends significant time there. Many fire safety experts recommend going beyond the minimum — place detectors in every bedroom hallway and near every potential CO source. The detectors are inexpensive ($30 to $80 each), and a life is priceless.

Critical specifications for CO detectors: Purchase detectors that meet CSA (Canadian Standards Association) certification — look for the CSA mark on the packaging. Do not buy uncertified or imported detectors; they may not meet Ontario safety standards. Battery-powered detectors are acceptable, but hardwired detectors with battery backup are more reliable because they cannot be disabled by a missing battery. Test your detectors monthly by pressing the test button — if you do not hear the alarm, replace the batteries immediately or replace the unit if it fails the test. Replace all detectors every 7 to 10 years; they degrade over time and lose sensitivity. Mount detectors on walls or shelves at breathing height (4 to 6 feet for wall mounting, or on a shelf at similar height) — do not mount them on the ceiling or in corners where CO may not reach the sensor. Avoid mounting detectors in kitchens near gas stoves or in bathrooms with steam, as these can trigger false alarms.

Important warning signs that your gas fireplace may be producing dangerous CO levels: A yellow or orange flame instead of blue (indicates incomplete combustion), soot or discoloration around the fireplace or vent pipe, cold spots on the exterior vent pipe (suggests blockage or poor draft), intermittent smoke entering the room, or a smell of gas or combustion byproducts. If you notice any of these signs, stop using the fireplace immediately, turn off the gas, open windows, and call a TSSA-licensed gas fitter for emergency inspection. Do not try to troubleshoot a potentially dangerous gas appliance yourself.

Service and maintenance tie-in: Your gas fireplace should be professionally serviced annually by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter — ideally in early fall before you start using it regularly. A proper service includes checking the

flame colour, verifying that the vent system is clear and properly sealed, testing for CO leakage, inspecting the burner assembly, and confirming that the appliance is operating safely. This professional inspection, combined with working carbon monoxide detectors in the right locations, gives you the best possible protection against silent, deadly carbon monoxide in your Ottawa home.

If you need help finding a qualified TSSA-licensed gas fitter to service your fireplace or inspect your home's venting system, you can browse fireplace and gas service contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory — it is a quick way to connect with experienced professionals who understand Ottawa's unique heating demands and venting challenges.

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

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- Geerts Roofing Inc
- ALTIOR CONSTRUCTION
- McLaren Masonry

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Q7

How much does a chimney cleaning cost in Ottawa to prevent a dangerous chimney fire?

A professional chimney cleaning in Ottawa costs **$175 to $350** depending on chimney height, accessibility, and the amount of creosote buildup — and it is genuinely one of the best safety investments a fireplace owner can make in a city with Ottawa's extreme heating demands.

Why Chimney Cleaning Is Non-Negotiable in Ottawa

Ottawa's climate is essentially a creosote factory. Homeowners here burn wood for extended periods during a long winter season (November through April, often longer), and many households with wood stoves burn 4 to 8 cords annually for supplemental or primary heat. This sustained burning creates significant creosote deposits — the black, tarry, flammable substance that builds up inside the chimney flue as wood smoke cools and condenses. The danger is compounded in Ottawa because the freeze-thaw cycle and cold shoulder seasons create ideal conditions for Stage 3 glazed creosote, which is the most dangerous form. This looks like a hard, shiny, black coating and can ignite at 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit, spreading to wooden framing and causing a devastating house fire.

A chimney fire in a properly maintained chimney may be contained to the flue itself, but in a neglected chimney — one with months or years of creosote buildup — the fire can spread to the surrounding framing, the roof structure, and interior walls, turning a preventable tragedy into a total loss.

What Professional Cleaning Includes

A WETT-certified chimney sweep will access the chimney from the top (usually from the roof), use specialized brushes sized to fit your exact flue diameter, and scrub away all creosote deposits. For wood stoves and fireplaces, this typically takes 1 to 2 hours. The sweep will also visually inspect the chimney for cracks, deterioration, missing mortar, or blockages that could affect performance or safety. At **$175 to $350 in Ottawa**, you are paying for expertise, specialized equipment (including brushes for clay tile liners, stainless steel liners, and various flue diameters), safe roof access, and the professional judgment to spot problems before they become emergencies.

Compare this to the cost of a chimney fire — you are looking at tens of thousands of dollars in structural damage, potential total loss, and months of restoration work. Insurance may not fully cover a chimney fire if records show you neglected cleaning.

Frequency & Timing

Here is where Ottawa's climate matters: if you have a wood stove or wood-burning fireplace that runs regularly through winter, **annual cleaning is the absolute minimum**. Heavy users — households burning 5+ cords per

season or running a stove daily from October through April — should consider **twice-yearly sweeps**: one in fall before the heavy burning season begins, and one in spring after the season ends. This is not paranoia; it reflects the reality of burning wood for six months straight in a climate where the heating season is genuinely long.

Schedule your cleaning in **September or early October**, before the first cold snap and before every chimney sweep in the city is frantically booked. Spring cleanings are also wise, as they reveal any damage that occurred over the winter and allow you to make repairs before the next season.

For gas fireplaces that are used regularly, annual visual inspection is recommended, though creosote buildup is far less of a concern than with wood burning — gas produces much less residue. Electric fireplaces and pellet stoves have different inspection schedules; ask your installer about their specific requirements.

Important Safety Notes

A WETT-certified chimney sweep is the professional standard in Canada, and while WETT certification is technically voluntary, your homeowners insurance will increasingly demand it. Some insurers now require proof of annual WETT inspection before they will cover a home with a wood-burning appliance at all. When you book a sweep, confirm they are WETT-certified and ask them to provide a written report of the inspection findings.

Carbon monoxide is the invisible threat: a blocked or damaged chimney can allow carbon monoxide to back up into your home. If you ever smell smoke, gas, or anything unusual, or if you experience headaches, dizziness, or nausea while the fireplace is running, stop using it immediately and have it professionally inspected.

If a chimney fire has already occurred in your home, a Level 2 WETT inspection (**$350 to $600**) is essential to assess damage to the flue liner and surrounding structure before you use the chimney again.

When you are ready to find a WETT-certified chimney sweep in Ottawa, you can browse qualified professionals through the Ottawa Construction Network directory, where local sweeps and chimney technicians are listed with their certifications and service areas. Getting your chimney cleaned regularly is the single most important thing you can do to prevent a fire and keep your home and family safe.

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

- Homeupgraders
- The Egress Group Inc
- ZinoM Concrete & Landscaping
- Home Front Services

- ALM Construction & Landscaping Inc.

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Q8

What should I do if I smell gas near my natural gas fireplace in my Ottawa home?

Stop using the fireplace immediately and leave your home. A gas smell near a fireplace signals a potential leak, improper combustion, or a gas line problem — all of which are serious safety hazards that require immediate professional attention. Do not attempt to identify or fix the source yourself, and do not ignore it hoping it will go away.

Here's what you need to do right now: First, turn off the fireplace at the wall switch or remote and do not use it again until a licensed gas fitter inspects and clears it. If the smell is strong or you feel at all unsafe, leave your home immediately, close the door behind you, and call Enbridge Gas at **1-866-763-5427** (their 24/7 emergency line) or your local fire department. Do not use your phone indoors if you suspect a major leak — step outside first. Enbridge will dispatch a technician immediately if there is evidence of a gas leak in your line.

A faint gas smell that occurs only when the fireplace first ignites and dissipates within 30 seconds is often normal — it's unburned gas that clears once combustion begins. However, a persistent smell, a smell that gets worse when the fireplace runs, or a smell in other parts of the house means something is wrong. The most common causes in Ottawa homes are a cracked heat exchanger (which allows gas to escape into the room rather than being fully combusted), a faulty gas valve that is not closing completely, a loose or corroded gas line connection at the fireplace, improper venting that is allowing combustion byproducts back into the home, or a problem with the gas regulator or supply line.

Natural gas is odourless in its natural state — the rotten-egg smell (mercaptan) is added by utility companies so leaks are detectable. That smell is there for a reason: to alert you to danger. Undetected natural gas leaks can accumulate in low areas of your home and create an explosion hazard, and incomplete combustion of gas produces carbon monoxide, which is a silent killer. A TSSA-licensed gas fitter (G2 or G3 certificate) must diagnose and repair the problem. This is not a DIY situation, and it's not something to delay — call a licensed gas fitter immediately.

When you do hire someone, be specific about what you smelled and when. Did the smell occur only during ignition, continuously while the fireplace ran, or even when the fireplace was off? Is the smell inside the room or coming from outside near the fireplace vent? Has anyone in your household experienced headaches, dizziness, or nausea?

These details help the technician narrow down the cause.

For professional inspection and repair, you can browse fireplace and gas technicians through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory — look for contractors with TSSA licensing (they will list this in their profile). In the meantime, keep the room well-ventilated and avoid using the fireplace, and make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home and near bedrooms. Gas safety is not negotiable in Ottawa.

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

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- The Egress Group Inc
- JMY Renovations
- Titley Construction
- The Granite shop

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Q9

Where should I place a fire extinguisher near my fireplace and what size does Ontario code require?

A fire extinguisher should be mounted on a wall in an easily accessible location within 3 to 5 metres of your fireplace, ideally in a hallway or room where the fireplace is located, rather than directly next to the hearth where heat or smoke might obscure it during an emergency. Position it at eye level (roughly 1.2 to 1.5 metres high) so it is immediately visible and reachable without bending or searching, and keep the access path clear of furniture, décor, or other obstacles.

Ontario Building Code does not specify a mandatory fire extinguisher size requirement for residential fireplaces — the OBC focuses on chimney height, clearances to combustibles, and hearth dimensions rather than extinguisher specifications. However, the National Fire Code of Canada recommends that residential properties have at least one multipurpose fire extinguisher (rated for Class A, B, and C fires) rated at a minimum of 5 pounds (2.3 kg) ABC dry chemical extinguisher, though 10 pounds (4.5 kg) is more practical for household use and provides longer discharge time. For fireplace and wood stove emergencies specifically, a 10-pound ABC extinguisher is the

practical standard in Ottawa homes.

The reason fire extinguisher placement matters near a fireplace is that chimney fires — which can occur in Ottawa homes burning creosote-laden wood or operating with a heavily fouled chimney — can escalate quickly. A chimney fire produces roaring sounds, sparks exiting the chimney top, and intense heat that can ignite nearby combustibles. Your primary response to a chimney fire is to evacuate, call 911, and let firefighters handle it — do not attempt to extinguish a chimney fire yourself, as it burns inside the flue where an extinguisher is useless and potentially dangerous. However, if sparks or flames escape into the firebox area or onto the hearth, having an immediately accessible extinguisher can help you contain a small fire while evacuating. More importantly, a visible extinguisher serves as a psychological prompt to maintain the discipline around fireplace safety — checking it annually reminds you to also get your chimney inspected and cleaned, which is far more effective at preventing emergencies than the extinguisher itself.

Check your extinguisher annually to ensure the pressure gauge is in the green zone, the nozzle is not clogged, and the seal is intact. Most residential extinguishers have a lifespan of 5 to 15 years depending on type and storage conditions. Dry chemical extinguishers can settle over time, so shake the canister gently once or twice a year to keep the powder loose. Keep a second extinguisher in your kitchen (where most home fires start) and consider a third in your basement if your furnace or water heater is located there.

More critically, Ottawa fireplace owners should focus energy on prevention rather than extinguisher readiness. Annual chimney cleaning by a WETT-certified sweep (typically $175 to $350 in Ottawa) eliminates the creosote buildup that causes most chimney fires. Proper firewood seasoning (12 to 18 months to reach 15 to 20 percent moisture content) reduces creosote formation dramatically. Maintaining proper clearances to combustibles around the fireplace, hearth pad, and chimney prevents fires that start from radiant heat or contact with flammable materials. Installing and maintaining carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home with fuel-burning appliances is legally required in Ontario and far more likely to save your life than an extinguisher — CO poisoning from an improperly vented or leaking fireplace is a silent killer.

If you need guidance on fireplace safety inspections, chimney cleaning, or chimney repair to address serious draft, creosote, or structural issues, fireplace professionals in the Ottawa area are available through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory — they can assess your entire system and help ensure your fireplace is operating safely before an emergency arises.

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

- 613Bins

- The Egress Group Inc
- Gillani Heating & Appliance Care Inc.
- Treka Construction Group
- Nic’s D.U.C.T Works Inc

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Q10

What type of hearth padding should I install to protect my kids around our Ottawa wood fireplace?

For a masonry fireplace in Ottawa, you need non-combustible hearth protection that extends at least 16 inches in front of the fireplace opening and 8 inches on either side to meet Ontario Building Code requirements — and with young kids in the house, going larger is smart thinking for safety.

The best non-combustible options for families with children are **ceramic tile over cement backer board** (durable, easy to clean, attractive, $15 to $30 per square foot installed), **natural stone like slate or granite over backer board** ($25 to $50 per square foot installed, extremely durable and elegant), **sheet metal hearth pads** (raw steel or stainless steel, $10 to $20 per square foot, industrial look but highly practical for heavy use), and **porcelain tile** ($12 to $25 per square foot, similar durability to ceramic but slightly more stain-resistant). All of these require installation over cement backer board anchored directly to the floor — never use drywall or regular plywood under a hearth pad, as these materials can smolder or catch fire if exposed to radiant heat.

What makes this particularly important in Ottawa is that wood fireplaces generate intense radiant heat, especially when burning for the 4 to 8 hours common in our long winters. A proper hearth pad protects both the floor beneath the fireplace and creates a clear safety boundary that younger kids learn to recognize and respect. The 16-inch minimum depth in front means ash and hot embers that might escape the firebox land on non-combustible material rather than your flooring.

Critical safety considerations: The hearth pad protects the structure, but you also need a safety gate or barrier if you have toddlers or very young children who might crawl toward an active fire. Install carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home and in sleeping areas — wood fires can produce CO if the chimney is blocked or improperly maintained, especially if you damper the fire down to slow the burn. Teach older kids never to touch the fireplace opening during or immediately after a fire, and never to reach into the firebox for any reason. Ensure your wood stove or fireplace has proper clearances to combustible materials — minimum 12 inches from walls and furniture, or more depending on the appliance specifications.

If your fireplace is part of a recent renovation or addition, confirm that the hearth pad installation was done to code — if it was installed over regular flooring material or particle board, it needs to be redone. A WETT-certified inspector can confirm whether your current hearth setup meets Ontario requirements during a Level 1 inspection ($250 to $450 in Ottawa).

For installation, a local flooring or fireplace specialist can handle ceramic or stone tile work properly. If you're in the market to hire someone for hearth work, you can browse fireplace and hearth contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to find local professionals experienced with family-safe fireplace installations.

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

- 613Bins
- JC Carpentry
- Elie The Carpet Guy Inc.
- Nic’s D.U.C.T Works Inc
- Dump n Dash Hauling

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Q11

Can the glass on my gas fireplace burn my toddler and what safety barriers work best?

Yes, gas fireplace glass can absolutely burn a toddler — it reaches temperatures of 65 to 85 degrees Celsius (150 to 185 degrees Fahrenheit) during operation, hot enough to cause a serious thermal burn in seconds of contact. A severe burn can occur with just 3 to 5 seconds of skin contact at those temperatures, which is faster than most parents can react when a curious toddler lunges toward the flames.

This is a genuinely serious safety issue that deserves your full attention, especially in Ottawa homes where fireplaces are often central gathering spaces during the long winter months when young children spend more time indoors.

Effective safety barriers for gas fireplaces include three main approaches. The most reliable option is a sturdy metal safety gate or hearth barrier that creates a physical fence around the entire fireplace perimeter — these typically stand 60 to 75 centimetres high and extend 1 to 2 metres on either side of the fireplace, creating a protective zone that prevents access to both the hot glass and the hearth. Quality hearth gates cost $150 to $400 and should be securely anchored to the floor or wall so a determined toddler cannot tip or push through them. Look for gates that meet safety standards and have no handholds or climbing points that a small child could exploit.

A second option is a flat safety screen or barrier that sits directly in front of the fireplace opening — essentially a panel of heat-resistant material that blocks direct contact with the glass while still allowing some view of the flames. These are less intrusive than full gates but only protect against direct contact; they do not prevent a child from reaching the hot hearth surface or falling into the fireplace surround. Cost is typically $100 to $250 for a quality

removable screen.

The most comprehensive approach combines a physical barrier with your supervision and consistent safety teaching. Even the best gate is not a substitute for active parenting — children should be taught that the fireplace is "hot" and off-limits, and you should never leave a toddler unsupervised in a room with an operating gas fireplace, regardless of barriers in place. This is especially important during Ottawa's long winters when the fireplace may be running for 4 to 6 hours at a time during evening family time.

Important safety considerations: Make sure any barrier you install does not block emergency egress or obstruct the fireplace in a way that restricts proper ventilation — your direct-vent gas fireplace needs unobstructed air flow around the front glass. Some hearth barriers can be installed removably (using floor anchors that you can tighten or loosen) rather than permanently, which is helpful if you want to protect against toddlers in the short term and remove the barrier as your children age. Test the temperature of the glass yourself before relying on any barrier — in very cold Ottawa weather, the glass may actually be cooler than in mild conditions because the indoor-outdoor temperature differential affects how hard the fireplace works, but it will still be dangerously hot. Never assume a fireplace is cool just because it has not been running for a few minutes — allow at least 30 minutes of cooling time after shutdown before assuming the glass is safe to touch.

Equally important: ensure you have working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home, including near sleeping areas. A properly installed direct-vent gas fireplace should not produce CO in the living space, but a damaged or improperly vented fireplace can leak carbon monoxide, which is especially dangerous for young children whose bodies are more vulnerable to CO poisoning. Test your CO detectors monthly and replace batteries twice yearly (Ottawa fireplace owners often do this when clocks change in spring and fall, making it a simple habit).

Your gas fireplace manual should specify the operating temperature of the glass and any manufacturer-recommended safety precautions — review this document carefully. If you have questions about your specific fireplace model or need guidance on the best barrier option for your home's layout, a TSSA-licensed gas technician can assess your fireplace and recommend the most suitable safety solution. You can browse qualified gas service providers through the Ottawa Construction Network directory if you need a professional safety assessment.

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

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- The Egress Group Inc
- Capital City Drywall
- SDR Electric, Plumbing & Heating Inc.

- BFI Renovations

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Q12

How much does a child safety screen for my fireplace cost installed in Ottawa?

A child safety screen for a fireplace in Ottawa typically costs **$200 to $600 installed**, depending on the fireplace type, screen dimensions, and whether you're adding it to an existing setup or including it as part of a new installation. Most basic safety screens run $100 to $300 for the screen itself, plus $50 to $200 for installation labour if a professional handles it.

Why This Matters in Ottawa Homes

Fireplace safety screens are essential in any home with young children, but they take on particular importance during Ottawa's long heating season. When temperatures drop to -25 or -30 degrees Celsius, fireplaces and wood stoves run regularly from October through March — that's five or six months of consistent operation. Children who are curious, unpredictable, or learning to walk near a constantly warm fireplace face real burn risks from exposed glass, metal trim, or the firebox opening itself. A safety screen creates a physical barrier between little hands and the heat source, giving parents and caregivers peace of mind during the months when the fireplace is in heavy use.

For gas fireplaces, safety screens are typically tempered glass panels that attach to the front of the fireplace opening with a metal frame. They look clean and modern and allow full visibility of the flames while blocking access to the hot glass and interior components. These run $150 to $400 for the screen and frame, plus $75 to $150 for professional installation if needed.

For wood-burning fireplaces and inserts, safety screens are usually heavy-duty mesh or perforated metal panels in a sturdy steel frame that can withstand the heat and resist tipping. These are more robust than gas screens because they need to handle radiant heat from active flames and coals. Expect $200 to $500 for a quality wood fireplace screen, plus $75 to $150 for installation.

For wood stoves, the approach is different — rather than a screen in front of the stove itself (which would restrict airflow and create safety issues), you install a perimeter safety gate or barrier that keeps children at least 1 metre away from all sides of the stove, where the radiant heat can cause burns. These protective barriers run $300 to $700 depending on the stove's size and location, and installation takes 2 to 4 hours.

Installation and DIY Considerations

Most fireplace safety screens can be installed by a homeowner if you have basic tools and are comfortable measuring and fastening hardware. Many screens use adjustable mounting brackets that fit into the fireplace opening without permanent installation — no drilling into tile, stone, or masonry required. If your fireplace has an irregular opening, ornate trim, or you want a custom-fitted screen, professional installation ensures the screen sits flush, looks polished, and is truly secure.

For wood stove perimeter gates, installation is usually straightforward — you assemble the gate frame and secure it to the floor with the included brackets and fasteners. However, if your wood stove is in a tight corner, near furniture, or in a finished room where aesthetics matter, a professional installer will ensure the gate is positioned correctly to maintain proper clearance while still being effective.

One important note: **a safety screen is protection, not a substitute for supervision**. Screens reduce but do not eliminate burn risks, especially if a child can push the screen aside or if hot embers escape from the firebox. They also don't protect against burns from touching the screen frame itself, which conducts heat. Teaching children fireplace safety, establishing clear boundaries, and always supervising near an operating fireplace remain essential.

Budget and Timeline

For a straightforward installation on an existing fireplace, you should expect to complete the project within a single day. Parts and labour combined typically fall in the $300 to $600 range for most Ottawa homes. If your fireplace has an unusual opening size or you want a custom-built screen with decorative elements, costs can reach $800 to $1,200. Many local fireplace showrooms and hearth retailers in Ottawa stock standard sizes and can arrange same-day or next-day installation.

If you're planning a new fireplace installation and want a safety screen included from the start, discuss it with your installer — the screen cost may be slightly lower when bundled as part of the overall project.

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

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Ottawa Caulking
- Leeds Property Maintenance
- Edenza Landscaping

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Q13

What are the penalties for installing a gas fireplace without a TSSA-licensed technician in Ottawa?

Installing a gas fireplace without a TSSA-licensed gas fitter in Ottawa exposes you to serious legal, financial, and safety consequences that go far beyond the cost of doing the work properly the first time.

Legal penalties under Ontario law: The Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) has enforcement authority over all gas appliance installation in Ontario, and unlicensed gas work is explicitly illegal. If the City of Ottawa or TSSA discovers unlicensed gas work during a building permit inspection, home inspection, or insurance claim investigation, you can face a provincial offence charge. Fines for unlicensed gas installation range from $250 to $50,000 depending on severity and whether this is a first or repeat offence. In cases involving serious safety violations or negligence that results in injury or property damage, criminal charges and jail time are possible, though rare. More commonly, the homeowner is ordered to have the installation removed or corrected by a licensed technician — meaning you pay to have the illegal work torn out, plus pay again to have it done correctly.

Insurance consequences: This is often where homeowners face the most immediate and painful consequences. If you install a gas fireplace without TSSA licensing and later file an insurance claim — whether for a gas leak, carbon monoxide incident, fire damage, or even an unrelated house fire — your insurer will almost certainly deny the claim. Insurance companies explicitly exclude coverage for work done in violation of Ontario building code requirements, and unlicensed gas work is a clear breach. A denied claim on a house fire or explosion could easily cost $300,000 to $500,000 or more out of pocket. Beyond the specific claim, insurers have also been known to cancel homeowners policies entirely upon discovery of unlicensed gas work, leaving you scrambling to find coverage elsewhere — and insurers who will cover a house with known code violations charge significantly higher premiums or may refuse coverage altogether.

Home resale and disclosure issues: When you sell your Ottawa home, the realtor's disclosure documents require you to declare any unpermitted or non-compliant work. An unlicensed gas fireplace installation must be disclosed. Potential buyers (and their home inspectors) will almost certainly demand that the system be certified by a licensed technician before closing, or they will require a credit or price reduction to cover the cost of having the work corrected. This typically means $2,000 to $4,000 or more in remediation costs at closing time — and you may struggle to find a buyer willing to deal with the liability at all. Some buyers will simply walk away rather than inherit the risk of a non-compliant gas system.

Safety risks: This is the reason the TSSA regulation exists in the first place. Natural gas is colourless, odourless, and explosive. Carbon monoxide (CO) from improperly installed or maintained gas appliances is equally invisible and deadly — it has no smell or taste and kills people silently in their sleep. An unlicensed installer may not

properly vent combustion gases, fail to install CO detectors, miscalibrate the gas pressure, use incorrect fittings or tubing, fail to test for gas leaks, or create a system that develops dangerous conditions over time. Properly licensed TSSA gas fitters are trained in gas safety codes, required to carry liability insurance, and held accountable if their work causes injury or death. An unlicensed person installing a gas fireplace has no such accountability — and no insurance backing them if something goes wrong. Gas fireplace-related CO poisoning, explosions, and fires do happen in Ontario homes, and a significant portion occur in systems installed by unqualified people.

Cost reality: The cost differential between unlicensed installation (if you could even find someone willing to do it illegally) and licensed, compliant work is typically only $500 to $1,500 — maybe 15 to 20 percent of the total installed cost of a gas fireplace. Once you factor in the risk of a $50,000 fine, a denied $400,000 insurance claim, a remediation bill at resale, or the loss of a home sale entirely, the "savings" from unlicensed work evaporate instantly. You are essentially gambling with tens of thousands of dollars to avoid spending $500.

What proper installation looks like: A TSSA-licensed gas fitter (G2 or G3 certificate) will install your gas fireplace to Ontario building code specifications, pull any required building permits, test all connections for gas leaks using proper equipment, ensure correct venting and clearances, install a properly functioning carbon monoxide detector (or verify one is nearby), obtain final TSSA approval with a compliance label affixed to the appliance, and provide you with documentation proving the work meets code. After installation, you should receive a copy of the TSSA compliance certificate — this is your proof that the system is legal and safe.

In Ottawa, licensed gas fireplace installation costs $3,500 to $7,500 for a standard direct-vent unit. That cost includes the appliance, proper venting materials, all labour, permits, TSSA compliance, and a warranty. When you hire through a licensed gas fitter, you also get recourse if something goes wrong — the fitter carries liability insurance and maintains professional credentials that depend on doing quality work.

If you are considering a gas fireplace installation or already have one that concerns you, contact a TSSA-licensed gas fitter to have the system inspected and certified. If the fireplace was installed by an unlicensed person, have a licensed technician assess it and bring it into compliance immediately — the cost of correcting it now is far less than the cost of discovery later. You can browse qualified fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to find licensed gas fitters in your area.

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

- 613Bins
- JC Carpentry
- Dtech Services and Solutions Inc

- Ottawa Demolition Corp.
- Humble Homes - property maintenance

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Q14

Does my Ottawa home insurance require a WETT certificate before covering a wood-burning fireplace or stove?

Yes — virtually every home insurance company operating in Ottawa now requires a WETT inspection and certificate before they will insure a home with a wood-burning fireplace, wood stove, or wood-burning fireplace insert. This has become the de facto standard across Ontario over the past decade, and failure to obtain WETT certification before operating a wood-burning appliance is one of the fastest ways to have a claim denied or your policy cancelled entirely.

Why Ottawa Insurers Require WETT Certification

Insurance companies view wood-burning appliances as higher-risk than gas or electric fireplaces because improper installation, maintenance, or operation can lead to chimney fires, carbon monoxide poisoning, structural damage, and house fires. A WETT inspection—which examines the appliance itself, the entire chimney system, clearances to combustible materials, hearth protection, and overall safety—gives insurers confidence that the installation meets national safety standards. In Ottawa's extreme climate, where freeze-thaw cycling and prolonged burning seasons create heightened risks, insurers take this requirement very seriously.

The WETT certification is not a one-time thing after installation. Many insurers require a current Level 1 WETT inspection annually, especially if the fireplace or stove is actively used as a supplemental heat source. A Level 1 inspection costs $250 to $450 in Ottawa and takes about an hour — a WETT-certified inspector visually examines the appliance, chimney condition, creosote accumulation, and clearances, then issues a formal report that you provide to your insurer.

What Happens Without WETT Certification

Operating a wood-burning fireplace or stove without WETT certification creates serious consequences. If your home experiences a chimney fire, structural damage from a chimney fire, or a fire that starts in or near the fireplace, your insurance claim will almost certainly be denied because you operated an uninsured appliance. Some insurers will outright cancel your homeowner's policy if they discover you are burning wood without WETT certification, leaving you scrambling to find coverage. This is not theoretical risk — Ottawa insurance brokers regularly

encounter claims denials for exactly this reason.

Before buying a home with an existing wood stove or fireplace, always ask the seller for proof of a valid WETT inspection. If the seller cannot provide documentation, budget $300 to $600 for a Level 2 WETT inspection (more thorough than Level 1, appropriate for real estate transactions) before you close on the property. This inspection may reveal that the installation is non-compliant, the chimney is unsafe, or modifications are required to bring the system up to code—information that could save you thousands of dollars and prevent a dangerous situation.

When you install a new wood stove, fireplace insert, or wood-burning fireplace, hire a WETT-certified installer who will perform the installation to WETT standards and provide you with WETT documentation upon completion. This documentation is essential for your insurer. Keep your WETT inspection reports on file — you may need them when renewing your insurance, selling your home, or filing a claim.

If you are ready to install a wood stove or fireplace and need a WETT-certified professional, you can browse experienced fireplace installers and chimney sweeps through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory to find contractors in your area who understand Ottawa's climate and regulatory requirements.

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

- Homeupgraders
- JC Carpentry
- Ottawa Caulking
- Best Hand2Hand moving company
- TIER 1 HVAC SERVICE'S INC

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Q15

What Ontario fire code clearance distances are required between a wood stove and combustible walls in Ottawa homes?

Wood Stove Clearance Requirements for Ottawa Homes

Wood stoves in Ontario must maintain minimum clearances to combustible materials (wood framing, drywall, insulation, and finished wall surfaces) as specified in the Ontario Building Code and the manufacturer's installation instructions — typically **18 inches (45 centimetres) from the back and sides of the stove to any combustible wall surface, and 36 inches (91 centimetres) from the front**, though your specific stove may require greater distances depending on its design and heat output.

These clearance requirements exist for a concrete reason: wood stoves radiate intense heat in all directions. Even a properly operating stove with a metal firebox can heat the air around it to temperatures that will ignite wood framing, drywall, and insulation if they are too close. In Ottawa's deep continental climate where wood stoves and fireplace inserts are relied upon for supplemental heating during brutal winters, homeowners often want to tuck their stoves into tight spaces — a corner alcove, against an external wall, or squeezed into a room addition. Those spaces are precisely where clearance violations create house fire risk.

The specific clearance distances you must follow are determined by three sources, in this order of authority: **(1) your wood stove manufacturer's installation manual** — this is the binding requirement for your specific appliance and takes precedence over everything else; **(2) the Ontario Building Code**, which sets minimums for installations in Ontario; and **(3) WETT (Wood Energy Technology Transfer) standards**, which are the installation standard adopted by virtually all insurance companies and fire officials in Canada.

The standard Ontario Building Code clearance minimum is **18 inches from combustible surfaces on the sides and back, 36 inches in front**. However, many modern wood stoves — especially EPA-certified catalytic or non-catalytic models — can achieve these same clearances through engineering: some have insulated walls, others have metal heat shields that are part of the certified design, and some are designed specifically for tight installations. Your stove's manual will specify if different clearances apply. Some high-efficiency stoves permit 12 inches to combustible materials if they include proper thermal shielding; a few premium models can achieve 6-inch clearances with engineered heat deflection systems. The only valid distance is what the manufacturer specifies in the installation manual for your exact model.

How to determine your stove's exact clearances: Pull out the installation manual (manufacturers often include a clearance diagram right on the first page). If you have lost the manual, visit the manufacturer's website — reputable stove makers like Jøtul, Osburn, Napoleon, Drolet, and Vermont Casting post manuals as free PDFs. If the manual is genuinely unavailable, contact the manufacturer directly with your model number. You can usually find the model number on a metal plate inside the firebox or on the back of the stove.

Measuring clearances in your installation: Use a tape measure and measure from the actual surface of the wood stove (not the legs or any removable components) to the nearest combustible surface — studs, drywall, insulation, or finished wall material. Account for any protrusions like door handles or thermometers that extend beyond the main stove body. If your stove is against an external wall, remember that the insulation behind the

drywall counts as a combustible material, even if the drywall itself is non-combustible — measure to the inside surface of the drywall. If you have already installed a stove and are unsure whether clearances are correct, you will need a WETT Level 2 or Level 3 inspection to verify — the inspector can confirm whether your installation meets code and your insurance company's requirements.

Reducing clearances with heat shielding: If your space does not accommodate the required clearances without modification, you have options. Stainless steel heat shields (metal barriers that create an air gap between the stove and the combustible wall) can reduce required clearances — a 1-inch air gap with proper shielding can drop the required distance from 18 inches to as little as 12 inches or even less, depending on the shield design and your stove's manual. High-temperature insulation board can also reduce clearances in some installations. However, any modification must be explicitly permitted in your stove's installation manual, and the shield itself must meet specific material requirements. Do not improvise shielding — improper shielding can trap heat and actually increase fire risk. If your stove manual permits a shield reduction, have a WETT-certified installer verify that the shield is installed correctly.

In Ottawa's climate, this matters even more: Ottawa's long heating season means wood stoves run for extended periods — sometimes 8 to 12 hours a day from November through March. A stove that is running continuously at or near full output generates sustained heat that will eventually degrade or ignite nearby combustibles if clearances are inadequate. The freeze-thaw cycles that stress Ottawa chimneys also affect the stove installation: expansion and contraction can open gaps in shielding or allow combustible materials to shift closer to the stove over time. An installation that barely meets code in spring may be unsafe by January.

Important considerations: The clearance requirement includes the hearth pad at floor level — your stove should sit on a non-combustible hearth that extends at least 12 inches in front of the stove door and 6 inches on each side (check your manual for your specific model's requirements, as some require larger hearths). The chimney that vents your stove also has clearance requirements — it must maintain 6 inches of clearance from any combustible material in the walls, attic, or roof spaces. If your stove is being installed in a basement, attic, or room addition, additional clearances may apply due to confined-space heating rules. Any electrical work associated with the installation — like running a circuit for a pellet stove auger or a blower fan hardwiring — requires an ESA-licensed electrician.

This is one area where you absolutely should not guess or assume. If you are installing a new wood stove, hire a WETT-certified installer who will verify clearances during the installation process and provide written documentation that the installation complies with the Ontario Building Code and your stove's manual. If you inherit an existing stove installation (in a home you have just purchased, for example) or you are unsure about an installation you are considering, a WETT Level 1 inspection ($250 to $450 in Ottawa) will verify clearances, inspect the chimney, and give you insurance-compliant documentation. Insurance companies increasingly require WETT inspection

documentation before they will insure a home with a wood stove, and if a house fire occurs

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- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Renovo Construction
- Sam’s Brickworks
- Diamond renovations

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Q16

Can I call Ottawa 3-1-1 to find out which fireplace installations require a building permit in my neighbourhood?

Yes, calling Ottawa 3-1-1 is an excellent first step to find out whether your specific fireplace or chimney project requires a building permit — and the city can also tell you about any heritage district restrictions or neighbourhood-specific requirements that might apply to your address.

The City of Ottawa Building Code Services handles permit requirements for fireplace and chimney work. When you call 3-1-1, explain exactly what you're planning — whether it's a new gas fireplace installation, a wood stove insert into an existing chimney, a full chimney rebuild, or converting an open masonry fireplace to a gas insert. The city can tell you whether a permit is required, what inspections are involved, and what the process looks like. You can also visit ottawa.ca and navigate to the Building Code Services section to find permit application forms and technical guidance, though speaking with someone directly is usually faster for fireplace-specific questions.

The Ontario Building Code requires permits for new chimney construction, major chimney structural repairs or rebuilds, and modifications that affect the house structure or safety systems. A simple gas fireplace insert into an existing fireplace may or may not require a permit depending on whether it involves new venting or electrical work — the city can clarify. If your home is in a heritage-designated area like the Glebe, Sandy Hill, New Edinburgh, or Rockcliffe Park, there may be additional restrictions on exterior chimney modifications, visible venting, or chimney cap styles that the city's heritage planning office enforces alongside building code requirements.

One important note: having the right permit protects you. It ensures the work meets current code standards, it's documented for insurance purposes, and it supports future resale value. If you hire a contractor, confirm in writing that they will handle permit applications and arrange required inspections — this is part of their responsibility, not yours.

When you call, have your street address ready and a clear description of what you want to install. The city staff can usually answer the permit question within a few minutes, and they'll point you to any other approvals you might need.

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

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Denys Builds Designs Renovations

- East Coast Sheet Metal Inc
- Beauty of gardens

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Q17

How much do Ottawa fireplace permit fees and TSSA gas inspection costs add to a total installation budget?

Permit fees and TSSA inspections add $500 to $1,200 to a typical fireplace installation budget in Ottawa, depending on the type of appliance and whether the project requires a building permit.

For gas fireplace installations, TSSA compliance labelling is mandatory but does not carry a separate inspection fee — the TSSA-licensed gas fitter who performs the installation includes compliance tagging as part of their work at no additional cost. However, you will pay the gas fitter's labour for this final inspection step, typically $100 to $200 of their overall installation fee. The real cost driver is whether your project requires a City of Ottawa building permit, which applies to new chimney construction, major structural modifications, or new appliance installations in spaces where fireplace installation was not previously possible (like converting an office to a den with a new gas fireplace).

A standard building permit for fireplace work in Ottawa costs $200 to $400 depending on the project's estimated construction value — the City of Ottawa issues permits through Building Code Services (call 3-1-1 or visit ottawa.ca). The permit process typically takes 5 to 10 business days for straightforward applications, though complex projects or heritage-designated properties may take longer. Your contractor can often handle permit applications on your behalf for an additional $100 to $200 fee, which is usually worthwhile if you are unfamiliar with the process.

For wood-burning appliances, WETT certification is not a legal requirement in Ontario, but virtually all insurance companies now require a WETT Level 1 inspection before they will insure a home with a wood stove or fireplace insert. This inspection costs $250 to $450 and is performed after installation by a WETT-certified chimney professional. Many homeowners schedule this as a post-installation inspection rather than during the permit phase, so it may not appear as an "upfront" cost but should be factored into total project budgeting. A WETT Level 2 inspection (more detailed, often required for real estate transactions or post-chimney-fire assessments) runs $350 to $600.

The timing of permit work matters in Ottawa's short construction season. Exterior chimney work, cap installation, and crown repair cannot proceed in winter conditions, so if your project involves structural chimney modifications,

plan to apply for permits in March or April for May-through-October completion. This avoids November-through-March delays when masonry mortar cannot cure properly.

Building permits are essential for insurance coverage and resale value. If a fireplace or chimney project was completed without a required permit, your homeowner's insurance may deny claims related to fire damage, and you could face issues when selling your home if the unpermitted work surfaces during a home inspection. It is worth the modest upfront cost and scheduling delay to do it correctly.

When budgeting a gas fireplace installation in the $3,500 to $7,500 range, add $300 to $600 for permits and TSSA compliance. For a wood stove installation ($4,500 to $9,500 total), add $250 to $450 for the mandatory WETT inspection. For any project involving a new or modified chimney, add an additional $200 to $400 for the building permit itself. Always request a detailed written quote from your installer that clearly specifies who handles permitting, what fees are included, and what the timeline looks like — this prevents surprise costs and scheduling conflicts later.

If you are ready to move forward with a fireplace or chimney project and need to connect with a licensed gas fitter, WETT-certified chimney professional, or general fireplace contractor familiar with Ottawa's permit requirements, you can browse experienced local providers through the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

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

- 613Bins
- The Egress Group Inc
- Transitions Renovations
- Nic’s D.U.C.T Works Inc
- McLaren Masonry

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Q18

Will my Ottawa home insurance rates increase or decrease after replacing an old wood fireplace with a gas insert?

Replacing an old wood fireplace with a gas insert will almost certainly **lower your insurance premiums**, and potentially by a meaningful amount. Insurance companies view gas inserts as dramatically safer and lower-risk than wood-burning fireplaces — they eliminate the creosote fire hazard, reduce structural stress on the chimney, and produce far fewer insurance claims.

The insurance savings come down to risk reduction. A traditional open masonry fireplace is an underwriter's concern in several ways: it operates at only 30 to 40 percent efficiency, which means most heat escapes up the chimney; it requires annual chimney cleaning and inspections to manage creosote buildup; and it has a meaningful fire risk if the chimney is neglected or damaged. A gas insert, by contrast, burns at 70 to 80 percent efficiency with minimal creosote production, has sealed combustion with direct venting (in most Ottawa installations), and produces far fewer insurance-related incidents. Insurers reward this lower risk with lower premiums.

How much will you save? In Ottawa, insurance premium reductions for converting a wood fireplace to a gas insert typically range from **$100 to $300 annually**, depending on your home's value, location, and your insurer's specific underwriting guidelines. Some insurance companies offer larger discounts — occasionally reaching $400 to $500 per year — while others are more modest. The discount usually applies as long as the conversion is documented and completed to code. The savings are genuine, but they are not so dramatic that they will fully offset the $2,500 to $5,500 cost of the insert installation. Still, over a decade, the insurance savings can amount to $1,000 to $3,000, which is meaningful.

What documentation matters for your insurer? After the gas insert is installed, you'll need written proof that the work was completed by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter and that the appliance received a compliance tag. You should also request a copy of the TSSA compliance certificate and any inspection documentation. When you notify your insurer of the upgrade, provide these documents — they will confirm the work was done to code and help your insurance agent process the premium adjustment quickly. Some insurers will also want a WETT Level 1 inspection of the chimney system to confirm it is in good condition, though this is less common for gas conversions than it is for wood stove installations.

One important caveat: If your old fireplace was not insured (some homeowners with deteriorated or unsafe fireplaces actually have them excluded from their insurance), then converting it to a gas insert may actually allow you to re-add fireplace coverage to your policy at a lower rate than if you replaced it with another wood fireplace. Conversely, if your fireplace was already insured at a reduced rate due to age or condition, the premium drop after conversion will reflect the difference between "aging wood fireplace" risk and "new gas insert" risk — so the absolute dollar savings may be smaller than the example ranges above, but the direction is always downward.

The broader financial picture: While insurance savings alone won't justify the conversion cost, they are a legitimate bonus on top of the other benefits gas inserts deliver in Ottawa's climate. You'll gain substantial heating efficiency, eliminate the hazard of creosote fires, reduce the need for frequent chimney maintenance, and enjoy the

convenience of a fireplace that ignites with a remote or wall switch. For many Ottawa homeowners, especially those burning wood regularly during our long winter season, the combination of insurance savings, reduced maintenance costs, and improved heating efficiency makes the conversion financially sensible over a 10 to 15-year timeline.

If you're ready to move forward, you can browse experienced fireplace contractors in the Ottawa area through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory — they can provide firm quotes on the conversion work and explain exactly what documentation your insurer will require after installation.

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

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- The Egress Group Inc
- Joe Imerti Contracting
- Anchor Home Comfort
- JMY Renovations

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Q19

What are Ottawa's requirements for carbon monoxide detectors near gas fireplaces under Ontario fire code?

Ontario's carbon monoxide detector requirements are straightforward and non-negotiable: **Ontario law mandates that every level of a home containing a fuel-burning appliance must have at least one carbon monoxide detector, and detectors must be certified to Canadian standard CAN/ULC-S552.** For a home with a gas fireplace, this means detectors on every storey — including the basement if your furnace is located there — with at least one detector positioned near bedrooms where people sleep, since carbon monoxide poisoning often strikes silently at night.

Why This Matters in Ottawa

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless gas produced whenever any fuel-burning appliance — gas fireplace, furnace, water heater, or wood stove — operates. Defective, improperly installed, or poorly maintained gas fireplaces, blocked chimneys, and negative pressure problems in homes can all cause dangerous carbon monoxide accumulation. Ottawa's extreme cold and tightly sealed modern homes create particular risk. When a homeowner closes windows tight for the winter and runs exhaust fans aggressively, negative pressure can actually pull carbon monoxide back into living spaces instead of venting it safely outdoors. A gas fireplace with a cracked heat exchanger, improper venting, or a chimney blockage is a silent killer — and it kills quietly, often while people sleep. The Ontario Fire Code exists specifically because carbon monoxide poisoning claims lives every year in Canada.

Specific placement requirements under the Ontario Building Code: Install at least one detector on each storey of the home. Bedrooms and sleeping areas should have a detector within 10 metres (roughly 33 feet) of any fuel-burning appliance. If your master bedroom is upstairs and your gas fireplace is in the main floor living room, you need detectors on both levels — one near the fireplace and one near the bedroom. For open-concept homes, a centrally located detector on the main floor may satisfy the requirement, but bedrooms on upper storeys still need coverage. In a two-storey home with a gas fireplace in the living room and bedrooms upstairs, you absolutely need detectors on both floors.

Detector type and maintenance: Purchase only detectors certified to CAN/ULC-S552 (you can verify this on the packaging). Plug-in detectors that connect to standard electrical outlets are acceptable, but battery-powered models are also compliant. Hard-wired detectors connected to your home's electrical system with battery backup are an excellent choice for permanent protection. Never place detectors in kitchens (cooking appliances produce false alarms) or in direct line with exhaust vents where they might read abnormally high levels during normal operation. Test detectors monthly by pressing the test button — the alarm should sound loudly. Replace batteries in battery-powered models twice yearly (coinciding with daylight saving time changes is a helpful reminder). Replace

the entire detector every 5 to 7 years, as the sensor degrades over time. Write the installation date on the back of the detector so you know when it needs replacement.

Critical warning signs that warrant immediate professional inspection: If your carbon monoxide detector ever alarms, treat it as an emergency. Evacuate the home immediately, shut off the gas fireplace and any other fuel-burning appliances, open windows for ventilation, and call Enbridge emergency gas line support (1-866-763-5427) or 911. Do not re-enter the home until a TSSA-licensed gas fitter has inspected the gas fireplace and chimney system. Do not assume it was a false alarm — carbon monoxide detectors rarely false-alarm if they are properly maintained and correctly placed. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning — headaches, dizziness, nausea, confusion, or difficulty waking in the morning — should be taken as seriously as an alarm. If your household experiences these symptoms, especially when the gas fireplace or furnace is running, evacuate and seek professional inspection immediately.

Installation best practices: Position detectors at eye level or slightly higher so you can easily hear and read them. Do not place them directly above or beside a gas fireplace, as this can create false readings during normal operation. Keep detectors at least 3 metres away from cooking appliances. In apartments and condos, install detectors in every bedroom and common living area — shared ductwork and ventilation systems in multi-unit buildings can allow carbon monoxide to migrate between units. Many Ottawa fire departments offer free carbon monoxide detector installations if you purchase the detector yourself — call your local fire station to ask about this community service.

When you have your gas fireplace professionally installed or serviced by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter, mention that you want confirmation the appliance is properly vented and that they recommend detector placement for your specific home layout. A reputable installer will walk you through detector requirements and placement as part of the installation handoff. If you're purchasing a home with an existing gas fireplace, ask the home inspector or the selling agent whether compliant CO detectors are currently installed — this is a quick safety checklist item during your inspection period.

Protecting your family from carbon monoxide starts with understanding the risk, installing compliant detectors, and maintaining them faithfully. It's inexpensive protection against a very real threat in Ottawa's long heating season.

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

- Apple HVAC and mechanical
- The Egress Group Inc
- Galico Home Comfort Inc.

- Capital City Drywall
- ComfortWay Plumbing Heating and Cooling

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Q20

How much does a WETT inspection cost in Ottawa before installing a wood-burning fireplace or insert?

A WETT inspection in Ottawa typically costs **$250 to $450 for a Level 1 inspection**, which is the visual assessment most homeowners need before installing a wood-burning fireplace or insert. If you're dealing with a more complex situation — such as a real estate transaction, post-fire damage assessment, or concerns about hidden deterioration — a **Level 2 inspection runs $350 to $600** and involves more detailed probing and documentation. A **Level 3 inspection costs $500 to $1,000 or more** and requires partially invasive work like removing sections of drywall or flooring to examine concealed chimney areas — this is rarely needed for new installations but may be required if your chimney has suspected structural damage or previous fire damage.

Why WETT Inspection Matters Before Installation

Here's the critical part: while a WETT inspection is technically voluntary in Ontario, your homeowner's insurance company almost certainly requires one. Most insurers will not cover a wood stove, fireplace insert, or wood-burning fireplace unless a WETT-certified professional has inspected the system and signed off on it. This means that skipping the inspection might save you $300 to $400 upfront, but it will cost you far more if your house catches fire and your insurer denies the claim because the appliance was not WETT-inspected and certified.

For a new wood insert installation in an existing masonry fireplace, a **Level 1 WETT inspection before installation** confirms that your chimney is structurally sound, properly sized for the new appliance, free of major obstructions, and has adequate clearances to combustibles around the fireplace opening. The inspector examines the flue from bottom to top, checks for cracks or deterioration in the clay tile liner, verifies that the chimney is at least 3 feet above the highest point where it penetrates the roof (the 3-2-10 rule), confirms that no nearby structures or tall trees are creating downdraft problems, and documents that the hearth extension meets Ontario Building Code requirements (typically 16 inches in front and 8 inches to each side of the firebox opening for a wood insert).

Ottawa's brutal freeze-thaw cycle makes this inspection especially valuable. A chimney that looks intact from the outside may have internal spalling — where ice repeatedly cracks and breaks apart the clay tile liner from the inside out. A WETT inspector will identify this damage and recommend whether the chimney needs relining before the

new appliance is installed. Installing a high-output wood insert into a deteriorating chimney is a recipe for chimney fires and dangerous flue gas leakage into your home.

Timeline and Scheduling

Schedule your WETT inspection well before you plan to have the wood stove or insert installed. Many installers recommend getting the inspection done first so you and the installer both know exactly what you're working with. The inspection itself takes 1 to 2 hours, and you'll receive a detailed written report documenting the condition of the chimney, any defects found, and recommendations for repair or relining before installation. If the chimney needs significant work — such as relining or crown repair — you'll want to budget extra time and money for those repairs before the fireplace installation can proceed. Since major masonry work on chimneys should be done between April and November (when temperatures are consistently above 5 degrees Celsius for mortar to cure properly), spring is the ideal time to get your inspection and schedule any necessary repairs.

After Installation

After your wood insert or stove is installed, you'll want another WETT inspection — typically a **Level 1 follow-up at $250 to $450** — to confirm that the installation meets code, clearances are correct, and the entire system is safe and ready to use. This post-installation inspection generates the documentation you need for your insurance company.

When you're ready to move forward with a professional WETT-certified inspector and wood stove or insert installation, you can browse fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracking.com/directory to find WETT-certified professionals in your area.

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

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- The Egress Group Inc
- Beauty of gardens
- Speedy Pete's Inc
- Canadian Masonry Services

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Q21

What does TSSA certification mean for gas fireplace installers in Ontario and why should I verify it?

TSSA certification means a gas fitter has passed rigorous training, examination, and background checks to legally install, repair, and service gas appliances in Ontario — it is not optional, it is the law. If someone is not TSSA-licensed, the work is illegal and your home insurance will not cover it.

Why TSSA Matters for Your Safety and Protection

The Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) is Ontario's regulator for gas safety. A TSSA-licensed gas fitter carries either a **G2 certificate** (apprentice-level, can work under a G3 supervisor) or a **G3 certificate** (journeyperson-level, can work independently and supervise others). These credentials mean the person has completed classroom training, logged hundreds of hours of supervised field work, passed a comprehensive exam covering gas codes and safety protocols, and undergone a criminal record check. This is serious regulation because natural gas is explosive and invisible — improper installation, leaking connections, or faulty venting can cause carbon monoxide poisoning, explosions, or fires that kill people.

When a TSSA-licensed gas fitter completes work on a gas fireplace, they must tag the appliance with a **TSSA compliance label** and provide you with documentation confirming the installation meets Ontario Building Code requirements. This tag proves the work was done legally and by a qualified professional. Your home insurance depends on this — if you ever file a claim and your insurer discovers the gas fireplace was installed by an unlicensed person, the claim can be denied entirely, even if the fireplace had nothing to do with the loss you are claiming.

How to Verify TSSA Certification

Verification is straightforward and takes two minutes. Ask the installer for their TSSA licence number or certificate details, then visit the **TSSA website (tssa.org)** or call **1-800-640-8772** and use their contractor verification tool. You can confirm the licence is active, current, and in good standing. A legitimate gas fitter will have this information readily available and will not hesitate to share it — in fact, they will likely offer it unprompted as part of their credibility. If an installer becomes defensive or vague about their TSSA status, that is a red flag.

When you get quotes for a gas fireplace installation in Ottawa, always confirm TSSA licensing before hiring. Pricing typically ranges from **$3,500 to $7,500 for a standard direct-vent gas fireplace installed** or **$2,500 to $5,500 for a gas insert into an existing masonry fireplace**, and these quotes should explicitly state that the work includes TSSA tagging and compliance documentation. A licensed gas fitter will build the compliance process into their timeline and cost — never hire someone who tries to save you money by cutting corners on licensing.

The Real Risks of Unlicensed Work

Unlicensed gas installation creates three catastrophic risks. **Carbon monoxide poisoning** is the most dangerous — faulty venting or improper gas combustion can flood your home with colourless, odourless, deadly carbon monoxide while you sleep. **Gas leaks** from improperly connected lines or fittings can cause explosions or slow poisoning. **Insurance denial** means if your unlicensed gas fireplace causes a house fire, carbon monoxide hospitalization, or any other damage, your insurer can refuse to pay — leaving you personally liable for tens of thousands in losses. No price saving is worth risking your life or your family's safety.

When you are ready to hire a licensed gas fitter for your fireplace project, you can browse experienced fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory, where you can verify qualifications and reach out directly to local professionals who know Ottawa's code requirements and climate challenges.

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

- 613Bins
- The Egress Group Inc
- Home Front Services
- Elie The Carpet Guy Inc.
- Dtech Services and Solutions Inc

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Q22

Do I need a City of Ottawa building permit to install a new gas fireplace in my home?

The short answer is yes, a City of Ottawa building permit is typically required for a new gas fireplace installation, though the specific trigger depends on whether you are installing into an existing fireplace opening or creating a new one.

When a permit is definitely required: If you are installing a fireplace where none existed before, or if you are doing structural work to the exterior (like adding a new chimney or vent penetration through the roof), you must obtain a building permit from the City of Ottawa. This applies to all new gas fireplace installations that involve modifications to the building structure. The same applies if you are converting an existing wood-burning fireplace to gas, which technically counts as a new installation under the building code.

Why permits matter for Ottawa homeowners: The Ontario Building Code specifies several requirements that are particularly important in Ottawa's climate. The chimney or vent pipe must meet the 3-2-10 rule — it must extend at least 3 feet above the roof penetration point and at least 2 feet higher than any roofing, structure, or tree within 10 feet of the chimney. This is critical in Ottawa because our cold air pooling and wind patterns can create downdraft problems if the vent is too short. The code also specifies clearances from combustibles (typically 6 inches for a direct-vent gas fireplace depending on the model), and hearth protection requirements. A permit ensures your installation meets these standards, which protects both your safety and your home's insurability.

Building permit process: Contact the City of Ottawa Building Code Services at 3-1-1 or visit ottawa.ca/building-permits to apply. You will need to submit plans showing the proposed fireplace location, the venting configuration, and how it integrates with your roof and exterior walls. Your contractor can often handle the permit application on your behalf. Permit costs typically run $150 to $400 depending on the project scope. Processing time is usually 5 to 15 business days, though complex installations may take longer. Plan ahead — don't submit your permit application one week before you want the work done.

TSSA licensing is separate from building permits: Even with a building permit, your installation must also be performed by a TSSA-licensed gas fitter (G2 or G3 certificate) and tagged with a TSSA compliance label after completion. TSSA (Technical Standards and Safety Authority) regulates gas appliances in Ontario separately from the City's building permit process. Both are required — the permit ensures the installation meets building code for venting and clearances, while the TSSA license ensures the gas piping, appliance connection, and safety systems are correct. After installation, you should receive documentation from the gas fitter confirming TSSA compliance.

Heritage district considerations: If your home is in a designated heritage area like the Glebe, Sandy Hill, New Edinburgh, or Rockcliffe Park, check with the City of Ottawa heritage planning office before applying for a permit. Heritage designations may restrict exterior chimney modifications, vent pipe visibility, or cap styles. This can affect whether a direct-vent system is acceptable or whether you need to relocate the vent to a less visible part of the roof.

When you are ready to move forward, a professional gas fitter can guide you through both the building permit and TSSA requirements, and you can browse experienced fireplace contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to find installers who handle permits as part of their service.

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

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- The Egress Group Inc
- Floor-2-Wall Inc
- Renovo Construction
- Core Climate Ltd.

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Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Fireplaces. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any fireplace installation or chimney project. Information is current as of May 10, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawafireplaces.com** for the latest answers.