OTTAWA ABATEMENT

# Asbestos Removal

How asbestos drywall compound, plaster, ceilings, floor tile, pipe insulation and siding are removed under Ontario's Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3 rules

4 Expert Answers from Abatement IQ

ottawaabatement.com/construction-brain

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Q1

## Can an asbestos job in Ottawa be split to lower its Type?

No. Ontario's O. Reg. 278/05 closes that door directly. Section 12(5) says: "Work on ceiling tiles, drywall or friable asbestos-containing material is classified according to the total area on which work is done consecutively in a room or enclosed area, even if the work is divided into smaller jobs." So a contractor who returns on separate days to remove friable material in the same room cannot count each visit separately: the areas add up.

What this means in practice is straightforward. If a contractor quotes to remove friable material from a ceiling in two or three sessions, each covering less than one square metre, the regulation treats the whole ceiling as a single job. The Type is set by the combined area, not by how the schedule is arranged. The same rule covers drywall with asbestos joint compound and ceiling tiles: for those, the thresholds are about the total area worked consecutively, not visit count or invoice count. Other materials are not named in that subsection.

The thresholds that matter are these. For friable material, removing one square metre or less is Type 2; removing more than one square metre is Type 3. For drywall with asbestos joint compound, removing less than one square metre is Type 1; removing one square metre or more is Type 2. Whether a material is friable is decided by the contractor on site, not from a description or a photo, and the Type the work falls into depends on that assessment combined with the total area.

Type 3 work carries obligations that Type 2 does not. Before starting a Type 3 operation, the employer or constructor must notify, orally and in writing, an inspector at the nearest Ministry of Labour office. Every worker must have completed the Asbestos Abatement Worker Training Program and every supervisor the Asbestos Abatement Supervisor Training Program, approved by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, before work begins. A clearance air test under section 18 of the regulation is required once the enclosure is dry. None of those requirements disappear because the job is broken into sessions.

For ceiling tiles, drywall or friable material, a quote that splits the job into smaller pieces to avoid a higher Type is not consistent with section 12(5). If you receive a quote structured that way, it is worth asking the contractor directly how they are applying section 12(5) to the total area of ceiling tiles, drywall or friable material in that room.

When you have two written quotes side by side, put the Type each contractor names for the job next to the total area they measured, and check that the two are consistent with each other and with the thresholds in the regulation.

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Q2

# What should an Ottawa quote say about protecting the rest of the house?

## What a fair asbestos quote says about protecting the rest of the house

A quote for asbestos work in an Ottawa home should spell out, in writing, exactly how the work area will be isolated from the rest of the building and what happens to the air, the surfaces and the waste before the contractor leaves. If those details are missing, ask for them before you sign.

The level of containment the contractor must set up depends on the Type of operation, which the contractor determines on site based on whether the material is friable and how much of it is being disturbed. For Type 3 work, O. Reg. 278/05 requires a clearance air test once the enclosure is dry. The clearance standard under section 18 is that every air sample inside must not exceed 0.01 fibres per cubic centimetre, measured by PCM, or that the inside average is statistically less than the outside average by TEM. The quote should name which method will be used and confirm that results will be posted within 24 hours, as the regulation requires.

Here is what to look for in the written scope:

- A description of the enclosure: what barriers are going up, where, and how the work area connects to the rest of the house during the job.
- How the heating and ventilation system will be handled during the work.
- A statement of the Type the contractor has assigned, based on friability and area, so you know what the regulation requires of them for that job.
- For Type 3 work, confirmation that every worker has completed the Asbestos Abatement Worker Training Program and every supervisor the Asbestos Abatement Supervisor Training Program, and that the Ministry of Labour inspector notice has been given before work starts.
- Where the waste is going. Ontario Regulation 347 requires that asbestos waste leave the site only to a disposal facility whose operator has agreed to accept it and has been told when to expect it. The quote should name the facility or confirm it has been arranged.
- Whether a clearance air test is included in the price. Published Ontario contractor prices read in September 2026 put air clearance testing at roughly $300 to $800. If the quote does not include it, you can ask for it to be added.

You can also check the contractor's WSIB clearance through the WSIB online search before signing. The clearance is valid for up to 90 days. Under the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, if the agreement was signed at your home and the total exceeds $50, you have 10 days to cancel after receiving the written copy; check the current rules, as that Act is being replaced.

Where something was already disturbed before the quote was sorted out, stop the work, don't disturb it further, and have it tested by a professional.

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Q3

## Can asbestos floor tiles be covered instead of removed in Ottawa?

Covering intact tiles instead of removing them is a choice some owners weigh, and Health Canada says there are no significant health risks if asbestos-containing materials are left undisturbed, sealed behind walls and floorboards, or tightly bound in good condition. Published Ontario contractor prices for removal of vinyl floor tile and mastic that contains asbestos run roughly $5 to $15 per square foot (general asbestos removal is $8 to $15 per square foot), so covering can look attractive when the tiles are in good condition.

### What decides it

O. Reg. 278/05 classifies work by whether material is disturbed and how much. Removing non-friable asbestos-containing material without breaking or cutting it is a Type 1 operation. If the tiles are friable, or removal would break or cut them outside the Type 1 conditions, a higher Type and its controls may apply. Whether your tiles are friable is something the contractor decides on site, not from a photo or description. The question with covering is whether installing the new floor disturbs the tiles at all.

Ask the contractor to say in writing whether the tiles are intact, and whether the new flooring can go down without cutting, grinding or sanding them.

A few things to settle before you choose covering over removal:

- Whether the tiles have been tested and confirmed to contain asbestos at 0.5 per cent or more by dry weight (the threshold under O. Reg. 278/05, section 3(4)), or whether you are proceeding on the assumption that they do.
- Whether the installation of the new flooring requires any fastening, cutting or grinding that would disturb the tiles beneath.
- What the contractor's written scope says about the condition of the tiles and the method being used.
- Where the waste goes if any tiles do need to come out: Ontario Regulation 347 requires asbestos waste to be transported only to a disposal site whose operator has agreed to accept it, so that arrangement must be made before any material leaves the property.

A clearance air test is required by O. Reg. 278/05 only after Type 3 work. If the job stays at Type 1 or Type 2, the regulation does not require one, though you can ask for it to be included in the quote.

After the job is done, keep the original lab report confirming what the tiles contain, the contractor's written description of the Type of work performed and the method used, and, if a clearance air test was done, the results, which the owner is required to keep for at least one year under section 18 of O. Reg. 278/05.

Before you commit, ask the contractor to confirm in writing whether the installation of the new flooring will disturb the tiles at any point, and what they will do if a tile breaks during the work.

Q4

## Why wet asbestos material during removal in Ontario?

In Ontario, wetting is part of how the law sorts the work. Health Canada lists breaking apart, sanding, scraping and similar activities among the ways renovation can release asbestos fibres, and the asbestos regulation ties one of its Type 1 operations to keeping the material wet.

Ontario's O. Reg. 278/05 builds wetting into the Type classifications directly. Breaking or cutting non-friable asbestos-containing material with non-powered hand-held tools is classified as Type 1 only when the material is wetted during the work. If the material is cut dry, that item no longer applies: the regulation's catch-all makes any operation not listed as Type 1 or Type 3 a Type 2 operation, and power tools without HEPA dust collection make it Type 3, with a Ministry of Labour inspector notice before the job starts and a clearance air test once the enclosure is dry. So wetting is not just a precaution: it is part of what determines which set of legal requirements applies to the job.

For Type 2 and Type 3 the thresholds turn on friability and area: one square metre or less of friable material is Type 2, more than one square metre is Type 3. Whether a material is friable is assessed on site by the contractor. That is why you should ask for the Type in writing before work begins: it tells you exactly which controls the contractor is legally required to follow.

### What a fair quote should address

- Which Type applies and why, in writing
- Whether the method relies on wetting, since that is part of the Type 1 test
- For Type 3: confirmation that workers have completed the Asbestos Abatement Worker Training Program and supervisors the Asbestos Abatement Supervisor Training Program, both approved by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, and that the Ministry of Labour inspector notice has been given before work starts
- Whether a clearance air test is included; O. Reg. 278/05 section 18 requires one after Type 3 work, and you can ask for it to be included in the quote for lower-Type jobs as well
- Which disposal site has agreed to accept the waste under Ontario Regulation 347, because asbestos waste cannot leave the site until that arrangement is confirmed

Health Canada advises hiring a professional to test before renovating and a qualified asbestos removal specialist if asbestos is found, rather than attempting the work yourself.
You can request contact from local abatement contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory through the form on this page.

Before you commit to anyone, ask the contractor to name the disposal facility that has agreed to accept the waste and confirm it in writing, because that single detail tells you the job has been planned end to end.

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**Disclaimer:** This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Abatement. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa or your own municipality) before starting any asbestos, mould or lead paint project. Asbestos work in Ontario is governed by O. Reg. 278/05. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawaabatement.com** for the latest answers.