OTTAWA ABATEMENT

# Clearance & Air Testing

Clearance air testing on Type 3 asbestos jobs (the 0.01 f/cc pass line, PCM versus TEM). Post-remediation checks after mould work.

4 Expert Answers from Abatement IQ

ottawaabatement.com/construction-brain

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Q1

## Is a clearance test required after Type 2 asbestos work in Ontario?

No, Ontario's asbestos regulation does not require a clearance air test after Type 2 work. Section 18 of O. Reg. 278/05 is the only place clearance air testing appears, and it applies to Type 3 operations. The Type 1 and Type 2 sections of the regulation (sections 14 to 17) contain no clearance test requirement.

That said, nothing stops you from asking a contractor to include a clearance air test in their quote for Type 2 work. If you want that assurance, put it in writing before the job starts. Under section 18, the test is conducted by a competent worker once the enclosure is dry, and results must be posted within 24 hours, with the owner keeping a copy for at least one year. The PCM method passes if every air sample does not exceed 0.01 fibres per cubic centimetre, drawn at a minimum of 2,400 litres of air per filter. The TEM method passes if the inside average is statistically less than the outside average, or there is no statistical difference between them. Published Ontario contractor prices read in September 2026 put an air clearance test at about $300 to $800.

A few other things worth knowing about Type 2 work. The contractor must ensure every worker has received instruction and training by a competent person, as required by section 19(1) of O. Reg. 278/05. For Type 3 work, section 20 requires workers and supervisors to have completed the Ministry-approved Asbestos Abatement training programs before work begins; that formal program requirement does not appear in the Type 2 sections. The Type itself is determined on site by the contractor, based on whether the material is friable and how much of it will be disturbed. Ask the contractor to confirm the Type in writing before work begins.

For waste, 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. Ask the contractor which site they have arranged, and confirm that the driver is trained in asbestos waste management as the regulation requires.

Before you sign, ask the contractor whether they will include a clearance air test in the scope, and if not, what post-work verification they offer instead.

The request form on this page sends your job details to local abatement contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

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Q2

## Is air testing useful after mould removal in an Ottawa house?

Air testing after mould removal can be useful, but it is not required by law in Ontario, and what it tells you depends on when and how it is done.

We found no Ontario statute or regulation that requires air testing after mould remediation in a residential setting. Health Canada's guidance is about fixing moisture and cleaning up mould by size band. A sensible post-remediation check confirms the moisture problem has been repaired, no visible mould remains, and the written scope has been carried out.

If you want an air test anyway, we found no Ontario threshold for an acceptable indoor mould result and no industry guideline with the force of law, so ask the contractor to explain in writing what they are measuring and what result they would call a pass.

The written scope of work before the job starts does more for you. That document should describe the size and location of the affected area, how the moisture source will be repaired, how the mouldy material will be removed, and what the finished condition should look like. If the contractor offers a post-remediation inspection, ask whether it is visual, air-based or both, and get the result in writing.

One other thing worth raising before any wall or ceiling comes down in an older Ottawa house: if the building was constructed before 1990, the drywall, plaster, ceiling texture or flooring being removed may contain asbestos. Health Canada advises hiring a professional to test suspect materials before renovation work begins, and a qualified asbestos removal specialist if asbestos is found. A mould job that involves cutting into older building materials may also be an asbestos job, and the two scopes of work are governed differently.

Keep the written contract, the scope of work, and any post-remediation report the contractor provides.

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Q3

## What does 0.01 fibres per cubic centimetre mean for my Ottawa job?

The 0.01 fibres per cubic centimetre figure is the clearance threshold set by O. Reg. 278/05, section 18, for the PCM air-sampling method. Every air sample collected inside the enclosure after Type 3 asbestos work must come in at or below that concentration for the area to pass. If any single sample exceeds it, the area does not pass.

### What this means for your job

Clearance air testing under section 18 applies only after Type 3 work, which is the removal or disturbance of more than one square metre of friable asbestos-containing material, or certain power-tool operations. Whether your job is Type 3 depends on whether the material is friable and how much of it is disturbed. The contractor assesses that on

site. You can ask for the Type in writing before work starts.

The test is conducted by a competent worker once the enclosure is dry. At least 2,400 litres of air are drawn per filter. Results must be posted within 24 hours. As the owner, you keep a copy of those results for at least one year. That one-year copy is not optional: it is what section 18 requires.

The alternative sampling method is TEM. Under section 18, the TEM method passes if the inside average is statistically less than the outside average, or if there is no statistical difference between them. The regulation does not rank one method above the other.

A few things worth knowing about scope:

- Clearance air testing appears only in the Type 3 section of O. Reg. 278/05. The Type 1 and Type 2 sections do not require it.
- You can ask any contractor to include a clearance test in their quote for Type 1 or Type 2 work, even though it is not required by law for those Types.
- The clearance test exception in section 18 covers a building that is to be demolished and will not be entered by anyone except the workers doing the demolition.
- Published prices for an air clearance test in Ontario run roughly $300 to $800, based on published contractor prices read in September 2026.

Before Type 3 work begins, the employer or constructor must also notify, orally and in writing, an inspector at the nearest Ministry of Labour office. That notice is given before the work commences; the regulation sets no number of days in advance.

After the job is done, the documents worth keeping together are the original lab report confirming the material contained asbestos, the written Type the contractor assessed for the work, and the clearance air test results, which section 18 requires you to hold for at least one year.

Q4

## What is a clearance air test after asbestos removal in Ontario?

A clearance air test is the air test O. Reg. 278/05 requires inside the enclosure after Type 3 asbestos removal, once the enclosure is dry. Published Ontario contractor prices read in September 2026 put it at about $300 to $800.

### What the regulation requires

Section 18 of O. Reg. 278/05 is the only place clearance air testing appears. Once the enclosure is dry after Type 3 work, a competent worker collects air samples inside it. There are two accepted methods. Under the PCM method, every sample must show a fibre concentration no greater than 0.01 fibres per cubic centimetre of air, and at least 2,400 litres of air must be drawn through each filter. Under the TEM method, the area passes if the inside average is statistically less than the outside average, or if there is no statistical difference between the two. Results must be posted within 24 hours of the test, and the owner keeps a copy for at least one year.

One exception applies: a building that is going to be demolished and will not be entered by anyone except the workers doing the demolition does not require a clearance test.

It is worth knowing what the regulation does not say. Sections 14 through 17, which cover Type 1 and Type 2 work, contain no clearance air test requirement. If your job is classified as Type 1 or Type 2, the law does not require a clearance test, though you can ask for one to be included in the quote.

A clearance test is not the same as the pre-removal bulk sample test that identifies whether material contains asbestos. The clearance test measures airborne fibres after the work is done, not the material itself.

A few things to confirm before the test happens. Ask the contractor to tell you in writing which Type the job falls under, because that determines whether a clearance test is legally required or optional. For Type 3 work, O. Reg. 278/05 section 20 requires every worker to have completed the Asbestos Abatement Worker Training Program and every supervisor the Asbestos Abatement Supervisor Training Program before work begins. Section 11 requires the constructor or employer to notify, orally and in writing, an inspector at the nearest Ministry of Labour office before a Type 3 operation starts. You can search a contractor's current WSIB clearance online.

What a fair quote for Type 3 work should include: the job Type in writing, confirmation of the Ministry of Labour notice, the clearance air test with the method specified, and the name of the disposal site that has agreed to accept the asbestos waste under Ontario Regulation 347.

If you are unsure whether your job reaches the Type 3 threshold, ask the Ministry of Labour, whose inspectors receive the Type 3 notice.

**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.