OTTAWA ABATEMENT

Rules, Permits & Notice

Ontario's Type 1, 2 and 3 classes, the Type 3 inspector notice, who the regulation applies to, and City of Ottawa demolition permits

4 Expert Answers from Abatement IQ

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Q1

Do Ottawa building permits cover asbestos abatement?

No. We found no City of Ottawa permit for asbestos testing, removal or remediation as such.

What the City does require is a building permit to relocate or demolish a building. The City's demolition permit page points owners to section 30 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which requires an owner to determine whether designated substances, including asbestos, are present before a project begins and to share that information with prospective contractors. A designated substance survey is not listed as a submission item on the City's demolition permit application guidelines, so we found no rule requiring you to attach an asbestos report to your permit application. If you are unsure what your specific project requires, check directly with the City of Ottawa.

The rules that actually govern asbestos work in Ottawa are Ontario's, not the City's. O. Reg. 278/05 classifies asbestos operations as Type 1, Type 2 or Type 3, depending on whether the material is friable and how much of it is disturbed. Those thresholds are assessed on site by the contractor, not determined by a permit office. For Type 3 work, the constructor or employer must notify, orally and in writing, an inspector at the nearest Ministry of Labour office before the work begins. That notice is not a permit. Type 3 work also requires that workers and supervisors have completed the Ministry-approved asbestos abatement training programs before work starts.

A few practical points worth knowing:

- Asbestos waste leaving the site must go to a disposal facility whose operator has agreed to accept it, under Ontario Regulation 347. We found no exemption for small loads, and asbestos waste cannot go out with regular curbside collection.
- We found no Ontario company licence for asbestos abatement as such. What you can check is whether the contractor has current WSIB clearance, which you can search online.
- If your project is in Gatineau, Quebec rules differ; check with Quebec authorities.
- On the owner-occupier exemption in O. Reg. 278/05: The exemption covers a home the owner or their family lives in, and a building of up to four units where the registered owner or family lives in one of them. A landlord who doesn't live in the building, a building of more than four units, and commercial property are not covered.

For a quote on the work itself, the request form on this page reaches contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

Q2

Does O. Reg. 278/05 apply to homeowners in Ottawa?

The short answer is: it depends on your role. O. Reg. 278/05 contains an owner-occupier exemption, but that exemption does not protect every homeowner in every situation.

What the regulation actually says

Section 2(4) of O. Reg. 278/05 says the regulation does not apply to an owner of a private residence occupied by the owner or the owner's family, or to an owner of a residential building of not more than four dwelling units where one unit is occupied by the registered owner or the owner's family. So if you own and live in your Ottawa home, the regulation's duties placed on owners, including the examination and written report requirements, do not apply to you personally.

The exemption stops there, though. Ontario's guide to the regulation is clear that the regulation does apply to constructors, employers and workers engaged in private construction projects and repair or maintenance of such buildings. That means any contractor you hire is bound by the regulation in full, regardless of the exemption that covers you. If the work is Type 3, the contractor must ensure workers have completed the Asbestos Abatement Worker Training Program and supervisors the Asbestos Abatement Supervisor Training Program before work begins, and must notify an inspector at the nearest Ministry of Labour office orally and in writing before starting.

For a rental property, the picture changes. Ontario's guide says the regulation applies to the owner if the tenant is not related to the owner. Read that with section 2(4): The exemption covers a home the owner or their family lives in, and a building of up to four units where the registered owner or family lives in one of them. A landlord who doesn't live in the building, a building of more than four units, and commercial property are not covered.

On the question of whether an owner-occupier can do their own asbestos work, the Occupational Health and Safety Act states at section 3(1) that it does not apply to work performed by the owner or occupant of a private residence. We found no Ontario rule that explicitly prohibits an owner-occupier from doing their own asbestos work. At the same time, Health Canada advises hiring a professional to test before renovating and a qualified asbestos removal specialist if asbestos is found. Ontario Regulation 347 governs asbestos waste disposal and applies to everyone, including owner-occupiers. We found no exemption from section 17 of that regulation for small or homeowner loads, and asbestos waste cannot go out with regular garbage.

Section 30 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires a project owner to determine whether designated substances are present and to prepare a list before work is tendered. How section 30 applies to an owner-occupier is not settled. If you are unsure how it applies to your situation, ask the contractor or the Ministry of Labour directly.

We found no City of Ottawa permit for asbestos abatement as such. If your project involves a demolition or building permit, the City's demolition page points to section 30 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act under owner's duties.

If you want to reach Ottawa abatement contractors who work under these rules, the request form on this page sends your details to contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

Q3

Who has to follow O. Reg. 278/05 on an Ottawa renovation?

O. Reg. 278/05 binds every constructor, employer and worker on an Ottawa renovation or demolition project where asbestos may be disturbed. That means the abatement contractor you hire must follow it in full, regardless of what kind of building you own.

The regulation's reach depends on who is doing the work and what kind of property it is. For a constructor or employer, the rules apply on every project: the Type classification, the controls each Type requires, the training rules, the inspector notice before Type 3 work, and the waste rules under Ontario Regulation 347. Workers on those projects are bound as well.

Section 2(4) of O. Reg. 278/05 says the regulation does not apply to an owner of a private residence occupied by the owner or the owner's family, or to an owner of a residential building of not more than four dwelling units where the registered owner or family occupies one of them. That exemption covers the owner's duties only: the section 10 examination and report, and the obligations that flow from it. The contractor the owner hires is still bound by the regulation in full. Ontario's guide to the regulation makes this explicit: constructors, employers and workers engaged in private construction projects and repair or maintenance of such buildings are covered.

For a rented unit, Ontario's guide says the regulation applies to the owner if the tenant is not related to the owner. The exemption covers a home the owner or their family lives in, and a building of up to four units where the registered owner or family lives in one of them. A landlord who doesn't live in the building, a building of more than four units, and commercial property are not covered.

Section 30 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act adds a separate layer. Before beginning a project, an owner must determine whether any designated substances are present and prepare a list. O. Reg. 490/09 names eleven designated substances, including asbestos and lead. If work is tendered, that list goes into the tendering information, and a prospective constructor must receive a copy before a binding contract is signed. An owner who fails to comply is liable to the constructor and every contractor and subcontractor who suffers loss from the later discovery of a designated substance the owner ought reasonably to have known of. How section 30 applies to an owner-occupier is not settled; if you are unsure whether it applies to your situation, ask the contractor or the Ministry of Labour.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, section 3(1), separately says the Act does not apply to work performed by the owner or occupant, or a servant of the owner or occupant, to, in or about a private residence.

We found no City of Ottawa permit for asbestos, mould or lead abatement as such. Building and demolition permits come from the City; asbestos work is governed by O. Reg. 278/05, not by the City. If your project is in Gatineau, Quebec rules differ and you should check with Quebec authorities.

When you have two written abatement quotes in front of you, put the Type each contractor names for the job side by side: the Type decides the training the workers must have, whether a Ministry of Labour inspector notice is required, and whether a clearance air test applies, so a quote that names a lower Type for the same scope deserves a direct question about why.

Q4

Can I be liable if I hide asbestos from my Ottawa contractor?

Yes, hiding asbestos from a contractor can expose you to serious legal and financial liability under Ontario law. The short answer is: disclose it, in writing, before anyone starts work.

What Ontario law says about disclosure

Section 30 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires an owner to determine whether designated substances are present at a project site and to prepare a list before work begins. Asbestos is one of the 11 designated substances listed in O. Reg. 490/09. If the work is tendered, that list must go into the tendering documents. If a contractor signs a contract without receiving the list, section 30(5) makes the owner liable to the constructor and every contractor and subcontractor who suffers a loss from discovering a designated substance the owner ought reasonably to have known about.

That phrase, "ought reasonably to have known", matters. Health Canada says that before 1990 asbestos was mainly used for insulating buildings and homes, which is why the age of a house matters to what an owner ought reasonably to have known. How section 30 applies to a house the owner lives in is not settled: the asbestos regulation exempts owner-occupiers, section 30 itself has no residence exemption, and Ontario's guide says it applies to owners of residential properties who undertake projects. If you are unsure, ask your contractor or the Ministry of Labour. The exemption covers a home the owner or their family lives in, and a building of up to four units where the registered owner or family lives in one of them. A landlord who doesn't live in the building, a building of more than four units, and commercial property are not covered.

The owner-occupier exemption in O. Reg. 278/05 removes certain duties from your shoulders as an owner, but it does not remove the contractor's obligations. The contractor you hire is still bound by the regulation in full: the Type classification, the inspector notice for Type 3 work, the training requirements, the clearance air test, and the waste rules under Ontario Regulation 347. If asbestos you knew about is disturbed without the controls its Type requires, the losses that follow can become the owner's liability under section 30(5).

Practically speaking, the costs compound quickly. If suspect material is found during the work, O. Reg. 278/05 section 10(8) requires the constructor or employer to immediately notify, orally and in writing, an inspector at the Ministry of Labour, the owner, the contractor, and the joint health and safety committee or representative. A Type 3 removal, which covers more than one square metre of friable material, requires a Ministry of Labour inspector notice before it can begin, workers who completed the Asbestos Abatement Worker Training Program, and a clearance air test once the enclosure is dry. Published Ontario contractor prices read in September 2026 put asbestos removal at roughly $8 to $15 per square foot and an air clearance test at about $300 to $800.

What to do before you hire anyone: get a pre-renovation inspection with asbestos testing. Published prices for that run roughly $250 to $1,300 depending on the size of the building and the number of samples. Give the written report to every contractor before they quote. Ask each one to confirm in writing which Type their work falls under and how they plan to handle disposal under Regulation 347.

If material has already been disturbed, stop the work, don't disturb it further, and have it tested by a professional.

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.