OTTAWA WATERPROOFING PRO

Foundation Cracks

Leaking cracks in foundation walls: injection, the permit question for structural repairs, and quotes

4 Expert Answers from Waterproofing IQ

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Q1

Is a crack that leaks only in spring still a waterproofing job in Ottawa?

A crack that leaks only in spring still needs attention, and whether the fix is classified as waterproofing under Ontario's Building Code depends on what is driving the water in, not on the season. The City of Ottawa names groundwater from snowmelt and heavy rain as one of the ways water enters a basement.

Ontario's Building Code sets the dividing line at hydrostatic pressure. Where hydrostatic pressure occurs, waterproofing is required under clause 9.13.3.1. Where it does not, dampproofing under clause 9.13.2 may be sufficient. The Code gives no number or test for when hydrostatic pressure occurs, and the answer for your house turns on what a contractor finds when they look at the wall, the soil conditions and the drainage situation. Ask each contractor you speak with which protection their quote covers and why they chose it.

The crack itself is a separate question from the membrane behind the wall. Crack injection is one repair option; opening the wall from the outside to apply a continuous membrane and check the drain tile is another. A contractor has to look at the crack, the wall type and what is happening around the foundation before recommending one over the other. National Research Council research notes that many basements are wet because too much surface water gets into the soil beside the building, from grading combined with roof run-off, which is worth raising with whoever you hire.

Published Ontario contractor pricing for crack injection runs about $500 to $1,500 per crack, and one Ottawa source quotes from about $300 for epoxy. Exterior waterproofing, which involves excavating to the footing and applying a membrane with drainage, runs from about $100 to $350 per linear foot of wall, with deeper foundations and tight access pushing the cost higher. Interior drain and sump systems run from about $70 to $150 per linear foot. These are published 2025-26 ranges, not a quote for your house.

When you have two written quotes in front of you, set them side by side and check that each one names the same wall or walls and the same linear footage, states clearly whether the scope is dampproofing or waterproofing, and says whether the drain tile is being replaced and where it will discharge.

Q2

Who should look at a crack that leaks every spring in Stittsville?

A crack that lets water in every spring should be looked at by a waterproofing contractor, and depending on what they find, a licensed plumber may also be involved if the work touches the drainage or sump system.

The City of Ottawa lists three ways water gets into a basement: sewer surcharging, groundwater coming through cracks or joints in walls or floors, and overland water entering through windows or cracks. A contractor or plumber has to look at the crack and the wall before anyone can say why it leaks.

Ask the contractor to say in writing what they checked. The repair could range from crack injection (published Ontario contractor pricing about $500 to $1,500 per crack; one Ottawa source quotes from about $300 for epoxy) to exterior excavation and membrane work (about $100 to $350 per linear foot of wall) if the drainage system needs attention at the same time. Those are ranges, not quotes, and the right scope depends entirely on what the contractor sees.

A few things worth knowing before work starts:

- The City of Ottawa says "damp proofing of existing basements" is exempt from a building permit, but structural foundation repairs and drain tile replacement do require one. If the contractor's scope goes beyond sealing the crack, ask them which permit category applies before work starts.
- Ontario Dig Authority asks for a locate request at least 5 business days before any digging begins. On a job where a contractor excavates, the contractor is the excavator and is responsible for submitting that request.

Comparing two written quotes, check whether each one names the same wall, the same linear footage, the same scope of drainage work (tile replaced or left in place, and where it drains), and whether the protection described is dampproofing or waterproofing.

Q3

Who decides if a foundation crack in Nepean is structural?

A structural engineer or a qualified contractor assesses whether a foundation crack is structural. On price, published Ontario contractor pricing puts crack injection at about $500 to $1,500 per crack; we found no published range for structural foundation repair. We found no Ontario or City of Ottawa rule that assigns the decision to a specific trade or profession for a repair on a private residence.

Ask the contractor who looks at the crack whether they will bring in an engineer, or hire one yourself before any repair work begins.

Ontario's Building Code sets out requirements for foundation walls and their repair, but it does not define which cracks are structural and which are not, and neither does the City of Ottawa's permit guidance. The City's permit list includes "structural foundation repairs and drain tile replacement" and "structural repairs or alterations," so if a contractor or engineer determines the crack is structural, a building permit is required before the repair starts. For

crack injection alone, where no structural repair is involved, ask the City's Building Code Services whether a permit applies to your specific job before work begins.

A few things worth knowing before you hire anyone for this:

- We found no Ontario licence or certificate specific to waterproofing contractors. Ask whether a licensed engineer is involved if the contractor describes the crack as structural.
- Get the contractor's assessment in writing, including what they observed, what repair method they are proposing.

Before you sign, ask whether the repair will be done under a building permit, and have that written into the contract.

Q4

Can a leaking foundation crack be injected from inside in Ottawa?

Yes, foundation cracks in Ottawa can be injected from inside the basement. Published 2025–26 Ontario contractor pricing puts crack injection at roughly $500 to $1,500 per crack, with one Ottawa source quoting from about $300 for epoxy work.

The Ottawa-area price pages list two injection materials: epoxy and polyurethane. What drives the price and which material a contractor proposes are things to ask about directly, because the choice turns on the condition of the crack and what the contractor finds when they look at it. Neither this site nor the Code can tell you which one suits your wall.

A fair quote for crack injection should spell out a few things in writing:

- which material will be used and why
- what the warranty covers, for how long, and whether it transfers to a buyer

Interior injection does not involve excavation, so no locate request is needed for this work. The City of Ottawa's exempt list names "damp proofing of existing basements" as work that does not need a building permit, but crack injection is not named on either the exempt or the permit list. Ask the City's Building Code Services whether a permit is required before the work starts.

One thing worth knowing: the City lists ways water gets into a basement, and a crack in a wall is one path. But the City also notes that protective plumbing devices, such as sump pumps and backwater valves, will not stop water entering through cracks. Ask the contractor who looks at the wall whether injection alone is the right scope for your basement.

Before you agree to any price, ask the contractor to explain in plain language what they expect to find once they start, and what happens to the quote if the crack turns out to be wider or deeper than it looks from inside.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Waterproofing Pro. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa) before starting any waterproofing or foundation project. Some of this work needs a City building permit, and a free locate request is required before any digging. Information is current as of November 8, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawawaterproofingpro.com** for the latest answers.