OTTAWA WATERPROOFING PRO

Hiring & Quotes

Choosing a waterproofing contractor in Ottawa: no waterproofing licence exists, who does the plumbing part, WSIB clearances, what an in-home contract must include, warranties and comparing quotes

4 Expert Answers from Waterproofing IQ

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Q1

Should my Ottawa quote say dampproofing or waterproofing in writing?

Your quote should name exactly which protection is being applied, because Ontario's Building Code treats dampproofing and waterproofing as two different requirements with different conditions.

What the Code says

Dampproofing (clause 9.13.2) is required on the exterior of foundation walls below grade where the finished ground outside is higher than the ground level inside. Waterproofing (clause 9.13.3) is required where hydrostatic pressure occurs. The Code gives no number or test for when hydrostatic pressure occurs, and it does not say every basement needs waterproofing. The choice turns on whether hydrostatic pressure is present at your foundation, and that is something the contractor assesses at the house, not something this site can determine for you.

The practical difference matters for your quote because the two systems are not interchangeable. Dampproofing is not required where the wall is waterproofed, but the Code does not allow dampproofing to substitute for waterproofing where hydrostatic pressure exists. If a contractor proposes dampproofing, ask them to explain in writing why hydrostatic pressure is not a factor at your foundation. If they propose waterproofing, ask them to confirm the membrane is continuous across joints and at wall-to-footing junctions, as clause 9.13.3 requires.

A few other things worth checking in the written quote:

- whether the foundation wall is poured concrete or block, because block walls require at least 6 mm of mortar parging on the exterior face below grade before any dampproofing or waterproofing is applied (clauses 9.13.2.3 and 9.13.3.3)
- whether drain tile is being replaced or left in place, and where it discharges
- whether the membrane is protected from damage during backfilling, as clause 9.13.3.4 requires

Published Ontario contractor pricing for exterior work that includes excavation, a membrane, drainage and new tile runs roughly $100 to $350 per linear foot of wall, with deeper foundations and tight access pushing the figure higher. If your quote is for dampproofing only, too few published figures exist for that alone to give a useful range. Read the quote line by line and ask the contractor to point to the specific word, dampproofing or waterproofing, and to explain in plain language which clause of Ontario's Building Code their proposed system satisfies.

Q2

Who should sign off the plumbing on an interior sump job in Barrhaven?

Plumber is a compulsory trade in Ontario under O. Reg. 876/21. The province says you cannot engage someone to do compulsory trade work unless they are authorized to do it, so ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing part of the sump installation before any work starts.

Do not assume who does the plumbing part: ask directly, and ask for the plumber's name so you can check the Skilled Trades Ontario Public Register yourself.

A few things worth confirming in writing before you sign:

- who pulls the building permit (the City of Ottawa requires one for a sump pit and pump installation)
- whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing connection, and who that person is
- the sump pit dimensions, since Ontario's Building Code requires the pit to be at least 750 mm deep and at least 0.25 m² in area, with a cover that resists removal by children and is airtight
- where the pump discharges, and whether a check valve and union are included in the line

You can check the Skilled Trades Ontario Public Register to confirm a plumber's authorization before the work begins.
Before you sign the contract, ask the contractor to name the licensed plumber who will do or sign off the plumbing connection, and confirm that person will be on site for the relevant part of the job.

Q3

Does the Construction Act holdback apply to a homeowner waterproofing job in Orleans?

Ontario's Construction Act requires an owner to retain a 10 per cent holdback as work and materials are supplied, and we found no exemption for homeowners, so plan for it on a waterproofing job in Orleans.

Without certified substantial performance, a lien expires 60 days after the work is completed, abandoned or terminated. When to release the holdback is a legal question: on a larger job, ask a lawyer about release timing before the final payment.

A few things worth having in writing before any money changes hands:

- a written agreement with a fair description of the work, an itemized price list, and start and completion dates (the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 requires this for any direct agreement over $50 made at your home)
- the 10-day cancellation window, which runs from the date you receive that written copy
- the warranty terms: what is covered, for how long, and whether the warranty transfers to a buyer

- ask for the contractor's insurance details in writing
- ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing portion, if the work involves a sump, a backwater valve or any change to the drainage system

The Consumer Protection Act, 2002 also says that if the contract includes an estimate, the final charge cannot exceed it by more than 10 per cent. Services are deemed to be of reasonably acceptable quality, and any term that tries to remove that deemed warranty is void.

Ask to see the written warranty before you sign, and confirm in writing exactly what scope of work the price covers, so there is no dispute over what "complete" means when the holdback comes due.

Q4

Can a waterproofing contractor in Orleans promise a dry basement?

A contractor can promise to do the written scope of work. No contractor can honestly promise a basement that never takes on water, and Ontario's Consumer Protection Act, 2002 says it is an unfair practice to claim that services have benefits or qualities they do not have.

The City of Ottawa names three ways water gets into a basement: sewer surcharging through the lateral, groundwater leaking through cracks or joints in walls or floors, and overland water coming in through windows, doors and cracks. The City's protective plumbing FAQ also lists what devices such as sump pumps and backwater valves will not stop: water through cracks in walls or window wells, failed foundation drains or sump pumps, overflowing eaves troughs and plugged downspouts, poor foundation drainage, poor lot drainage, and water sources inside the house. One scope of work deals with some of those paths, not all of them.

That is why the written scope is the thing to compare. A quote for exterior work on one wall says nothing about sewer surcharging, and a quote for a sump pump says nothing about a crack higher up the wall. What a contractor can stand behind is that the work in the written contract was done, to the Building Code minimums where the Code applies, on the warranty terms they put in writing.

On warranties, the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 deems services to be of reasonably acceptable quality, and a contract term that tries to cancel that deemed warranty is void. Anything beyond it is whatever the contract says. We found no Ontario rule specific to lifetime warranties, so get the terms in writing: what is covered, for how long, and whether they transfer to a buyer.

Ask each contractor to list in the quote which entry paths the work addresses and which it does not, so two quotes can be compared on the same footing.

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.