OTTAWA WATERPROOFING PRO

Interior Drainage Systems

Interior perimeter drains that carry seepage to a sump: how they are installed, permits and what to ask

4 Expert Answers from Waterproofing IQ

ottawawaterproofingpro.com/construction-brain

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Q1

Is a sump pump part of every interior drain system in Ottawa?

A sump pump is required by Ontario's Building Code only where gravity drainage is not practical (clause 9.14.5.2). Whether that condition applies depends on where your foundation sits relative to the storm sewer or a suitable discharge point, and a contractor has to assess that for your house.

An interior drain system collects water that enters at the base of the foundation walls and channels it to a collection point. If the lot and the storm connection allow the water to flow out by gravity, a pump is not required by the Code. Where gravity drainage is not practical, the Code requires an automatic sump pump, and the pit must be at least 750 mm deep, at least 0.25 m² in area, and covered with a lid that resists removal by children and is airtight.

A few things shape whether a pump ends up in the quote for your job:

- Whether a sump pit is already in place or a new one is part of the job.
- Where the drain channel discharges, and whether that outlet works by gravity.

Ask the contractor to explain in writing whether the quote includes a sump pit and pump, and if so, what the discharge point is and how it meets the Code. If a pump is included, ask whether it comes with battery backup and what the pit dimensions will be. If no pump is included, ask them to show you why gravity drainage is practical for your specific layout.
On the question of who does the plumbing connection, plumber is a compulsory trade in Ontario, so ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing part of the installation.

You can use the request form on this page to have local contractors from the Ottawa Construction Network directory reach out with quotes. Ask the contractor, before signing, to walk you through exactly where the water goes after it leaves the drain channel, because that answer tells you whether a pump is genuinely needed or not.

Q2

Who should I hire for an interior drain in Westboro?

For an interior drain system in Westboro, you are looking for a waterproofing contractor who can also bring in, or confirm they work with, a licensed plumber for the parts of the job that connect to your home's plumbing.

Here is why that matters. 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. An interior drain channel runs along the perimeter of your basement floor and ties into a sump pit, and the sump pump discharge goes to the

storm sewer or out above grade. Ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing part of the installation, and ask the contractor to confirm that before you sign anything.

We found no Ontario or City of Ottawa licence, registration or certificate specific to waterproofing contractors. What you can check is the Skilled Trades Ontario Public Register to confirm a plumber's authorization.

When you are comparing contractors, a written quote for this job should spell out:

- the wall length the drain channel covers and where it starts and stops
- whether a new sump pit is being constructed or an existing one is used, and the pump and battery backup details
- where the pump discharge goes and how it gets there
- who pulls any required permits

On the question of permits: the City of Ottawa lists sump pits and pumps as work requiring a building permit. Whether the drain channel itself counts as drain tile replacement under the permit list is not stated by the City, so ask the City's Building Code Services before the work starts.
Ask for the contractor's insurance details in writing. WSIB's clearance policy does not apply to a homeowner who lives in the house and directly hires a contractor for exempt home renovation work only; a rental or investment property is outside that exemption. You can still ask for a clearance.

Published 2025-26 Ontario contractor prices for an interior drain and sump system run about $70 to $150 per linear foot of wall, with some published pages ranging from $50 to $230. A new sump pit adds roughly $500 to $1,500 to that; a pump with battery backup runs about $2,000 to $4,000.

You can use the request form on this page to have local contractors from the Ottawa Construction Network directory reach out by email.

Before you commit, call the City's Building Code Services and ask them directly which permits apply to your specific scope.

Q3

Where does the water from an interior drain end up in an Orleans house?

An interior drain channel collects water that enters along the base of the foundation walls and directs it to a sump pit. From the pit, a sump pump pushes the water out of the house.

Where that discharge goes is the part that varies. Ontario's Building Code (9.14.5.1) says foundation drains must discharge to a sewer, a drainage ditch, or a dry well. For a sump pump, the City of Ottawa advises connecting it to the storm sewer or discharging to the ground at least 1.2 m from the foundation. The storm sewer connection is plumbing work, and plumber is a compulsory trade in Ontario, so ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing part of the installation.

A dry well is only permitted where natural groundwater sits below its bottom and it is at least 5 m from the foundation (Building Code 9.14.5.3). If the contractor proposes a dry well, ask them to confirm those conditions are met for your lot.

The sump pit itself has minimum dimensions under the Building Code (9.14.5.2): at least 750 mm deep, at least 0.25 m² in area, with a cover that resists removal by children and is airtight. Where gravity drainage to a sewer is not practical, an automatic sump pump is required.

One thing worth knowing: the City notes that in some older homes, foundation drains may be connected to the sanitary or combined sewer rather than the storm sewer, or may not be present at all. The City says foundation drains should not be connected to the sanitary sewer. Ask the contractor where your existing drainage currently ties in, and where the new discharge line will connect, before any work begins.

The City also notes that a backwater valve, sump pump, and similar devices will not stop water from entering through cracks in walls or window wells, failed foundation drains, poor lot drainage, or overflowing eavestroughs.

Published 2025-26 prices for an interior drain and sump system run roughly $70 to $150 per linear foot of wall, with a range seen as wide as $50 to $230 depending on wall length, access, whether a new pit is needed or an existing one is used, and whether battery backup is included.

Comparing quotes side by side, check that each one names the same walls and total length, and spells out whether existing drain tile is being replaced and exactly where the new discharge line will connect.

Q4

Is a City of Ottawa permit needed for an interior drain system?

The sump pit and pump in an interior system are protective plumbing devices, and the City of Ottawa says a building permit is required to install them, before the work starts. Whether the drain channel itself counts as "drain tile replacement" on the City's permit list is not stated, so ask the City about that part.

The drain channel connects to a sump pit and the pump discharges somewhere, so there is a plumbing component: ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off that part.

The sump pit and pump may also qualify for the City's protective plumbing rebate; check ottawa.ca for the current terms, since the City lists the program as under review. The permit fee for plumbing work only is $117 per application under the City's 2026 fee schedule.

A fair quote for this work should set out in writing:

- the length of drain channel being installed and where it runs
- whether existing drain tile is being replaced or left in place, and where the system drains
- the sump pit dimensions (Ontario's Building Code requires at least 750 mm deep and 0.25 m² in area, with a cover that resists removal by children and is airtight)
- whether the pump includes battery backup, and the make and model
- who applies for the building permit and pays the fee

Make sure the written contract names who is responsible for pulling the City permit, because the permit must be in hand before work begins and the City requires an inspection when the work is complete.

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.