OTTAWA WATERPROOFING PRO

Permits & Inspections

Which foundation and drainage jobs need a City of Ottawa building permit, which are exempt, fees and inspections

4 Expert Answers from Waterproofing IQ

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Q1

Does the Ontario Building Code still apply to permit-exempt dampproofing?

Yes. The City of Ottawa's permit exemption for "damp proofing of existing basements" removes the need to file for a building permit; it does not remove the obligation to meet Ontario's Building Code.

The Code sets out what dampproofing must do and where it must go. Under clause 9.13.2.1, the exterior surfaces of foundation walls below ground must be dampproofed where the finished ground outside is higher than the ground level inside. The dampproofing runs from finished ground level down to the top of the exterior of the footing (9.13.2.4), and joints, cracks and penetrations must be sealed to keep it continuous. For a masonry block wall, clause 9.13.2.3 requires at least 6 mm of mortar parging on the exterior face below ground, coved over the footing, before the dampproofing goes on. For a poured concrete wall, holes and recesses are sealed first.

The exemption also does not remove the Code's foundation drainage requirements. Clause 9.14.2.1 calls for drainage at the bottom of every foundation wall that encloses the building interior, unless it can be shown to be unnecessary. If the exterior work disturbs or replaces the drain tile, that work moves onto the permit list: the City names "structural foundation repairs and drain tile replacement" as permit-required. Ask the City's Building Code Services whether your scope crosses that line before the work starts.

One other limit on the exemption: the City says designated heritage buildings and buildings in a Heritage District Overlay are not subject to the exemptions, so check with the City first.

A contractor doing permit-exempt dampproofing is still working to the Code. Ask the contractor which specific Code clauses their quote is written to meet, and get that in writing alongside the scope of work.

Q2

What plans does the City of Ottawa want for a sump pump permit?

The City of Ottawa requires a building permit to install a sump pit and pump as protective plumbing. The permit application must include floor plans and show the device's location, type, make and model.

Ask your contractor to show you the drawings they will submit.

What the drawings show has to meet Ontario's Building Code. The pit must 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, and an automatic pump is required where gravity drainage is not practical (9.14.5.2). A storm sump discharge gets a union and a check valve, in that order in the direction of flow, and is pumped to above grade level (7.4.6.3). The City of Ottawa advises connecting

the pump to the storm sewer or discharging to the ground at least 1.2 metres from the foundation.

A few things worth knowing before the work starts:

- Ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing portion of the installation.
- The permit fee for plumbing work is $117 per application under the City's 2026 fee schedule. The RPPP covers 100 per cent of that fee as a separate rebate line.

Get in writing who applies for the permit and who arranges the City inspection.
Before you sign the contract, ask the contractor to show you the floor plan they intend to submit and confirm in writing that the permit will be issued before work starts.

Q3

Does replacing a sump pump in an existing pit need a permit in Barrhaven?

Replacing a sump pump in an existing pit is not named on the City of Ottawa's permit-required list, and it is not on the exempt list either. The City's permit list covers the installation of a sump pit and pump as a new protective plumbing device; replacing a pump in a pit that already exists falls into a gap the City's published lists do not address. The straightforward answer is: ask the City's Building Code Services before the work starts.

That said, the question matters for a practical reason beyond compliance. The City's Residential Protective Plumbing Program offers a rebate of up to $1,500 for a primary or secondary sump pump with battery backup power installed in an existing sump pit. The City also says rebates are not available for maintenance, repair or replacement of existing protective plumbing devices, so ask the City whether replacing your pump qualifies, and settle the permit question first. The City rebates the lesser of the maximum or the actual cost of the work, the application must be received within 18 months of the permit's issue date (the City changed this from 12 months on July 1, 2026), and the program is listed as currently under review, so check ottawa.ca before relying on it.

A couple of other things worth knowing before you hire:

- Plumber is a compulsory trade in Ontario. Ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing part of the installation.
- Published 2025-26 prices for replacing a pump in an existing pit run roughly $500 to $1,200; adding battery backup brings that to roughly $2,000 to $4,000.

Before you commit to a contractor, ask whether the job will be done under a permit, and have that written into the quote.

Q4

Is a permit required to add a second sump pit in Orleans?

Yes, the City of Ottawa requires a building permit to install a sump pit and pump. The City's permit page lists "Plumbing - alterations, additions or extensions to a plumbing system" as requiring a permit, and its protective plumbing guidance states that a building permit is required to install protective plumbing devices, including sump pits and pumps, with floor plans and the device's location, type, make and model submitted with the application.

The permit fee for plumbing work is $117 per application under the City's 2026 fee schedule.

Because a sump pit involves plumbing connections, ask whether a licensed plumber does or signs off the plumbing portion of the work.

A second pit may also qualify for the City's protective plumbing rebate, which lists primary and secondary sump pumps; check ottawa.ca for the current terms, since the City lists the program as under review.

Ontario's Building Code sets out what a sump pit must be: at least 750 mm deep, at least 0.25 m² in area, with a cover that resists removal by children and is airtight (clause 9.14.5.2). Where gravity drainage is not practical, an automatic sump pump is required. The pump's discharge needs a union and a check valve in that order in the direction of flow, and the City advises discharging to the storm sewer or to the ground at least 1.2 m from the foundation.

A complete quote for this job should name the pit dimensions, the pump make and model, whether battery backup is included, who pulls the permit, who handles the plumbing connections.

Before you sign, ask the contractor to confirm in writing exactly who is responsible for obtaining the permit and scheduling the City inspection, since the rebate application depends on having both the permit and the inspection report in hand.

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.