

OTTAWA FLOOR INSTALL

Costs & Pricing

Flooring costs, budgeting, material comparisons,
and project estimates

8 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

ottawafloorinstall.ca/construction-brain

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Q1

Is it normal for contractors to separate underlayment and labour as line items?

Yes, it's completely normal and actually preferred for flooring contractors to separate underlayment and labor as distinct line items on estimates. This transparency helps you understand exactly what you're paying for and makes it easier to compare quotes between contractors.

Professional contractors typically break down estimates into material costs (flooring, underlayment, transitions, moldings) and labor costs (preparation, installation, cleanup). This itemization serves several important purposes. You can see the quality and type of underlayment being used, which directly affects your floor's performance and longevity. It also allows you to make informed decisions about upgrades - for example, choosing premium moisture barrier underlayment in basements or acoustic underlayment in condos.

In Ottawa's competitive flooring market, detailed line-item estimates are standard practice among licensed contractors. This breakdown helps you understand why one quote might be higher than another - perhaps one contractor is using superior underlayment or including additional prep work. Quality underlayment can range from \$0.50 to \$2.50 per square foot depending on the type (basic foam, cork, rubber, or specialized moisture barriers).

Be cautious of contractors who provide only lump-sum pricing without material breakdowns, as this makes it impossible to verify what quality of products they're planning to use. Reputable contractors will gladly explain their material choices and why specific underlayments are recommended for your particular installation.

For a detailed estimate with clear material and labor breakdowns on your flooring project, request a quote from Ottawa Floor Install. Our transparent pricing helps you make informed decisions about your flooring investment.

Q2

How much should I budget for a kitchen floor retiling?

Kitchen floor retiling in Ottawa typically costs \$12-22 per square foot installed, depending on tile choice and complexity. For an average 120 square foot kitchen, budget \$1,400-2,600 for the complete project.

The total cost breaks down into several components. **Material costs** range from \$3-12 per square foot for the tile itself - ceramic starts around \$3-6, porcelain runs \$5-10, and natural stone like marble or travertine can reach \$8-15 per square foot. You'll also need underlayment, adhesive, grout, and trim pieces, adding roughly \$2-4 per square foot in materials.

Labor costs in Ottawa run \$8-12 per square foot for professional installation, which includes removing existing flooring, subfloor preparation, waterproofing, tile setting, and grouting. Kitchen installations often cost more than other rooms due to precise cuts around cabinets, appliances, and the need for waterproof installation practices. If your subfloor needs repair or leveling, add \$3-6 per square foot.

Additional factors affecting your budget include tile size and pattern complexity. Large format tiles (12"x24" or larger) may cost \$2-4 more per square foot to install due to the precision required. Diagonal patterns, herringbone, or intricate borders also increase labor costs. Kitchen-specific requirements like waterproof membranes behind the sink area and proper transitions to adjacent rooms can add \$200-500 to the project.

Ottawa-specific considerations include ensuring proper subfloor moisture protection for our climate and meeting any condo board requirements if you're in a high-rise. Most kitchen retiling doesn't require permits, but heated floor integration would need electrical permits.

For an accurate estimate on your specific kitchen layout and tile preferences, request a free consultation from Ottawa Floor Install to discuss material options and get precise measurements.

Q3

What does stair carpeting cost for a standard two-storey?

Carpet installation on a standard two-storey staircase in Ottawa typically costs \$800 - \$1,800, depending on carpet quality, stair configuration, and whether you're including landings.

A typical two-storey home has 13-16 steps plus upper and lower landings. **Stair carpet installation is priced differently than regular room carpet** because it requires specialized techniques like waterfall or Hollywood wrapping, precise measuring, and power stretching around each step. Most contractors charge \$15 - \$25 per step for basic carpet, \$20 - \$35 per step for mid-range, and \$30 - \$50 per step for premium carpet with quality padding.

The total project cost breaks down roughly as: carpet material (\$300 - \$800), quality padding (\$100 - \$200), professional installation labor (\$400 - \$800), and any prep work like removing old carpet or minor repairs (\$100 - \$300). Curved or L-shaped staircases cost 20-30% more due to the complex cutting and fitting required.

Ottawa homes often benefit from durable, stain-resistant carpet on stairs since they're high-traffic areas. Consider loop pile or cut-and-loop styles that hide wear patterns better than plush carpets. Berber and frieze carpets are popular choices that balance durability with comfort underfoot.

Proper installation is crucial for safety - stairs need power stretching to prevent wrinkles or loose areas that could cause trips. The carpet should be secured with heavy-duty tack strips and quality staples at each step nose.

For a free estimate on your stair carpeting project, request a quote from Ottawa Floor Install to ensure professional installation that meets safety standards.

Q4

What's a realistic budget to refinish around 800 sqft of hardwood?

For 800 square feet of hardwood refinishing in Ottawa, expect to budget \$2,400 to \$4,800 for professional work, with most homeowners spending around \$3,200 for a standard sand and refinish job.

The cost breakdown depends on your specific needs. **Basic sand and refinish** runs \$3-6 per square foot, so your 800 sq ft project would cost \$2,400-4,800. If you're keeping the existing stain color and the floors are in decent condition, you'll be on the lower end. **Stain color changes** add \$1-2 per square foot since they require additional steps and materials, bringing your total to \$3,200-5,600.

Several factors affect your final cost in the Ottawa market. The current condition of your floors matters significantly - floors with deep scratches, pet stains, or multiple previous refinishes require more aggressive sanding and potentially board replacement at \$15-30 per board. The type of finish you choose also impacts cost, with water-based polyurethane typically costing more upfront than oil-based but offering faster cure times and lower odor.

Consider the value of dustless sanding systems that many Ottawa contractors now use. While this might add 10-15% to your cost, it dramatically reduces cleanup time and dust throughout your home. Most professional refinishing jobs take 3-5 days including cure time, during which you'll need to stay off the floors.

Get multiple quotes from licensed flooring contractors to compare pricing and approaches. The investment is worthwhile - properly refinished hardwood can last 7-10 years before needing attention again and significantly increases your home's value. For a detailed estimate based on your floor's specific condition and your finish preferences, request a consultation from Ottawa Floor Install.

Q5

The contractor quoted us \$14 per sqft for engineered click-lock — is that actually in the right ballpark for Ottawa right now or are we overpaying?

\$14 per square foot for engineered click-lock is on the higher end but not unreasonable for Ottawa's current market, especially if it includes quality materials and proper preparation work. You're looking at premium pricing that could be justified depending on several factors.

Engineered click-lock typically ranges from \$8-14 per square foot installed in Ottawa, so your quote sits at the top of that range. The price variation usually comes down to the quality of the engineered hardwood itself - premium brands with thicker wear layers, better core construction, and longer warranties command higher prices. If

your contractor is quoting name brands like Mirage, Lauzon, or similar Canadian-made products, that pricing makes more sense.

What's included in that \$14 matters significantly. A proper installation should include subfloor inspection and preparation, moisture testing, quality underlayment, professional acclimation of the material, and proper expansion gaps. If your quote includes moving furniture, removing old flooring, or addressing subfloor issues, that adds value. However, if it's just basic installation on a perfect subfloor, you might want to get a second opinion.

Ottawa's market has seen material costs increase 15-20% over the past two years, and skilled flooring installers are in high demand, which drives labor costs up. Licensed contractors with WSIB coverage and proper insurance (which you should always verify) typically charge more than unlicensed installers, but you're paying for protection and accountability.

Before accepting, ask for a breakdown showing material costs versus labor, and confirm exactly what preparation work is included. Getting one additional quote from another licensed contractor will give you confidence in your decision - most reputable installers are within \$1-2 per square foot of each other for comparable work.

Q6

Are install costs higher in condos because of elevator bookings and restrictions?

Yes, condo installations typically cost 10-20% more than single-family homes due to building restrictions, elevator booking fees, and logistical challenges that extend project timelines.

Elevator and Access Fees are the most direct cost impact. Most Ottawa condos charge \$50-150 per day for elevator bookings, plus security deposits of \$200-500. Some buildings require professional movers for material transport, adding \$200-400 to your project. High-rise buildings often restrict deliveries to specific hours (typically 9am-4pm weekdays), which can extend installation schedules and increase labor costs.

Building Restrictions create additional expenses through required compliance measures. Many condos mandate acoustic underlayment for laminate and hardwood installations, adding \$1-2 per square foot. Some buildings require specific installation methods - for example, floating floors only, or prohibition of nail-down hardwood due to noise concerns. Work hour restrictions (no work before 8am or after 6pm, limited weekend hours) can stretch a 2-day job into 4-5 days, increasing labor costs significantly.

Logistical Challenges in Ottawa's condo market include limited parking for contractor vehicles (\$20-40/day), smaller unit access requiring more careful material handling, and coordination with building management for

approvals. Waste disposal often requires special arrangements since regular construction bins can't access loading docks, adding \$100-300 to disposal costs.

Ottawa-specific considerations include stricter noise bylaws in downtown condos and requirements for WSIB-insured contractors in most buildings. Winter installations face additional challenges with salt tracking and temperature control in building lobbies.

Smart planning can minimize extra costs - book elevators for consecutive days, coordinate with neighbors for shared elevator time, and choose materials that meet your building's acoustic requirements upfront. For a detailed estimate that factors in your building's specific requirements, request a quote from Ottawa Floor Install - we're experienced with Ottawa's condo installation challenges.

Q7

Is 12mm laminate worth the extra cost over 8mm for a busy family home in Riverside South?

Yes, 12mm laminate is definitely worth the extra cost for a busy family home - the increased durability, better sound dampening, and improved underfoot feel make it a smart long-term investment for high-traffic households.

The thicker 12mm laminate offers several key advantages that matter in busy family homes. **Durability** is the biggest factor - the thicker core provides better resistance to dents from dropped toys, furniture legs, and heavy foot traffic. You'll also get significantly **better sound reduction**, which is crucial in multi-story homes where footsteps can echo through the house. The 12mm thickness creates a more solid, premium feel underfoot that's closer to real hardwood.

In Ottawa's market, you're typically looking at about **\$1-2 per square foot difference** between quality 8mm and 12mm laminate when professionally installed. For a typical 1,500 sq ft main floor, that's roughly \$1,500-3,000 extra - but spread over 15-20 years of use, it's a minimal annual cost for the improved performance.

Riverside South homes often have open concept layouts and multiple levels, making the sound dampening particularly valuable. The 12mm thickness also handles Ottawa's seasonal humidity changes better, with less expansion and contraction at the joints. Look for 12mm options with **AC4 or AC5 wear ratings** and waterproof cores if you have kids and pets.

The thicker laminate also provides more **installation forgiveness** over minor subfloor imperfections, though proper subfloor preparation is still essential. For a busy family home where the flooring needs to perform reliably for decades, the 12mm upgrade typically pays for itself in longevity and satisfaction.

Want to compare specific 12mm laminate options for your Riverside South home? We can help you evaluate the best products for your family's needs and provide a detailed estimate.

Q8

Is \$18 per square foot for solid maple flooring a reasonable quote for Ottawa?

Yes, \$18 per square foot for solid maple flooring installation is within the reasonable range for Ottawa's current market. This price point typically indicates you're getting quality materials and professional installation from a licensed contractor.

Solid hardwood installation in Ottawa generally ranges from \$10-\$20 per square foot installed, so your quote sits at the higher end of this range. The \$18 price point usually reflects several factors: maple is a premium domestic hardwood known for its durability and beautiful grain patterns, solid hardwood requires more skilled installation than engineered options, and current material costs have increased due to supply chain factors affecting the lumber industry.

For context in Ottawa's market, quotes under \$12 per square foot often indicate lower-grade materials or potentially unlicensed installers who may skip crucial steps like proper subfloor preparation or moisture testing. Quality solid maple with professional installation, including proper acclimation, moisture barriers, and finishing work, typically commands premium pricing.

What should be included at this price point: The quote should cover the maple flooring material, professional installation with proper nail-down techniques, subfloor preparation if needed, baseboards and quarter-round trim, and cleanup. Make sure the contractor is licensed in Ontario, carries WSIB coverage, and provides warranty on both materials and workmanship. Also confirm whether the quote includes any necessary subfloor leveling or moisture barrier installation.

Before proceeding, verify exactly what grade of maple is included (select grade costs more than common grade), confirm the plank width and thickness, and ensure the contractor will handle proper acclimation of the wood to your home's humidity levels. For a detailed breakdown of what's included in your specific project, consider getting a second quote for comparison.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Floor Install. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any construction or renovation project. Information is current as of March 15, 2026 and may change. Visit ottawafloorinstall.ca for the latest answers.