

OTTAWA HVAC PRO

Permits & Codes

TSSA permits and building codes

15 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

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What is a TSSA inspection

A TSSA inspection is a safety inspection conducted by the Technical Standards & Safety Authority to ensure fuel-burning equipment meets Ontario safety codes and regulations. TSSA inspectors verify that gas appliances like furnaces, water heaters, and fireplaces are installed correctly and operating safely.

TSSA inspections are required whenever you install or significantly modify gas-burning equipment in Ontario. This includes new furnace installations, gas fireplace installations, and major repairs to existing gas appliances. The inspection ensures the work meets current safety standards and that there are no carbon monoxide risks or gas leaks that could endanger your family.

During a TSSA inspection, the inspector will check several critical safety elements. They'll verify proper venting and combustion air supply, test for gas leaks, ensure adequate clearances from combustible materials, and confirm that carbon monoxide levels are within safe limits. They'll also check that the installation matches the approved permit and that all components are properly sized for your home.

In Ottawa, TSSA inspections typically cost between \$100-150 and must be scheduled after installation work is complete. Your licensed HVAC contractor will usually arrange the inspection as part of the installation process. The inspector will provide a certificate of compliance once everything passes, which is important for insurance purposes and future home sales.

Only TSSA-licensed technicians (G2 or G3 gas fitters) can perform work that requires TSSA inspection. Attempting DIY work on gas appliances is both dangerous and illegal in Ontario. If you're planning any gas appliance installation or major repairs, ensure your contractor is properly licensed and will handle the permit and inspection process.

TSSA requirements may vary depending on your specific installation - always confirm requirements with your licensed HVAC technician who can guide you through the proper permitting and inspection process for your project.

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Q2

What safety features should a furnace have

Modern furnaces include several critical safety features designed to protect your home and family from carbon monoxide, gas leaks, and fire hazards. The most important safety components are the heat exchanger integrity monitoring, flame sensors, and proper venting systems.

Heat exchanger monitoring is crucial because a cracked heat exchanger can allow deadly carbon monoxide to mix with your home's air supply. High-efficiency furnaces often include pressure switches that monitor the heat exchanger and will shut down the system if problems are detected. Your annual maintenance should always include a thorough heat exchanger inspection by a licensed technician.

Flame sensors and gas valve safety controls prevent dangerous gas buildup by ensuring the burner lights properly every time. If the flame sensor doesn't detect a flame within seconds of the gas valve opening, the system automatically shuts off gas flow. Additionally, modern furnaces have **rollout switches** that detect if flames are escaping the combustion chamber, immediately shutting down the system to prevent fire hazards.

Proper venting and combustion air supply are essential safety features that must be installed according to TSSA requirements in Ontario. This includes adequate clearances around the furnace, proper vent pipe sizing and routing, and sufficient combustion air intake. High-efficiency furnaces use sealed combustion systems that draw air from outside, reducing the risk of backdrafting and carbon monoxide issues.

In Ottawa's climate, it's especially important that your furnace has **reliable ignition systems** (either hot surface ignition or intermittent pilot) rather than older standing pilot lights, which can be extinguished and create gas buildup. Your furnace should also have **limit switches** that prevent overheating and **proper electrical grounding** to prevent shock hazards.

Every home with a furnace must have working carbon monoxide detectors - this is required by Ontario building code and could save your life. Schedule annual professional maintenance to ensure all safety systems are functioning properly, as even small issues can become dangerous over time.

For a comprehensive safety inspection of your furnace and to ensure all safety features are working properly, request a quote from Ottawa HVAC Pro for professional maintenance service.

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What is the Ontario Building Code requirement for furnaces

The Ontario Building Code (OBC) sets strict requirements for furnace installations to ensure safety and proper operation. All furnace installations must comply with OBC requirements and receive TSSA (Technical Standards & Safety Authority) permits before operation.

Key OBC requirements for furnaces include proper clearances from combustible materials - typically 6 inches from the sides and rear, and specific clearances above based on the manufacturer's specifications. The furnace must be installed on a non-combustible base, and all gas connections must be made by a licensed G2 or G3 gas technician. Electrical connections must meet Ontario Electrical Safety Code requirements.

Venting and combustion air requirements are critical safety components. High-efficiency furnaces require proper PVC venting with specific slope requirements and termination distances from windows, doors, and air intakes. Combustion air must be provided either through direct connection to outside air or adequate room ventilation. The heat exchanger and all gas connections must pass pressure testing before approval.

In Ottawa, all furnace installations require both a TSSA permit and often a municipal building permit. The installation must be inspected by TSSA before the gas can be connected and the system activated. Only licensed HVAC contractors can pull these permits and perform the work legally. Carbon monoxide detectors are mandatory in homes with fuel-burning appliances.

TSSA requirements may vary based on your specific installation - confirm all code requirements with your licensed HVAC technician. Never attempt DIY work on gas furnaces, as this violates both safety codes and insurance requirements. For proper code-compliant furnace installation in Ottawa, work with licensed professionals who understand all current OBC and TSSA requirements.

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What warranty should I expect on a new furnace

Most new furnaces come with a 10-year parts warranty from the manufacturer, plus a 1-2 year labor warranty from your HVAC contractor. However, warranty terms vary significantly between brands and efficiency levels, so it's important to understand what's actually covered.

Manufacturer warranties typically cover the heat exchanger for 10-20 years (longer on high-efficiency models), while other components like the blower motor, gas valve, and control board usually get 5-10 years of coverage. Premium brands like Lennox, Carrier, and Trane often offer better warranty terms than budget models. The key thing to remember is that manufacturer warranties only cover parts - you'll still pay labor costs for warranty repairs unless your contractor offers additional coverage.

Installation warranties from your HVAC contractor are equally important and cover the quality of the installation work itself. A reputable Ottawa HVAC contractor should provide at least one year of labor warranty, with many offering 2-5 years on their workmanship. This covers issues like improper sizing, ductwork connections, or electrical problems that arise from the installation process.

In Ottawa's climate, where furnaces work hard through long winters, having solid warranty coverage is especially valuable. Make sure to register your new furnace with the manufacturer within 60-90 days of installation to activate the full warranty terms. Also, most warranties require annual professional maintenance to remain valid - skipping tune-ups can void your coverage.

Before choosing a furnace, compare warranty terms alongside efficiency ratings and upfront costs. A slightly more expensive unit with a 20-year heat exchanger warranty might save you money long-term compared to a budget model with basic 10-year coverage. For a detailed warranty comparison on furnaces suitable for Ottawa homes, request a quote from Ottawa HVAC Pro.

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Do I need a permit to replace my furnace with the same size

Yes, you need a TSSA permit to replace your furnace in Ontario, even when installing the same size unit.

This is a legal requirement for all fuel-burning appliance installations, regardless of whether it's a direct replacement.

TSSA (Technical Standards & Safety Authority) regulations require permits for any furnace installation or replacement work in Ontario. The permit ensures the installation meets current safety codes, proper venting requirements, and gas connection standards. Only licensed G2 or G3 gas technicians can obtain these permits and perform the installation work legally.

The permit process involves several safety checks that protect your family. The technician must verify proper gas line sizing, ensure adequate combustion air supply, confirm correct venting and drainage, and test for gas leaks. Even if you're replacing with an identical model, building codes may have changed since your original installation, requiring updates to meet current standards.

In Ottawa, most reputable HVAC contractors include the TSSA permit cost in their installation quote, typically adding \$100-200 to the project. The permit also triggers a mandatory inspection to ensure everything meets code requirements. This inspection protects you from potential safety hazards and ensures your home insurance remains valid.

Never attempt furnace installation yourself or hire unlicensed contractors, as this violates Ontario law and creates serious safety risks including carbon monoxide poisoning. Working with gas appliances requires specialized training and certification for good reason.

For a properly permitted furnace replacement in Ottawa, expect to invest \$3,500-\$6,500 depending on efficiency level, with the peace of mind that comes from professional installation and code compliance.

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How do I check for gas leaks

If you suspect a gas leak, your safety is the top priority - leave the area immediately and call Enbridge Gas at 1-866-763-5427 or 911. Never attempt to locate gas leaks yourself, as this work requires specialized equipment and training.

Natural gas has a distinctive "rotten egg" smell added specifically for safety detection. This mercaptan additive makes even small leaks detectable by smell. If you notice this odor anywhere in your home, especially near gas appliances like your furnace, water heater, or gas fireplace, treat it as an emergency. Don't turn lights on or off, don't use electrical devices, and don't try to find the source - just leave immediately.

Other warning signs of potential gas leaks include dead vegetation near gas lines, hissing sounds near gas appliances or meters, and dirt or dust blowing from underground gas lines. You might also notice physical symptoms like headaches, dizziness, or nausea when near gas appliances, though these can have other causes too.

In Ottawa's climate, it's particularly important to have your gas appliances inspected annually by a TSSA-licensed technician. Our cold winters mean your furnace works harder, and thermal expansion and contraction can affect gas connections over time. **Only licensed G2 or G3 gas technicians should inspect, test, or repair gas lines and connections** - this isn't DIY territory due to both safety risks and Ontario regulations.

If you're concerned about your gas appliances or want peace of mind with an annual safety inspection, contact Ottawa HVAC Pro. Our TSSA-licensed technicians use professional gas detection equipment and can ensure your home's gas systems are operating safely. We also recommend installing gas detectors near gas appliances for added protection.

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What questions should I ask an HVAC contractor

Ask about licensing, experience, and detailed project scope to ensure you're hiring a qualified contractor who will complete your HVAC work safely and properly.

Licensing and Insurance Questions Start with the most important qualifications. Ask if they're TSSA licensed (required for gas work in Ontario), request their license number, and verify they carry WSIB coverage and liability insurance. A legitimate contractor will readily provide this information and won't hesitate when you ask to see proof of insurance.

Experience and References Inquire about their experience with your specific type of project - furnace installation, heat pump systems, or ductwork modifications all require different expertise. Ask for recent references from similar jobs and whether they specialize in residential or commercial work. **Contractors with 10+ years of experience** typically handle unexpected issues more effectively than newer companies.

Project Details and Timeline Get specifics about the work scope, including what equipment they'll install, whether permits are required, and realistic timelines. Ask about **TSSA permit requirements** for gas appliances and who handles the permit application process. Discuss what happens if they encounter unexpected issues like asbestos insulation or structural modifications needed for new equipment.

Pricing and Warranty Structure Request detailed written quotes that break down equipment costs, labor, permits, and any additional fees. Compare not just total prices but warranty coverage - quality contractors typically offer **2-5 year warranties on installation** and will explain manufacturer equipment warranties. Ask about payment schedules and avoid contractors demanding large upfront payments.

Emergency Service and Maintenance Find out if they provide ongoing service and emergency repairs, especially important for heating systems in Ottawa winters. Ask about **annual maintenance programs** and response times for emergency calls. Contractors who service what they install typically provide better long-term value than install-only companies.

For a free consultation about your specific HVAC project, Ottawa HVAC Pro provides detailed estimates and answers all these questions upfront - we're TSSA licensed with full insurance coverage and 15+ years of local experience.

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Q8

How do I verify my HVAC contractor is licensed

In Ontario, you should verify that your HVAC contractor holds proper TSSA licensing for gas work and is registered with WSIB for insurance coverage. This protects you from liability and ensures the work meets safety standards.

TSSA License Verification is the most critical step. Any contractor working on gas furnaces, fireplaces, or other fuel-burning equipment must hold a G2 or G3 gas technician license from the Technical Standards & Safety Authority. You can verify their license status directly on the TSSA website by searching their license number or company name. A legitimate contractor will readily provide their TSSA license number - if they hesitate or can't provide it, that's a major red flag.

WSIB Coverage protects you from liability if a worker is injured on your property. Ask to see their WSIB clearance certificate, which should be current and list your contractor's business name. You can also verify WSIB coverage online through their website. Additionally, confirm they carry liability insurance - reputable contractors typically carry \$1-2 million in coverage.

In Ottawa, you should also verify the contractor is registered with the City of Ottawa if required for permits. For major installations like furnaces or gas fireplaces, proper permits must be pulled through the city and inspected by TSSA. A licensed contractor will handle this process and provide you with copies of all permits and inspection certificates.

Red flags to avoid: contractors who work only for cash, can't provide license numbers, offer door-to-door services, or pressure you to sign immediately. Always get multiple quotes and verify credentials before any work begins.

For peace of mind with your HVAC project, Ottawa HVAC Pro maintains current TSSA licensing, WSIB coverage, and \$2M liability insurance - credentials we're happy to verify for any potential client.

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Is my furnace safe

Your furnace safety depends on several key factors including proper maintenance, ventilation, and carbon monoxide detection. Without inspecting your specific unit, I can guide you through the essential safety checks every Ottawa homeowner should know.

Age and maintenance history are the biggest safety indicators. Furnaces over 15-20 years old require more attention, especially if they haven't received annual tune-ups. A well-maintained newer furnace with proper installation is generally very safe, while an older, neglected unit poses higher risks for carbon monoxide leaks, gas leaks, or heat exchanger cracks.

Visual and operational warning signs include unusual sounds (banging, squealing, or rumbling), yellow or flickering pilot light flames (should be blue), rust or corrosion around the unit, excessive dust or soot, frequent cycling on/off, or any gas odors. Your furnace should operate quietly with consistent heating throughout your home.

Carbon monoxide protection is absolutely critical in Ottawa homes. Install CO detectors on every level of your home, especially near bedrooms. Symptoms of CO exposure include headaches, dizziness, nausea, or flu-like symptoms that improve when you leave the house. If your CO alarm ever sounds, leave immediately and call 911.

TSSA regulations in Ontario require annual inspections for older gas furnaces and professional servicing by licensed G2/G3 technicians. Never attempt DIY repairs on gas components - this is both dangerous and illegal. Even simple maintenance like changing filters should be done carefully to avoid damaging safety switches.

Schedule a professional safety inspection if your furnace is over 10 years old, hasn't been serviced recently, or shows any warning signs. A licensed HVAC technician can check the heat exchanger, test for gas leaks, verify proper ventilation, and ensure all safety controls function correctly. For peace of mind about your furnace safety, request a consultation from Ottawa HVAC Pro.

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What is G2 vs G3 gas technician certification

G2 and G3 are TSSA gas technician certification levels in Ontario that determine what type of gas work a technician can legally perform. G2 is the higher certification level, while G3 is more limited in scope.

G2 Gas Technician Certification allows technicians to work on all residential and light commercial gas appliances, including furnaces, boilers, water heaters, gas fireplaces, and gas lines. G2 technicians can install, repair, and service any gas appliance up to 400,000 BTU input. This is the certification level required for most residential HVAC work in Ottawa homes.

G3 Gas Technician Certification is more limited and typically covers smaller appliances like gas ranges, dryers, and some water heaters. G3 technicians cannot work on furnaces, boilers, or install gas lines. The scope is much more restricted compared to G2 certification.

In Ottawa's residential market, you'll want to ensure your HVAC contractor has **G2 certified technicians** for any furnace installation, repair, or gas fireplace work. Only G2 or higher certified technicians can legally obtain TSSA permits for major gas appliance installations. Working with unlicensed technicians on gas appliances is not only illegal but extremely dangerous due to carbon monoxide risks.

TSSA requires proper certification because improper gas work can lead to gas leaks, carbon monoxide poisoning, or explosions. Always verify your technician's TSSA certification before allowing any gas appliance work. Licensed contractors will readily provide their certification numbers and carry proper insurance.

When hiring HVAC contractors in Ottawa, ask to see their TSSA G2 certification and ensure they're pulling proper permits for your installation. This protects both your safety and your home insurance coverage.

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What are the signs of carbon monoxide from a furnace

Carbon monoxide from a furnace is odorless and colorless, making it extremely dangerous. The most reliable sign is your CO detector alarm, but there are other warning signs that indicate potential carbon monoxide production from your heating system.

Physical symptoms are often the first indication of CO exposure. These include headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, and flu-like symptoms that improve when you leave the house. Multiple family members experiencing these symptoms simultaneously is a major red flag. In severe cases, CO poisoning can cause confusion, chest pain, and loss of consciousness.

Visual signs around your furnace can indicate incomplete combustion that produces carbon monoxide. Look for yellow or orange flames instead of blue flames in gas furnaces, soot buildup around the furnace or vents, rust or corrosion on the heat exchanger or flue pipe, and moisture or condensation around windows near the furnace. A damaged or disconnected flue pipe is particularly dangerous as it can allow CO to enter your home instead of venting outside.

In Ottawa's climate, furnaces work harder during our cold winters, increasing the risk of CO production from cracked heat exchangers or blocked vents. Snow and ice can block outdoor vents, causing dangerous backdrafting. The temperature swings we experience can also cause expansion and contraction that may crack heat exchangers over time.

If your CO detector sounds or you suspect carbon monoxide, leave your home immediately and call 911. Don't try to locate the source or turn off equipment - just get everyone out and call for help. Contact Enbridge Gas at 1-866-763-5427 if you smell gas. Never ignore CO detector alarms or assume they're malfunctioning.

Annual furnace maintenance by a licensed HVAC technician is crucial for preventing CO issues. We inspect heat exchangers, test combustion, and ensure proper venting during tune-ups. For peace of mind about your furnace's safety this winter, Ottawa HVAC Pro offers comprehensive furnace inspections and maintenance services.

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Q12

Do I need a permit to install a furnace in Ottawa

Yes, you need a TSSA permit to install a furnace in Ottawa. This is required by law for all fuel-burning appliances in Ontario, and only licensed G2 or G3 gas technicians can obtain these permits and perform the installation.

The **Technical Standards & Safety Authority (TSSA)** regulates all fuel-burning equipment installations in Ontario, including furnaces. Your HVAC contractor will handle the permit application process as part of the installation. The permit ensures the installation meets safety codes and includes a mandatory inspection by a TSSA inspector after completion. This inspection verifies proper venting, gas connections, electrical work, and overall safety compliance.

In Ottawa, furnace installations typically require both the **TSSA permit for the gas appliance** and may also need an **electrical permit from the city** if significant electrical work is involved. The permit costs are usually included in your contractor's quote, ranging from \$100-200 for the TSSA permit. Most reputable HVAC companies handle all permitting as part of their service.

Never attempt to install a furnace yourself or hire unlicensed contractors. Improper installation can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, gas leaks, fires, or voided insurance coverage. Insurance companies may deny claims if work wasn't done by licensed professionals with proper permits. Additionally, when you sell your home, buyers and home inspectors will look for permit records.

Choose a licensed HVAC contractor who will handle permits, installation, and the required TSSA inspection. This ensures your new furnace is safe, code-compliant, and properly warrantied. For a free estimate on furnace installation with all permits handled professionally, request a quote from Ottawa HVAC Pro.

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Do I need a permit for AC installation

Yes, you typically need permits for air conditioning installation in Ottawa. The specific permits required depend on the type of installation and electrical work involved.

For **central air conditioning installation**, you'll need an electrical permit from the City of Ottawa since the installation involves connecting a 240V electrical circuit to your home's panel. This is required whether you're installing a completely new system or replacing an existing unit, as the electrical connections must be inspected to ensure they meet Ontario Electrical Safety Code requirements.

Heat pump installations also require electrical permits for the same reasons, and may require additional permits if refrigerant lines need to be run through structural elements of your home. Mini-split systems typically need electrical permits as well, though the requirements may be less complex depending on the electrical load.

In Ottawa specifically, permit applications are submitted through the City of Ottawa's building services department. The permit ensures that the electrical work is inspected by a qualified electrical safety inspector and meets all safety codes. Your HVAC contractor should handle the permit application process as part of their service - this is standard practice for licensed professionals.

Important safety note: Only licensed electricians should perform the electrical connections for AC installations. Improper electrical work can create fire hazards and void your home insurance. Additionally, many manufacturers require professional installation to maintain warranty coverage.

The permit process typically takes 1-2 weeks for approval, so factor this into your installation timeline. Your HVAC contractor will coordinate the electrical inspection once the installation is complete. For a free consultation about permits and installation requirements for your specific AC project, Ottawa HVAC Pro can walk you through the entire process and handle all permit applications.

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Where should I place carbon monoxide detectors

Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed on every level of your home, including the basement, and outside each sleeping area. The most critical locations are within 15 feet of fuel-burning appliances like your furnace, water heater, and gas fireplace.

Install detectors at least 5 feet high on walls or on the ceiling, as carbon monoxide is slightly lighter than air and will mix throughout the room. Avoid placing them directly above fuel-burning appliances, in bathrooms, or near windows and doors where drafts could affect readings. In bedrooms, mount them on the wall opposite the bed so you'll hear the alarm clearly.

In Ottawa homes, pay special attention to basement placement since that's where most furnaces and water heaters are located. Install a detector within 10-15 feet of your furnace but not directly adjacent to it. If you have an attached garage, place a detector on the wall connecting the garage to your home, as car exhaust can seep through.

Replace detector batteries twice yearly - many Ottawa residents do this when we change clocks for daylight saving time. Test detectors monthly by pressing the test button. Carbon monoxide detectors should be replaced every 5-7 years, as their sensors lose sensitivity over time.

If your CO detector ever sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911. Don't try to locate the source yourself. Once emergency responders clear your home, have a licensed HVAC technician inspect all fuel-burning appliances. Annual furnace maintenance helps prevent carbon monoxide issues by ensuring proper combustion and venting.

For peace of mind with your heating system's safety, consider scheduling an annual HVAC inspection to check for proper ventilation and carbon monoxide risks.

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What happens if HVAC work is done without a permit

Working without required permits can result in serious legal, safety, and financial consequences that far outweigh any perceived savings. In Ontario, TSSA takes unpermitted gas work very seriously, and the penalties can be substantial.

Legal and regulatory consequences include fines ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars for both homeowners and contractors. TSSA can issue stop-work orders, require complete system replacement even if the work was done correctly, and pursue legal action for serious violations. Unlicensed individuals performing gas work face criminal charges, as only G2 or G3 licensed technicians can legally work on fuel-burning equipment in Ontario.

Insurance implications are equally serious. Your home insurance may deny claims related to unpermitted work, even for unrelated damage. If a fire or carbon monoxide incident occurs and investigators discover unpermitted HVAC work, you could face complete claim denial and potential policy cancellation. Many insurance companies specifically exclude coverage for work done without proper permits and inspections.

Safety risks are the most critical concern. Unpermitted work bypasses crucial safety inspections designed to prevent carbon monoxide leaks, gas leaks, and fire hazards. Improper installation can create deadly conditions that may not be apparent for months or years. TSSA inspections verify proper venting, gas connections, and combustion air supply - all critical for safe operation.

Financial consequences extend beyond fines. When selling your home, unpermitted work must be disclosed and may require complete re-installation to current code standards. Buyers often demand significant price reductions or walk away entirely. The cost of bringing unpermitted work up to code typically exceeds the original permit fees by 10-20 times.

In Ottawa specifically, both TSSA and the City of Ottawa actively investigate unpermitted work, often triggered by neighbor complaints or insurance claims. The City can issue orders requiring permit applications for completed work, often at penalty rates.

For any furnace, gas fireplace, or major HVAC installation, always ensure your contractor pulls proper permits and uses licensed technicians. The permit fees are minimal compared to the risks of unpermitted work.

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