

OTTAWA DRIVEWAYS

Driveway Repair & Patching

Pothole filling, crack repair, heaving fixes, and edge crumbling solutions for asphalt, concrete, and interlock driveways damaged by Ottawa winters

39 Expert Answers from Driveway IQ

ottawadriveways.com/construction-brain

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Q1

Our asphalt driveway in Alta Vista is over 25 years old — is it worth resurfacing or should we just tear it out and start fresh?

At 25+ years old, your Alta Vista asphalt driveway is likely a candidate for full replacement rather than resurfacing, especially given Ottawa's harsh freeze-thaw conditions that accelerate asphalt deterioration.

The decision between resurfacing and replacement depends entirely on the condition of your existing base and the extent of surface damage. **Resurfacing only works if the underlying base is still stable** — if you're seeing widespread alligator cracking, significant settling, potholes, or areas where the driveway has heaved or sunk, these are signs of base failure that resurfacing cannot fix. An overlay will simply reflect every crack and movement from below within 1-2 Ottawa winters.

Alta Vista's housing stock from the 1960s-1980s often has driveways built to older standards with thinner base layers than what we'd install today. Many of these driveways were built with only 150-200mm of granular base, which is insufficient for Ottawa's 1.2-1.5 metre frost depth. After 25 years of freeze-thaw cycling, snow loading, and salt exposure, the base has likely deteriorated significantly. Additionally, the clay soils common in parts of Alta Vista can cause base instability over time.

Here's how to evaluate your driveway: Walk the entire surface and look for widespread cracking (especially alligator or interconnected cracks), areas that feel spongy underfoot, significant settling or heaving, and edge deterioration. If damage is limited to surface oxidation, minor linear cracks, and general wear, resurfacing might work and would cost \$2,500-\$5,500. However, if you're seeing structural issues, full replacement at \$5,000-\$12,000 is the only durable solution.

Given Ottawa's extreme climate, a properly rebuilt driveway with modern base specifications (300mm Granular B sub-base plus 150mm Granular A base) will last 20-25 years with regular sealcoating every 2-3 years. A resurfaced driveway over a failing base might only give you 3-5 years before requiring complete tear-out anyway.

When to hire a pro: Have a qualified paving contractor assess your base condition — they can often tell from surface symptoms whether the foundation is sound. Most will provide free estimates and can explain what they're seeing.

Need help finding a driveway contractor? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals for free estimates on your Alta Vista project.

Q2

Can Ottawa driveway repair contractors fix damage caused by a heavy delivery truck on my asphalt?

Yes, Ottawa driveway repair contractors can fix heavy truck damage to asphalt, but the repair approach depends on whether the damage is surface-level or extends into the base structure. Most residential asphalt driveways aren't designed for heavy delivery trucks, so damage often requires more than simple patching.

Surface damage like tire ruts, scuffing, or shallow gouges can typically be repaired with hot-mix asphalt patching. The contractor will cut out the damaged area in clean, straight lines, apply tack coat to the edges, and fill with fresh hot-mix asphalt compacted to match the surrounding surface. This type of repair costs \$200 to \$800 depending on the affected area and runs \$8 to \$15 per square foot in Ottawa.

Structural damage is more serious and common with heavy truck traffic. If the truck caused cracking, settling, or base failure beneath the asphalt surface, simple patching won't hold. The contractor needs to excavate the damaged area down to stable base, add and compact granular material if needed, then rebuild the asphalt in proper lifts. This type of repair costs \$500 to \$2,000 depending on depth and area, running \$15 to \$25 per square foot.

Ottawa's climate makes truck damage worse because our extreme freeze-thaw cycles exploit any cracks or weak spots the truck created. Water penetrates damaged areas, freezes and expands, then creates larger cracks and base instability. What starts as minor rutting in summer can become major structural failure after one Ottawa winter if not properly repaired.

Signs you need structural repair rather than surface patching include: cracks extending beyond the tire tracks, water pooling in ruts, soft or spongy feeling when walking on the damaged area, or visible settlement. If the damage occurred on a driveway over 15 years old with minimal base preparation, structural repair is more likely needed.

Timing matters for repairs. Hot-mix asphalt repairs should be done when temperatures are consistently above 10°C, ideally between May and October in Ottawa. Cold patch can provide temporary protection through winter, but it's not a permanent solution and typically fails within one freeze-thaw season.

Prevention for future deliveries: Ask delivery companies about truck weight and request they use smaller vehicles when possible. Consider having heavy deliveries made to the street with materials moved by hand cart or smaller equipment. Some Ottawa homeowners install a concrete pad near the street for heavy deliveries to protect their asphalt driveway.

When to call a professional: Any damage deeper than 25mm, cracks extending more than 1 meter from the tire tracks, or areas showing base settlement require professional assessment. A qualified paving contractor can determine whether you need surface repair or structural reconstruction.

Need help finding a driveway contractor? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who specialize in truck damage repair and can assess whether your damage requires surface patching or full structural repair.

Q3

How much does it cost to repair ruts and depressions caused by heavy truck traffic on my Ottawa driveway?

Repairing truck-caused ruts and depressions in Ottawa driveways typically costs \$800 to \$3,500 depending on the damage extent, repair method, and driveway material. The repair approach and cost vary significantly based on whether you have asphalt, interlock, or concrete, and how deeply the ruts have penetrated into the base layer.

Asphalt Driveway Rut Repair

For asphalt driveways, surface-level rutting (less than 25mm deep) can often be repaired with **infrared patching** at \$8 to \$15 per square foot. This process heats the existing asphalt to make it workable, adds new hot-mix material, and re-compacts the area. Deeper ruts requiring **full-depth patching** cost \$12 to \$25 per square foot — the damaged asphalt is cut out, base material is added if needed, and new hot-mix asphalt is installed and compacted.

If the rutting has compressed or displaced the granular base beneath the asphalt (common with repeated heavy truck traffic), you're looking at **base repair** which significantly increases costs. The asphalt must be removed, the base re-excavated and re-compacted, and new asphalt installed — essentially a localized reconstruction costing \$15 to \$30 per square foot.

Interlock Paver Repair

Interlock driveways with truck ruts require **lifting and releveling** the affected pavers. The process involves removing pavers from the rutted area, adding and compacting bedding sand or base material, and relaying the pavers. Costs range from \$12 to \$20 per square foot for bedding sand adjustment, or \$18 to \$35 per square foot if granular base needs rebuilding. If pavers are cracked from the truck weight, replacement pavers add \$3 to \$8 per square foot depending on the paver type.

Ottawa Climate Considerations

Heavy truck traffic damage is particularly problematic in Ottawa because **freeze-thaw cycles** exploit any base compression or surface cracking caused by the overloading. Water penetrates the damaged areas, freezes, and

dramatically worsens the rutting through the winter months. Ruts also collect water and ice, creating safety hazards and accelerating deterioration of surrounding pavement.

Repair Timing and Prevention

Truck rut repairs should be completed **before winter** to prevent freeze-thaw damage from expanding the problem. The repair area needs time to settle and stabilize before Ottawa's harsh winter conditions. For asphalt repairs, avoid scheduling work after September to ensure proper compaction temperatures.

If heavy truck access is ongoing (deliveries, construction, service vehicles), consider **reinforcing the driveway** during repairs. This might involve increasing the granular base depth to 600mm or more, using geotextile fabric for base stabilization, or upgrading to 80mm interlock pavers designed for vehicular traffic.

When to Hire a Professional

All truck rut repairs require professional contractors with proper compaction equipment. Base repair work needs vibratory plate compactors or roller compactors to achieve proper density. Asphalt patching requires hot-mix material delivered at the correct temperature and compacted while workable. DIY repairs using cold patch or hand tamping will fail within one Ottawa winter season.

Get multiple quotes and ensure contractors inspect the base condition before providing estimates — surface-only repairs over compromised base material are temporary fixes that fail quickly under Ottawa's freeze-thaw conditions.

Can I trench under my existing asphalt driveway in Kanata to run electrical for an EV charger without repaving?

Yes, you can trench under an existing asphalt driveway to run electrical conduit for an EV charger, but it requires careful planning and professional execution to avoid damaging the driveway surface. The key is using proper trenching techniques and ensuring the trench is properly backfilled and compacted to prevent settling that could crack the asphalt above.

Trenching Methods for Existing Driveways

The most common approach is **directional boring or horizontal drilling**, where a specialized machine creates a small-diameter tunnel beneath the driveway without disturbing the surface. This method works well for running electrical conduit from your house to a garage or charging station location. The boring machine enters and exits on either side of the driveway, leaving the asphalt completely intact. Expect to pay \$15 to \$25 per linear foot for directional boring in the Ottawa area.

If directional boring isn't feasible due to depth requirements or obstacles, **open trenching** is possible but requires cutting through the asphalt. A concrete saw cuts clean lines, the asphalt is removed in sections, the trench is dug, conduit is installed, and the trench is backfilled in compacted lifts. The asphalt sections are then replaced or the area is patched with new hot-mix asphalt. This approach costs less upfront (\$8 to \$15 per linear foot) but requires asphalt repair that may not match perfectly with your existing surface.

Ottawa-Specific Considerations

In Kanata, you're dealing with a mix of soil conditions — sandy soils in areas closer to the Canadian Shield drain well and are easier to work with, while clay soils in newer subdivisions require more careful trenching to prevent cave-ins. The electrical conduit must be buried below Ottawa's frost line (1.2 to 1.5 metres depth) to prevent frost heaving that could damage the conduit or create surface settlement.

Electrical Code Requirements

Any electrical work for EV charger installation requires an ESA (Electrical Safety Authority) permit and must be done by a licensed electrical contractor. The conduit run typically requires TECK cable or individual conductors in PVC conduit, properly sized for your charger's amperage (typically 40 to 80 amps for residential Level 2 chargers). The electrical contractor will coordinate the trenching work or hire a qualified excavation contractor.

When to Hire Professionals

This is definitely professional work requiring coordination between an electrical contractor and an excavation specialist. The electrical contractor handles permits, conduit sizing, and connections, while the excavation contractor manages the trenching and backfill. Improper backfilling is the biggest risk — loose soil under your driveway will settle over the first winter, creating a depression that cracks the asphalt above and requires expensive repairs.

Need help finding electrical and excavation contractors for your EV charger project? Ottawa Driveways can connect you with professionals through the Ottawa Construction Network who regularly coordinate these installations in Kanata and across Ottawa.

Q5

How much does it cost to replace just the first 10 feet of my driveway apron in Ottawa if the rest is still solid?

Replacing just the driveway apron (the first 10 feet from the street) in Ottawa typically costs \$1,200 to \$3,500 depending on width, material, and permit requirements. However, this work requires a City of Ottawa permit since the apron sits within the municipal right-of-way and must meet city specifications.

The **driveway apron** is the section between the sidewalk and the road that connects your private driveway to the municipal street. This area experiences the heaviest traffic loads from your vehicles plus municipal snowplows, making it the most stressed part of any driveway. In Ottawa's freeze-thaw climate, aprons often fail first due to the combination of heavy loading, salt exposure from road treatments, and water pooling where the driveway meets the street.

Cost breakdown for apron replacement:

- **Asphalt apron (10 feet x 12 feet average):** \$1,200 to \$2,200 including excavation, granular base, and hot-mix asphalt to City of Ottawa specifications
- **Concrete apron:** \$1,800 to \$3,200 for the same area with reinforced concrete meeting municipal standards
- **Interlock apron:** \$2,500 to \$3,500 but rarely approved by the City of Ottawa for the apron section due to snowplow damage concerns
- **City permit:** \$150 to \$300 depending on scope and inspections required

The challenge with **partial driveway replacement** is creating a seamless transition between the new apron and your existing driveway. If your existing surface is asphalt, the contractor must saw-cut a clean edge and ensure proper bonding between old and new sections. Temperature differences between the existing surface and fresh

hot-mix can create a weak joint that cracks within the first winter if not handled properly.

Ottawa-specific considerations make apron work more complex than typical driveway sections. The apron must be built to withstand municipal snowplow blades, meet City drainage requirements, and often requires a thicker base layer than residential sections. Clay soils prevalent in Ottawa (especially Barrhaven, Orleans, and Gloucester) require extra attention to base preparation since the apron area often has the poorest drainage and highest water exposure.

Practical steps for your project: First, call 3-1-1 to apply for a City of Ottawa driveway permit — this is mandatory for any work in the road allowance. The permit process includes a site inspection to verify the work meets municipal standards. Get quotes from contractors experienced with municipal apron work, as the specifications differ from regular driveway paving. Ensure the contractor coordinates with the city inspector and understands the required base depth, drainage slope, and connection details to the existing surface.

When to consider full driveway replacement instead: If your existing driveway shows significant cracking, settling, or drainage issues beyond the apron area, replacing just the apron may be throwing good money after bad. A failing apron often indicates base problems that extend further up the driveway. Many Ottawa homeowners discover during apron replacement that the adjacent sections need work within 2 to 3 years, making full replacement more cost-effective upfront.

This work absolutely requires a professional contractor due to permit requirements, municipal inspection, heavy equipment needs for proper base preparation, and the precision required to integrate new paving with existing surfaces. The apron is not a DIY project.

Need help finding a driveway contractor experienced with municipal apron work? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals familiar with City of Ottawa requirements.

Q6

Is it worth repairing a 20-year-old asphalt driveway in Ottawa or should I just replace the whole thing?

A 20-year-old asphalt driveway in Ottawa is approaching the end of its typical lifespan, and replacement is usually the better long-term investment unless the damage is very minor and the base remains stable.

At 20 years in Ottawa's brutal climate, your driveway has endured approximately 1,000 freeze-thaw cycles, two decades of snowplow scraping, and countless applications of road salt. Most asphalt driveways built in the early 2000s are showing significant wear by now, and the question becomes whether the underlying base structure is still

sound or if surface repairs are just cosmetic fixes over deeper problems.

Repair makes sense if your driveway has only minor surface cracking (hairline cracks less than 5mm wide), isolated small potholes, and the surface is still relatively level without major settling or heaving. In this case, professional crack filling with hot-pour sealant (\$2-5 per linear foot), pothole patching with hot-mix asphalt (\$100-400 per hole), and a fresh sealcoat application (\$200-500 for an average driveway) can extend the life by 3-5 years for a total investment of \$800-2,000. This approach works best if you've maintained the driveway with regular sealcoating every 2-3 years throughout its life.

Replacement is the better choice if you're seeing alligator cracking (interconnected cracks forming a reptile-skin pattern), significant edge cracking, multiple large potholes, areas where the asphalt has completely failed down to the base, or any settling and heaving that creates drainage problems. These are signs that Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles have compromised the structural integrity of both the asphalt surface and potentially the granular base beneath. Repairs on a driveway with these issues typically fail within 1-2 winters, leaving you with repair costs plus full replacement costs.

Ottawa-specific considerations make replacement more attractive at the 20-year mark. Driveways built in the early 2000s often have thinner asphalt lifts and less robust base preparation than current best practices. Modern Ottawa driveway construction uses deeper granular base layers (minimum 300mm Granular B plus 150mm Granular A) to handle our 1.2-1.5 metre frost depth, and two-lift asphalt installation (50mm binder course plus 50mm surface course) for better durability. Your 20-year-old driveway likely has a single 75mm asphalt lift over minimal base depth.

Cost comparison for an average Ottawa driveway: Major repairs (crack filling, multiple pothole patches, sealcoating) will run \$1,500-3,000 but only buy you 3-5 more years. Full replacement costs \$5,000-12,000 but gives you 20-25 years of service with proper maintenance. The math strongly favors replacement unless you're planning to sell the house within 2-3 years.

When to hire a professional: Have a qualified paving contractor assess the base condition before deciding. They can probe the base depth, check for stability, and identify whether the granular foundation is still sound. If the base has failed, surface repairs are pointless. If the base is solid, targeted repairs might be worthwhile as a short-term solution.

Need help finding a driveway contractor for an assessment? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who can evaluate your specific situation and provide honest guidance on repair versus replacement.

How much does it cost to fix asphalt driveway damage caused by city snowplow berms in Ottawa?

Snowplow damage to Ottawa driveways typically costs \$300 to \$2,500 to repair, depending on whether you're dealing with edge cracking, surface gouging, or full-depth damage to the driveway apron. The most common damage occurs where the metal plow blade catches raised or cracked asphalt edges, tearing chunks away and creating jagged breaks that worsen rapidly through freeze-thaw cycles.

Edge damage and surface gouging represents the most frequent snowplow damage in Ottawa. When plow blades catch the edge of an asphalt driveway, they tear away strips of surface material and create irregular breaks along the driveway perimeter. This type of damage costs \$300 to \$800 to repair professionally. The contractor will saw-cut clean edges, remove loose material, and patch with hot-mix asphalt. Cold patch repairs are tempting because they're cheaper (\$100 to \$200), but cold patch fails within one Ottawa winter and actually makes the problem worse by creating a raised, loose area that catches the plow blade again.

Driveway apron damage is more serious and expensive. The apron — the section between the sidewalk and road — sits within the municipal right-of-way and takes the heaviest abuse from city plows. Full apron replacement costs \$1,200 to \$2,500 depending on width and depth requirements. This work often requires a City of Ottawa permit since it's within the road allowance, and the repair must meet municipal specifications for thickness and materials. The city plow operators push heavy, wet snow mixed with road salt and sand directly over this area dozens of times each winter, and the constant scraping gradually wears away the surface.

Deep gouges and structural damage occur when plow blades dig into the asphalt surface, creating trenches that collect water and accelerate freeze-thaw damage. These repairs cost \$500 to \$1,500 depending on area affected. The damaged asphalt must be cut out completely, the base inspected and repaired if necessary, and new hot-mix asphalt installed and compacted properly.

Ottawa's extreme freeze-thaw cycling makes snowplow damage particularly destructive. Water enters the torn edges and gouges, freezes and expands, then thaws and allows more water penetration. A small edge tear from December plowing can become a major pothole by March if not repaired promptly. The combination of road salt, repeated freeze-thaw, and continued plow contact turns minor damage into major structural problems within a single winter.

Prevention is more cost-effective than repair. Installing a concrete or interlock border along driveway edges creates a defined boundary that plow operators can see and avoid. This costs \$8 to \$15 per linear foot installed but prevents hundreds of dollars in annual plow damage. Some Ottawa homeowners install reflective markers or flexible plow stakes along driveway edges, though these require annual replacement and don't prevent all damage.

Timing repairs properly is critical in Ottawa. Temporary cold patch can protect damaged areas through winter, but permanent hot-mix repairs must wait until consistent temperatures above 10°C in spring. Most Ottawa contractors schedule plow damage repairs for May through September when hot-mix asphalt can be properly compacted.

When to hire a professional: Any damage deeper than 25mm or wider than 300mm requires professional repair with proper equipment. Hot-mix asphalt repairs need a compactor and must be done at proper temperatures. DIY cold patch is acceptable only as temporary winter protection.

Need help finding a driveway contractor for plow damage repairs? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who understand Ottawa's winter damage patterns and municipal apron requirements.

Q8

Can driveway cracks caused by Leda clay soil shifting be permanently repaired, or will they keep coming back?

Cracks caused by Leda clay shifting will keep returning unless you address the underlying soil instability — surface crack repairs are temporary band-aids that fail within 1-2 Ottawa winters when the clay moves again.

Leda clay is particularly problematic in Ottawa because it's a marine clay deposited when the Champlain Sea covered this region 10,000 years ago. This clay has unique properties that make it extremely unstable under driveways. When Leda clay gets wet, it can lose up to 80% of its bearing strength and become almost liquid — a phenomenon called "quick clay failure." Even when it doesn't reach that extreme, Leda clay expands dramatically when wet and shrinks significantly when dry, creating constant movement that cracks any rigid surface above it.

The fundamental problem is that your driveway is essentially floating on an unstable foundation. Every time Ottawa's clay soils go through wet-dry cycles (spring snowmelt, summer drought, fall rains, winter freeze-thaw), the subgrade moves up and down. Asphalt and concrete are rigid materials that cannot flex with this movement, so they crack. Filling those cracks with rubberized crack filler or patching compound might last one season, but when the clay shifts again, new cracks appear in the same locations or adjacent areas.

Permanent solutions require addressing the soil instability itself. The most effective approach is complete driveway reconstruction with proper soil stabilization. This involves excavating below the Leda clay layer (often 1-2 metres deep), installing a geotextile separation fabric, and building up a substantial granular base system — typically 450-600mm of Granular B sub-base plus 150-200mm of Granular A base. Some contractors also recommend lime stabilization of the clay subgrade or installation of a geocell reinforcement system to distribute

loads and minimize differential settlement.

Interlock pavers handle clay movement better than asphalt or concrete because the individual units can shift slightly without creating visible damage, and settled areas can be lifted and relevelled. However, even interlock requires proper base preparation on Leda clay — inadequate base depth just transfers the movement to the paver surface, causing waves, dips, and separated joints.

Drainage management is critical because wet Leda clay is far more unstable than dry clay. Installing French drains along driveway edges, ensuring positive drainage away from the surface, and managing roof runoff prevents water from saturating the clay subgrade. Many Ottawa driveways on clay soils fail because poor drainage keeps the clay in a constant wet-dry cycle.

Expect reconstruction costs of \$8,000-\$15,000 for an average driveway when dealing with Leda clay issues — significantly higher than standard replacement because of the deep excavation and additional granular material required. However, this investment typically provides 20-25 years of service versus 3-5 years for surface repairs over unstable clay.

Hire a contractor experienced with Ottawa clay soils who understands the need for deep base preparation and proper drainage. Many contractors from outside the Ottawa region underestimate the challenges of Leda clay and build driveways with insufficient base depth that fail within the first few winters.

Need help finding a paving contractor experienced with Ottawa's challenging clay soils? Ottawa Driveways can match you with professionals who understand proper soil stabilization techniques.

Q9

How do Ottawa contractors fix driveway apron damage where it meets the city sidewalk?

Driveway apron repairs where the driveway meets the city sidewalk require coordination with the City of Ottawa since this area is within the municipal right-of-way, and contractors must follow specific municipal standards for materials, grading, and accessibility compliance.

The **driveway apron** is the section between your property line and the road surface, which includes the area adjacent to the city sidewalk. This entire zone is within the municipal right-of-way, meaning any repair work must comply with City of Ottawa standards and typically requires a permit. Most homeowners don't realize they don't actually own this section of their driveway, which is why repairs can be more complex than fixing damage on the private portion of the driveway.

Common apron damage in Ottawa includes cracking and settling where the driveway meets the sidewalk, often caused by freeze-thaw cycling, inadequate base depth during original construction, or damage from city snow plowing operations. The transition between the rigid concrete sidewalk and flexible asphalt driveway creates a stress point that's particularly vulnerable to Ottawa's extreme temperature swings. Heavy snowplow blades catching the driveway edge during winter clearing operations frequently chip and crack this transition area.

Professional repair process begins with the contractor obtaining a **municipal right-of-way permit** from the City of Ottawa (call 3-1-1). The city requires specific materials and installation methods for apron work. For asphalt aprons, contractors must use **HL3 surface course asphalt** over a properly prepared **Granular A base** extending at least 150mm below the finished surface. The apron must be graded to direct water toward the street and away from the sidewalk, typically requiring a 2% minimum slope. Contractors must also ensure the finished surface is flush with the existing sidewalk to meet accessibility standards — any vertical displacement greater than 13mm creates a tripping hazard that violates Ontario accessibility requirements.

Concrete apron repairs are more complex and expensive but often necessary in heritage districts or where the original apron was concrete. The contractor must saw-cut the damaged section, excavate to stable subgrade, install **30 MPa air-entrained concrete** with proper reinforcement, and finish the surface with a broom texture for traction. Control joints must be cut within 24 hours of placement to manage shrinkage cracking. The new concrete must cure for minimum 7 days before vehicle traffic, which can be challenging for homeowners with no alternative parking.

Timing and coordination are critical because the city may require an inspector to approve the work before the contractor can backfill or pave. Most Ottawa paving contractors are familiar with municipal apron requirements, but always verify your contractor has experience with right-of-way work and will handle the permit process. Expect apron repairs to cost **\$800 to \$2,500** depending on the size of the damaged area, material choice, and permit fees. The work typically takes 1-2 days but may require longer curing time for concrete repairs.

Seasonal considerations are especially important for apron repairs since this area receives heavy salt exposure and snowplow traffic. Repairs should be completed by early September to allow proper curing before winter. Temporary cold-patch repairs may be necessary if damage occurs late in the season, but permanent repairs should wait until the following spring when proper materials and curing conditions are available.

Need help finding a contractor experienced with municipal right-of-way work? Ottawa Driveways can match you with paving professionals familiar with City of Ottawa apron repair requirements.

How much does it cost to repair driveway damage caused by heavy snow removal equipment in Ottawa?

Driveway damage from heavy snow removal equipment in Ottawa typically costs \$300 to \$3,000 to repair, depending on the extent of damage and surface material. Snowplow blade gouges in asphalt might cost \$300 to \$800 to patch and seal, while extensive interlock displacement or concrete edge damage can reach \$2,000 to \$3,000 for proper repair.

Asphalt damage is the most common issue Ottawa homeowners face after aggressive snow removal. Snowplow blades catch raised edges, existing cracks, or soft spots in the asphalt, tearing chunks from the surface and creating gouges. Metal-edged snow shovels and snow blower augers can also scrape and gouge sealed surfaces. Small gouges (under 1 square metre) cost \$150 to \$400 to repair with hot-mix patching, while larger damaged areas requiring saw-cutting and proper patching run \$400 to \$1,200. If the damage exposes the base layer or creates drainage issues, costs increase significantly because the base must be recompacted before placing new asphalt.

Interlock paver damage from snow removal equipment typically involves displaced, cracked, or chipped pavers where plow blades catch raised edges. Individual damaged pavers cost \$15 to \$40 each to replace, but the real cost comes from releveling work. When plows push pavers out of alignment, entire sections often need to be lifted, re-bedded, and relaid to restore proper drainage and prevent further displacement. This type of repair costs \$8 to \$15 per square foot and often affects 10 to 30 square metres around the damaged area.

Concrete driveways suffer edge spalling and surface gouging from heavy equipment. Concrete edge repairs using polymer-modified patching compound cost \$20 to \$40 per linear foot for minor damage, while full-depth edge reconstruction can reach \$80 to \$120 per linear foot. Surface gouges in concrete are difficult to repair invisibly — the patches rarely match the surrounding concrete colour and texture perfectly.

Ottawa's climate makes snow removal damage particularly costly because repairs often cannot be completed until spring. Temporary cold-patch repairs on asphalt fail within weeks in freeze-thaw conditions, meaning homeowners live with damaged driveways all winter and face full repair costs when paving season begins in May. Water infiltration through winter damage accelerates deterioration, often doubling repair costs by spring.

Prevention strategies significantly reduce repair costs. Marking driveway edges with reflective stakes helps plow operators avoid catching raised surfaces. Keeping asphalt driveways properly sealed prevents surface ravelling that creates loose material for plows to catch. For interlock driveways, ensuring pavers are level and joints are filled with polymeric sand reduces the likelihood of individual pavers catching plow blades.

Professional repair is essential for anything beyond minor surface scratches. Attempting to patch asphalt damage with cold-patch material in Ottawa's winter conditions creates a temporary fix that fails within one freeze-thaw cycle, often making the damage worse. Similarly, attempting to relay displaced interlock pavers without proper bedding and compaction leads to continued settling and movement.

Insurance considerations vary depending on who caused the damage. Municipal snowplows operating on city property are generally not liable for driveway damage unless gross negligence is proven. Private snow removal contractors should carry liability insurance, but coverage disputes are common. Many Ottawa homeowners find it more practical to pay for repairs directly rather than navigate insurance claims, especially for damage under \$1,000.

The key to minimizing snow removal damage costs is maintaining your driveway properly year-round — sealed asphalt resists gouging, level interlock pavers don't catch plow blades, and well-marked edges help operators avoid your driveway altogether.

Need help finding a driveway contractor for snow damage repairs? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who understand Ottawa's unique winter challenges.

Q11

Can cracked stamped concrete on my Ottawa driveway be repaired to match the original pattern and colour?

Yes, cracked stamped concrete can often be repaired to closely match the original pattern and colour, but the success depends on the crack severity, the age of the concrete, and the skill of the contractor. Minor cracks can be filled and re-textured to blend seamlessly, while major structural cracks may require partial replacement sections.

Crack injection and surface restoration is the most common repair method for stamped concrete in Ottawa. Small to moderate cracks (up to 6mm wide) can be filled with colour-matched polyurethane or epoxy injection. The contractor then uses texture rollers, stamps, or hand tools to recreate the original pattern over the repair area. A skilled concrete restoration specialist can often achieve repairs that are nearly invisible from normal viewing distance.

Colour matching is the biggest challenge with stamped concrete repairs. Ottawa's intense UV exposure and freeze-thaw cycles cause stamped concrete to fade and weather over time, creating colour variations across the surface. New repair material will initially appear brighter and more uniform than the weathered surrounding concrete. The best contractors use integral colour in the repair mix and apply acid stains or antiquing agents to

blend the repair with the existing surface. Complete colour matching may take 6 to 12 months as the new material weathers naturally.

Partial section replacement becomes necessary when cracks are wider than 10mm, when multiple intersecting cracks create loose sections, or when the concrete has spalled (surface scaling from salt damage). The contractor cuts out the damaged section to clean edges, places new concrete with matching integral colour, and re-stamps the pattern while the concrete is still workable. This approach provides the most durable repair but requires precise timing and pattern alignment.

Ottawa's climate creates unique challenges for stamped concrete repairs. The 50+ annual freeze-thaw cycles stress repair joints, and road salt accelerates surface deterioration. Any repair must use air-entrained concrete (minimum 6% air content) to resist freeze-thaw damage, and the surface should be sealed with a high-quality acrylic or polyurethane sealer within 30 days of repair. Resealing every 2 to 3 years is essential in Ottawa to prevent water penetration and salt damage.

Professional assessment is critical because not all cracks indicate the same problem. Settlement cracks from inadequate base preparation will continue to worsen regardless of surface repairs. Shrinkage cracks from improper curing or missing control joints can be permanently repaired. A qualified concrete contractor can determine whether cracks are structural (requiring base work) or surface-level (reparable with injection and re-texturing).

When to consider full replacement: If your stamped concrete has extensive alligator cracking, multiple settled sections, or widespread spalling, repairs may cost 60 to 80 percent of replacement while providing only temporary improvement. Stamped concrete driveways in Ottawa typically last 20 to 25 years with proper maintenance, so age is a factor in repair-versus-replace decisions.

Hire a professional for any stamped concrete repair beyond minor crack filling. The specialized tools, colour-matching expertise, and timing required for quality repairs make this unsuitable for DIY work. Look for contractors with specific stamped concrete experience and ask to see photos of completed repairs on similar aged surfaces.

Need help finding a concrete restoration specialist? Ottawa Driveways can match you with experienced contractors who specialize in decorative concrete repairs and have the tools and expertise to restore your stamped driveway's appearance and durability.

Q12

What insurance coverage applies if my Ottawa driveway is damaged by a city snowplow or utility work?

Damage to your Ottawa driveway from city snowplows or utility work typically falls under the City of Ottawa's liability insurance, but you'll need to file a claim and prove the city's negligence — your homeowner's insurance may also provide coverage depending on your policy.

When city snowplows damage your driveway, the **City of Ottawa can be held liable** if you can demonstrate that the damage resulted from negligent operation rather than normal wear and tear. This includes situations where plow operators strike raised interlock pavers, catch plow blades on cracked asphalt edges, or drive onto private property beyond the municipal right-of-way. However, the city typically argues that homeowners assume responsibility for driveway surfaces that extend into or are vulnerable to normal snow removal operations.

Filing a claim with the City of Ottawa requires prompt action — you must report damage within a reasonable timeframe (ideally within days of discovery) and provide photographic evidence, witness statements if available, and documentation of repair costs. Contact the city's Risk Management department through 3-1-1 to initiate a claim. The city will investigate whether their equipment or contractor caused the damage through negligent operation versus normal municipal services. Keep in mind that the **driveway apron** (the section between your property line and the road) sits within the municipal right-of-way, and the city has broader authority to work in this area, potentially limiting liability for damage during legitimate municipal operations.

Utility work damage (gas, electric, water, telecommunications) follows different rules depending on whether the utility company obtained proper permits and followed excavation protocols. If Enbridge Gas, Hydro Ottawa, or Rogers damages your driveway during permitted utility work, they're typically required to restore the surface to its original condition or pay for equivalent repairs. However, restoration often means basic asphalt patching rather than matching your existing interlock or decorative concrete. **Always photograph your driveway before any utility work begins** and get written confirmation of restoration commitments.

Your homeowner's insurance may cover driveway damage under certain circumstances, particularly if the damage results from a covered peril like vehicle impact or vandalism. However, most standard policies exclude damage from municipal operations, normal wear and tear, or gradual deterioration. Some policies include coverage for damage to driveways and walkways from vehicles (including municipal vehicles), but coverage limits are often modest — typically \$1,000 to \$5,000. Review your policy details or contact your insurance broker to understand your specific coverage.

Practical steps for Ottawa homeowners: Document your driveway's condition with photos each spring and fall, especially if you have premium interlock or decorative concrete that would be expensive to match. When city crews are working on your street, take photos of your driveway before and after the work. If you notice fresh damage after snowplow operations, photograph it immediately and note the date, weather conditions, and any witnesses. For utility work, insist on pre-work documentation and get restoration commitments in writing before allowing access to your property.

Prevention is often more effective than insurance claims in Ottawa's harsh climate. Ensure your driveway edges are clearly marked with reflective stakes during snow season, keep asphalt edges in good repair (cracked edges catch plow blades), and consider installing a concrete or stone edge border that can better withstand plow contact. Well-maintained driveways with clear boundaries suffer less incidental damage during municipal operations.

Need help finding a contractor to assess or repair driveway damage? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who understand insurance claim documentation and municipal restoration standards.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- Transitions Renovations
- Floor-2-Wall Inc
- Regimbal

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How much does it cost to replace just the driveway apron at the street in Ottawa without redoing everything?

Replacing just the driveway apron in Ottawa typically costs **\$800 to \$2,500** depending on width, material, and permit requirements. However, this work requires a City of Ottawa permit since it's within the municipal right-of-way and must meet specific municipal standards.

The **driveway apron** is the section between the sidewalk and the road surface — technically part of the municipal right-of-way but the homeowner's responsibility to maintain. When this section fails (common in Ottawa due to snowplow damage, freeze-thaw cycling, and heavy traffic loads), it can often be replaced independently of the main driveway if the rest of the driveway is in good condition.

Material and cost breakdown for apron replacement:

- **Asphalt apron:** \$12 to \$18 per square foot installed, so a typical 4-metre wide by 2-metre deep apron runs \$1,000 to \$1,500 including excavation and base work
- **Concrete apron:** \$15 to \$22 per square foot installed, making the same area \$1,200 to \$1,800
- **Interlocking pavers:** \$18 to \$28 per square foot installed, running \$1,400 to \$2,200 for a standard apron

Critical Ottawa-specific considerations make apron replacement more complex than typical driveway work. The apron must handle the transition from your driveway to the municipal road surface, withstand snowplow blade contact, and manage drainage from both your property and street runoff. Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles are particularly brutal on this transition zone because water pools where different surfaces meet and salt concentration is highest from municipal road treatment.

Permit requirements add \$200 to \$400 to the project cost. Call 3-1-1 or apply online through the City of Ottawa. The permit ensures the apron meets municipal standards for thickness (typically 100mm concrete or 75mm asphalt over proper base), slope (must match road grade), and width (cannot exceed your property's frontage allowance). Municipal inspection is usually required before backfilling.

Base preparation is critical even for apron-only replacement. The granular base must extend below Ottawa's frost line and tie into both the existing driveway base and the municipal road structure. Skipping proper base work to save money results in settlement and cracking within the first winter, especially where snowplows catch raised or uneven edges.

Timing considerations matter significantly in Ottawa. This work must be coordinated with the City's road maintenance schedule — they may require temporary road access restrictions. Spring is often ideal because winter damage is apparent but the full paving season hasn't created contractor backlogs.

When apron-only replacement makes sense: If your main driveway is less than 10 years old and in good condition but the apron has failed from snowplow damage or settlement, isolated replacement can be cost-effective. However, if your main driveway is approaching 15+ years old or showing significant cracking, it's often more economical to replace everything together and avoid the permit process twice.

Hire a professional for apron work — the permit requirements, municipal standards, and critical base preparation make this unsuitable for DIY. The contractor should handle permit applications, municipal inspections, and coordination with city requirements.

Need help finding a paving contractor experienced with Ottawa municipal apron requirements? Ottawa Driveways can match you with professionals familiar with City of Ottawa standards and permit processes.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Prime Property Works
- Nic's D.U.C.T Works Inc
- ALTIOR CONSTRUCTION

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Q14

How much does it cost to repair interlock pavers that sank near my foundation after heavy rain in Ottawa?

Interlock paver repair for foundation settling in Ottawa typically costs \$800 to \$2,500 depending on the affected area and underlying cause. The repair involves lifting settled pavers, addressing drainage issues, adding and compacting base material, and relaying the pavers with fresh polymeric sand.

Understanding Foundation Settlement Issues

When interlock pavers sink near your foundation after heavy rain, it indicates water is pooling and washing away the bedding sand beneath the pavers. This is extremely common in Ottawa due to our clay-heavy soils and intense

spring runoff. The clay expands when saturated, then shrinks as it dries, creating voids beneath the paver base. Additionally, if your downspouts discharge too close to the driveway or foundation grading directs water toward the house, the constant water flow undermines the carefully compacted base layers.

The repair process involves lifting the affected pavers (typically 10 to 30 square metres near foundations), excavating the compromised bedding sand and potentially some base material, improving drainage, adding fresh Granular A base and bedding sand, compacting in lifts, and relaying the pavers. **Professional repair costs \$8 to \$12 per square foot** including materials and labour. A typical foundation settlement area of 15 to 20 square metres runs \$1,200 to \$2,000 to repair properly.

Ottawa-Specific Drainage Considerations

Ottawa's clay soils and freeze-thaw cycles make foundation drainage critical for interlock longevity. Your repair contractor should extend downspouts at least 2 metres from the driveway edge, ensure proper grading slopes away from the foundation at minimum 2 percent, and potentially install a French drain or catch basin if water continues pooling. Many Ottawa homes built in the 1980s and 1990s have inadequate foundation drainage that becomes apparent when interlock settles repeatedly in the same areas.

DIY vs Professional Repair

Small areas (under 5 square metres) with minor settling can be a capable homeowner project. Rent a plate compactor, lift the pavers with pry bars, add bedding sand, compact, relay the pavers, and apply fresh polymeric sand. However, foundation settlement often indicates deeper drainage problems requiring French drains, catch basins, or regrading work that needs professional expertise and equipment.

Preventing Future Settlement

The key to preventing recurring settlement is addressing the water source. Ensure downspouts discharge well away from the interlock, maintain positive grading away from the foundation, and reapply polymeric sand every 3 to 4 years to keep joints tight. In Ottawa's climate, interlock near foundations requires more frequent maintenance than areas away from the house due to concentrated water exposure and freeze-thaw cycling.

Need help finding a qualified interlock contractor? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals experienced in foundation drainage and settlement repair.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting

- RenoMotion Inc.
- Dreamwood Construction & Renovations
- BFI Renovations
- The Granite shop

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Q15

Is it normal for a 20-year-old asphalt driveway in Ottawa to have widespread cracking and what are my options?

Yes, widespread cracking in a 20-year-old asphalt driveway is completely normal in Ottawa's extreme climate. Most asphalt driveways here reach the end of their functional lifespan between 18-25 years, and yours is right in that window where major deterioration typically becomes apparent.

Ottawa's brutal freeze-thaw cycles are the primary culprit behind your cracking. With 50+ freeze-thaw events each winter, water penetrates small cracks, expands by 9% when it freezes, then thaws and allows even more water to enter. After 20 winters of this relentless cycle, even well-built driveways develop the interconnected "alligator cracking" pattern you're likely seeing. Add in temperature swings of 60-65 degrees between summer highs and winter lows, plus decades of snowplow scraping, salt exposure, and UV oxidation, and widespread cracking becomes inevitable.

The **type and extent of cracking** determines your best options. If you're seeing mostly linear cracks (following one direction) with minimal settling or pothole formation, the base layer underneath is likely still stable. However, if you have alligator cracking (interconnected cracks forming polygon shapes), rutting, or areas where the asphalt is breaking apart into chunks, the base has probably failed and simple surface repairs won't provide a lasting solution.

Your three main options are:

Crack filling and sealcoating (\$400-800 total) can extend the life by 2-3 years if the base is stable and cracking is primarily surface-level. Hot-pour crack filler applied professionally, followed by sealcoating, will slow further deterioration. This is a temporary solution that buys you time to budget for replacement.

Asphalt overlay/resurfacing (\$2,500-5,500) involves placing a new 50mm layer of asphalt over the existing surface after crack repair. This only works if the existing base is sound and the surface damage is limited to the top layer. If your driveway has settled areas, potholes, or base failure, an overlay will simply reflect all those problems through the new surface within 1-2 winters.

Complete removal and replacement (\$5,000-12,000) is the permanent solution when base failure has occurred. This involves tearing out the old asphalt, evaluating and potentially rebuilding the granular base (essential in Ottawa's 1.2-1.5 metre frost depth), and installing fresh asphalt in proper lifts with adequate compaction.

Given Ottawa's clay soils prevalent in areas like Barrhaven, Orleans, and Gloucester, many 20-year-old driveways were built with minimal base preparation by today's standards. If your driveway was installed with only 150-200mm of base material (common in the early 2000s), the base has likely been compromised by frost heaving and clay movement, making full replacement the most cost-effective long-term choice.

Have a reputable paving contractor assess the base stability by taking core samples or using a probe to check base depth and condition. If the granular base is still solid and well-draining, resurfacing might work. If the base is contaminated with clay, insufficiently deep, or showing signs of movement, full replacement with proper 300mm Granular B sub-base plus 150mm Granular A base will give you another 20-25 years of service.

The best time for this work in Ottawa is late May through September when hot-mix asphalt can be properly compacted. Get multiple quotes and ensure any contractor provides WSIB clearance certificates before starting work.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- MAK Construction and Development Inc
- Callandgone
- Titley Construction

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Is it worth repairing a driveway with settling issues in Ottawa before selling versus offering a credit?

When selling a home in Ottawa, fixing settling driveway issues typically provides better return on investment than offering a credit, especially if the settling is moderate and the base structure is sound. Most buyers will overestimate repair costs and negotiate credits that exceed actual professional repair expenses.

Settling driveway repairs in Ottawa range from \$500 to \$3,000 depending on the extent and cause, while buyer-demanded credits often reach \$5,000 to \$8,000 because buyers assume worst-case scenarios. If the settling is limited to specific sections and the overall driveway structure is intact, professional releveling or targeted repairs cost significantly less than full replacement. However, if the settling indicates widespread base failure — common in Ottawa driveways built on inadequate granular base or clay subgrade without proper preparation — offering a credit may be more practical.

Ottawa's clay soils and deep frost line make driveway settling particularly problematic for buyers.

Prospective homeowners understand that settling driveways in Ottawa often signal deeper base issues that will worsen through freeze-thaw cycles. A driveway that shows minor settling now may develop major heaving, cracking, and drainage problems within 2 to 3 winters if the underlying cause isn't addressed. This knowledge makes Ottawa buyers especially cautious about driveway condition during home inspections.

For asphalt driveways with localized settling, professional repair involves cutting out the affected sections, adding and compacting granular base material, and patching with hot-mix asphalt. This typically costs \$1,500 to \$3,000 for moderate settling areas and can be completed in one day. The repair blends reasonably well with existing asphalt and demonstrates to buyers that the issue has been professionally addressed. **For interlock driveways with settling**, contractors lift the affected pavers, add bedding sand or granular base as needed, re-compact, and relay the pavers. This costs \$800 to \$2,500 depending on the area and integrates seamlessly with the existing surface.

Consider offering a credit instead if the driveway shows signs of widespread base failure — extensive cracking throughout the surface, multiple settled areas, poor drainage with water pooling, or heaving sections that indicate frost damage to the base structure. These conditions suggest the entire driveway will need replacement within 3 to 5 years, making repair a temporary fix. In these cases, a credit of \$8,000 to \$15,000 for full driveway replacement is more honest and may actually facilitate the sale.

The timing of your sale also matters in Ottawa's seasonal market. If you're selling in spring (March to May), buyers are more likely to notice winter damage and settling that became apparent as snow melted. Completing repairs before listing demonstrates proactive maintenance. If selling in fall or early winter, settling issues may be

less obvious under snow cover, but informed buyers will still identify problems during inspections.

Get a professional assessment from a local paving contractor to determine whether the settling represents a repairable surface issue or indicates deeper structural problems. A contractor can distinguish between settling caused by normal soil movement (repairable) versus base failure or inadequate original construction (replacement required). This assessment typically costs \$200 to \$400 but provides concrete information for your decision and can be shared with potential buyers to demonstrate transparency.

Need help finding a driveway contractor for an assessment? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who understand Ottawa soil conditions and can provide honest repair versus replacement guidance.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- Titley Construction
- L.L. Renovation
- Renovo Construction

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Q17

What is the cost to repair a driveway that was damaged by a large delivery truck or moving van?

Driveway damage from heavy delivery trucks or moving vans typically costs \$500 to \$5,000 to repair in Ottawa, depending on the extent of damage and driveway material. The most common issues are rutting in asphalt, cracked or displaced interlock pavers, and concrete surface cracking from concentrated wheel loads exceeding the driveway's design capacity.

Asphalt driveway repairs are the most frequent scenario. Heavy trucks create deep ruts, surface depressions, and sometimes punch through thin asphalt into the base layer. Minor rutting (10-20mm deep) can be repaired with hot-mix patching for \$300 to \$800, involving cutting out the damaged area, adding base material if needed, and placing new asphalt. Severe rutting or punch-through damage requires more extensive repair costing \$1,500 to

\$4,000, especially if the granular base has been compromised. The challenge with asphalt repairs is matching the existing surface — new asphalt appears black while older surfaces are grey, creating a visible patch that weathers to match over 6 to 12 months.

Interlock driveway damage typically involves cracked pavers, displaced units, or settled areas where the truck's weight compressed the bedding sand. Individual cracked pavers can be replaced for \$15 to \$25 per unit plus labour, but matching the exact colour and style of older pavers can be difficult. If the truck created widespread settling, the affected area needs to be lifted, re-levelled with bedding sand, and relaid — typically costing \$8 to \$15 per square foot. Polymeric sand in the joints usually needs replacement after any paver work, adding \$300 to \$600 for an average repair area.

Concrete driveway repairs range from surface crack injection (\$200 to \$600) for hairline cracks to full-depth replacement of damaged sections (\$12 to \$18 per square foot). Heavy truck loads can cause concrete to crack along control joints or create new cracks if the slab wasn't designed for that load. Concrete repairs are challenging to match perfectly — new concrete appears lighter and takes months to weather to match existing surfaces.

Ottawa's climate considerations make prompt repairs critical. Water penetrating damaged areas will freeze and expand during Ottawa's 50+ annual freeze-thaw cycles, turning minor damage into major structural problems. Rutted asphalt that pools water will deteriorate rapidly, and cracked concrete or displaced pavers allow water into the base layer, potentially causing frost heaving and further damage.

Insurance and liability factors often complicate these repairs. Many delivery companies carry insurance for property damage, but claims require documentation (photos, repair estimates) and can take weeks to process. Some moving companies specifically exclude driveway damage from their coverage. Get multiple repair quotes immediately and document everything with photos showing the damage extent and any base layer exposure.

Prevention for future deliveries involves specifying weight limits and truck types when scheduling services. Standard residential driveways in Ottawa are designed for passenger vehicles and light delivery trucks (up to 5 tonnes). Large moving vans, concrete trucks, and heavy delivery vehicles can exceed this capacity. Consider having heavy deliveries staged at the street with materials moved by hand or smaller equipment, or specify that trucks stay on the municipal road allowance rather than entering your driveway.

When to hire a professional depends on damage severity. Surface-only damage to asphalt or individual cracked pavers might be manageable as DIY repairs, but any damage involving the base layer, multiple cracked concrete sections, or widespread settling requires professional assessment and repair to prevent further deterioration through Ottawa's harsh winter conditions.

Need help finding a driveway contractor for damage assessment and repair? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who handle insurance-related repairs and can provide detailed estimates for claims

documentation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Geerts Roofing Inc
- The Granite shop
- Diamond renovations

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Q18

Can concrete driveway spalling from salt damage be spot-repaired in Ottawa or does the whole slab need replacing?

Concrete spalling from salt damage can often be spot-repaired if caught early, but extensive spalling across large areas typically requires full slab replacement. The key factors are the depth of damage, percentage of surface affected, and whether the underlying concrete remains structurally sound.

Surface spalling (scaling limited to the top 5-10mm of concrete) can be successfully spot-repaired using concrete resurfacing compounds or polymer-modified repair mortars. These products bond well to sound concrete and can restore both appearance and protection. For isolated spalled areas covering less than 20-30% of the driveway surface, spot repairs are cost-effective and can extend the driveway's life by 5-10 years. Ottawa contractors typically charge \$15-25 per square foot for professional spall repair, compared to \$10-16 per square foot for full replacement.

Deep spalling that penetrates beyond the surface paste into the aggregate structure indicates more serious deterioration. When spalling exposes and damages the aggregate, or when repairs repeatedly fail in the same areas, the concrete's freeze-thaw resistance has been permanently compromised. Ottawa's 50+ annual freeze-thaw cycles will continue attacking these weakened areas regardless of surface repairs.

Ottawa-Specific Considerations

Salt damage in Ottawa is particularly aggressive because of our extended winter season and heavy deicing chemical use. **Calcium chloride and magnesium chloride** (common alternatives to rock salt) actually penetrate deeper into concrete than sodium chloride, potentially causing spalling that appears minor on the surface but extends deeper into the slab. The damage often becomes fully apparent only after several freeze-thaw seasons.

Clay soil movement beneath Ottawa driveways can cause hairline cracks that allow salt penetration even in newer concrete. Once salt reaches the reinforcing mesh or rebar, corrosion begins and creates internal pressure that causes spalling from the inside out. This type of damage cannot be permanently spot-repaired.

When Spot Repairs Work

Spot repairs are most successful on driveways less than 15 years old where spalling is limited to high-traffic areas (the approach from the street, turning areas, or where snow piles sit longest). The repair process involves grinding or chiseling away all loose concrete, cleaning with muriatic acid to remove salt residue, applying a bonding agent, and building up the surface with repair mortar in thin lifts.

Professional application is critical — DIY concrete repair compounds often fail within one Ottawa winter because they lack proper surface preparation, bonding agent application, or curing protection. A quality repair should be nearly invisible and last 8-12 years with proper maintenance.

When Full Replacement is Necessary

Replace the entire slab when spalling covers more than 40% of the surface, when repairs have failed repeatedly in the same areas, or when the concrete shows signs of structural cracking beyond just surface scaling. **Air-entrained concrete** (essential for Ottawa's freeze-thaw exposure) that has lost its air void system cannot be restored through surface repairs.

Modern replacement concrete uses 30+ MPa strength with 6-8% air entrainment and proper curing techniques that make it far more resistant to salt damage than concrete poured 20-30 years ago. A new driveway with proper construction details should resist spalling for 15-20 years even with regular salt exposure.

Need help finding a concrete contractor to assess your spalling damage? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who specialize in concrete repair and replacement.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry

- Prism Services
- Ottawa Caulking
- Vanguard Environmental

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Why is my asphalt driveway bubbling up after heavy rain and what's causing water underneath?

Understanding Driveway Bubbling and Water Infiltration

Bubbling or blistering on an asphalt driveway after heavy rain is a sign that water has become trapped between the asphalt surface and the base layer beneath it. In Ottawa, this problem is especially common because our extreme freeze-thaw cycles create micro-cracks that allow water to seep downward during spring thaws and summer storms. Once trapped, the water has nowhere to go, and heat from the sun causes it to expand as steam, pushing the asphalt upward into visible bubbles.

Why Ottawa Driveways Are Particularly Vulnerable

Our climate puts incredible stress on driveway surfaces. Winter temperatures dropping to -30°C cause asphalt to contract and crack, while spring brings rapid warming that melts over 200cm of accumulated snow. Neighbourhoods like Barrhaven and Kanata built on clay-heavy soil are especially prone to this issue because clay retains moisture and drains poorly. The water table in low-lying areas of Gloucester and Orleans can also rise during spring melt, pushing groundwater upward against the driveway base.

How the Repair Process Works

A proper repair involves more than just patching the surface. A contractor will cut out the affected area, inspect the base layer for saturation or deterioration, and address the drainage issue before resurfacing. If the granular base has been washed out, it needs to be replaced and compacted properly. In some cases, a french drain or improved grading along the driveway edges is needed to redirect water away from the base.

Cost Expectations for Ottawa Homeowners

For a localized bubbling repair covering a few square metres, expect to pay between \$400 and \$900 including base repair and new asphalt. If the problem is widespread and involves drainage corrections, costs can range from \$1,500 to \$3,500 depending on the scope. Adding a simple drainage channel along one side of the driveway typically adds \$800 to \$1,500.

Timing Your Repair

The best time to address bubbling is late spring through early fall when asphalt plants are operating and temperatures allow proper compaction. Waiting too long allows water to further erode the base during winter, turning a small repair into a much larger project.

Connect with a local contractor through **Ottawa Driveways** to get the bubbling diagnosed and repaired before the next freeze-thaw cycle causes further damage to your base layer.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Ottawa Caulking
- ALTIOR CONSTRUCTION
- Prism Services

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Q20

How much does it cost to fix concrete driveway scaling and pitting in Ottawa?

What Causes Concrete Scaling and Pitting

Scaling is when the top layer of your concrete driveway flakes off in thin sheets, exposing the rough aggregate underneath. Pitting creates small holes or craters across the surface. Both are extremely common in Ottawa because our winters involve constant freeze-thaw cycling, heavy road salt use, and prolonged exposure to moisture from over 200cm of annual snowfall. When water penetrates the concrete surface and freezes, it expands by about 9%, physically breaking apart the top layer from within.

Why Ottawa's Climate Accelerates the Damage

Homeowners in Nepean, Stittsville, and across the city see this damage worsen rapidly because Ottawa experiences roughly 50 to 70 freeze-thaw cycles per winter. Each cycle does a small amount of damage that compounds over time. Municipal salt and calcium chloride used on adjacent roads and sidewalks gets tracked onto driveways, further attacking the concrete surface. Driveways that weren't properly air-entrained during the original pour are especially vulnerable.

Repair Options and Their Costs

For minor scaling affecting less than 25% of the surface, a concrete resurfer or overlay can restore the appearance and protect against further damage. This typically costs between \$800 and \$2,000 for a standard two-car driveway in Ottawa. For moderate damage, a bonded concrete overlay of 25 to 50mm thickness runs between \$2,500 and \$5,000. Severe scaling where the aggregate is deeply exposed or structural cracking accompanies the surface damage usually means full replacement at \$8,000 to \$15,000 depending on size and access.

Patching Individual Pits

If pitting is limited to a few spots, a contractor can grind the area and fill with a polymer-modified concrete patch compound. Individual pit repairs cost between \$150 and \$400 per area. However, if pitting is widespread, spot repairs become less cost-effective than a full resurfacing.

Preventing Future Scaling

After repair, applying a penetrating silane or siloxane sealer every two to three years significantly reduces water absorption and salt damage. Avoid using de-icing salts directly on the concrete surface — use sand for traction instead. A quality sealer application runs \$300 to \$600 for a typical Ottawa driveway.

Reach out through **Ottawa Driveways** to connect with concrete specialists in your neighbourhood who understand how to repair scaling that holds up through our harsh winters.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Elie The Carpet Guy Inc.
- ARTEXPRO Tile & Finishes
- Titley Construction

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Q21

A few of my interlock driveway pavers are cracked and sunken — can I just replace those individual ones?

Yes, Individual Paver Replacement Is Possible

One of the biggest advantages of an interlock driveway is that individual pavers can be removed and replaced without disturbing the rest of the surface. If you have a handful of cracked, chipped, or sunken pavers, a targeted repair is almost always the right approach rather than redoing the entire driveway.

How the Repair Process Works

A contractor will use specialized paver extraction tools to carefully lift out the damaged pavers without chipping the surrounding ones. Once removed, they inspect the bedding sand layer underneath. In Ottawa, sunken pavers are usually caused by the bedding sand washing out or compacting unevenly after years of freeze-thaw cycles. The contractor adds fresh bedding sand, levels and compacts it, then sets the new pavers in place. Finally, polymeric sand is swept into the joints and activated with water to lock everything together.

The Colour Matching Challenge

The trickiest part of paver replacement in older driveways is finding a match. Pavers fade and weather over time, so a brand-new paver from the same manufacturer may look noticeably different. Experienced contractors in neighbourhoods like Barrhaven and Orleans — where interlock driveways are very popular — often suggest pulling matching pavers from a less visible area of the driveway (near the garage wall or a garden border) and using the new pavers in that hidden spot instead.

When Sunken Areas Need More Than Paver Swaps

If a larger section has settled, the issue is likely with the compacted gravel base underneath, not just the bedding sand. Ottawa's clay soil, particularly common in Kanata South and Riverside South, shifts significantly with moisture changes. A base repair involves removing all the pavers in the affected zone, excavating and re-compacting the granular base, and reinstalling. This is more involved but still far less expensive than a full driveway replacement.

Cost Expectations

Replacing a few individual pavers with bedding sand repair typically costs \$200 to \$500 for a small area. If a larger section needs base work, expect \$40 to \$65 per square metre for the full lift-and-relay process, including new polymeric sand. Most contractors have a minimum service call fee of \$250 to \$350.

Use **Ottawa Driveways** to find interlock specialists near you who keep common paver styles in stock and can handle targeted repairs efficiently.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:\n

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- ALM Construction & Landscaping Inc.
- Geerts Roofing Inc
- Titley Construction

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The spot where my driveway meets the sidewalk is crumbling apart — whose responsibility is it to fix?

Understanding the Driveway-to-Sidewalk Transition

The junction where your driveway crosses the municipal sidewalk is one of the most vulnerable spots on any Ottawa property. This transition area, sometimes called the driveway apron or sidewalk crossing, takes abuse from both vehicle traffic and the City of Ottawa's snow clearing equipment. The crumbling you see is usually caused by a combination of heavy loading, salt exposure, and our relentless freeze-thaw cycles.

Responsibility Can Be Complicated

In Ottawa, the sidewalk itself is City property maintained by the municipality. However, the driveway apron — the lowered portion of sidewalk where your driveway crosses it — falls into a grey area. Generally, the City of Ottawa is responsible for the sidewalk infrastructure, but homeowners are often responsible for the driveway surface leading up to and connecting with it. If the damage was caused by City operations like road reconstruction, water main work, or aggressive snow plowing, you may be able to file a claim with the City for repair.

Filing a Request with the City

Start by calling 311 or submitting a service request online through ottawa.ca. Document the damage with photos showing the transition area clearly. The City will send an inspector to determine if the damage falls under their maintenance responsibility. If it does, they will schedule a repair, though wait times can be several months. If the City determines the damage is on your portion, the repair falls to you.

Private Repair Options

For the portion that is your responsibility, a contractor can cut out the deteriorated section and pour new concrete or install asphalt to create a smooth, durable transition. This is a common repair in older neighbourhoods like Alta Vista, Westboro, and the Glebe where original driveway aprons from the 1950s and 1960s are finally giving out. A typical apron repair or replacement costs between \$1,200 and \$3,000 depending on the width of your driveway and whether the base needs rebuilding.

Getting It Right for Ottawa Winters

The transition area needs to handle snowplow blades, salt exposure, and the weight of vehicles crossing it daily. Proper repair includes a reinforced concrete pour with fibre mesh or rebar, adequate depth, and good drainage so water doesn't pool at the junction and freeze.

Connect with experienced contractors through **Ottawa Driveways** who regularly handle apron and transition repairs and know how to navigate the City's process for shared-responsibility areas.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Pure Flow Water Solutions inc.
- Black Tar Construction
- Renovo Construction

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Q23

We have a massive pothole forming in our driveway in January — can anything be done in winter?

Emergency Winter Pothole Repair Is Possible but Temporary

You are not stuck waiting until spring. Winter pothole repairs in Ottawa use cold-mix asphalt, which is specifically designed to be applied in freezing temperatures. While it is not a permanent fix, it can prevent the pothole from growing larger and becoming a safety hazard or causing vehicle damage during the remaining winter months.

How Cold-Mix Repair Works

Cold-mix asphalt comes pre-mixed and does not require heating. A contractor cleans out the pothole as best as possible given the conditions, fills it with cold-mix material, and compacts it. The patch bonds through a chemical curing process rather than heat, so it can be applied even when temperatures are well below freezing. Some Ottawa contractors use infrared asphalt heaters for a more durable winter repair — this technology heats the existing asphalt around the pothole to bond with new hot-mix material, creating a much stronger patch even in cold weather.

What to Expect in Terms of Durability

A standard cold-mix patch is meant to last through the winter as a temporary measure. It will likely need to be replaced with a proper hot-mix repair once asphalt plants open in spring, typically late April or early May in the Ottawa area. An infrared repair is more durable and may last a full season or longer. The key is preventing water from entering the pothole and freezing, which would rapidly enlarge it through each freeze-thaw cycle.

Cost for Winter Emergency Repairs

A cold-mix pothole fill for a single pothole typically costs between \$150 and \$400 for a contractor visit. Infrared repair is more expensive at \$300 to \$700 per patch but offers significantly better longevity. Many Ottawa driveway contractors in Stittsville, Kanata, and across the city offer winter emergency service, though availability can be limited during extreme cold snaps below -25°C.

DIY as a Stopgap

If you cannot get a contractor out immediately, bags of cold-mix asphalt are available at hardware stores for \$20 to \$40 per bag. Clean out loose debris, fill the hole slightly above grade, and compact it firmly with a tamper or even your car tire. This will hold temporarily but should be professionally addressed in spring.

Planning the Permanent Fix

Book your spring repair early — Ottawa contractors fill their schedules quickly once the season starts. A permanent hot-mix repair of the same pothole will cost \$300 to \$600 and should include inspecting the base for the underlying cause.

Reach out through **Ottawa Driveways** to find contractors who offer winter emergency driveway repair and can schedule your permanent spring fix at the same time.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- Geerts Roofing Inc
- The Granite shop
- Custom By Arie

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My driveway was paved less than two years ago and it's already cracking — is this covered under warranty?

Understanding Driveway Paving Warranties in Ontario

Most reputable Ottawa paving contractors offer a workmanship warranty ranging from one to five years. If your driveway is showing cracks within two years of installation, you likely have grounds for a warranty claim, but the outcome depends on the type of cracking, the specific warranty terms, and whether the contractor followed proper installation practices.

What Warranties Typically Cover

A standard paving warranty covers defects in workmanship and materials — things like premature surface deterioration, improper compaction causing settling, poor drainage design, and cracking caused by inadequate base preparation. If wide structural cracks, significant settling, or surface ravelling appears within the warranty period, the contractor should address it at no cost to you.

What Warranties Usually Exclude

Most warranties exclude damage from factors outside the contractor's control. In Ottawa, this can include damage from unusually severe frost heave in clay-heavy soils (common in Barrhaven and Riverside South), damage caused by heavy vehicles like moving trucks or oil delivery trucks that exceed the driveway's designed load capacity, and damage from chemical spills. Hairline surface cracks from thermal expansion and contraction are generally considered normal in our climate and are typically excluded.

Steps to File Your Claim

Gather your original contract, any written warranty documentation, and the receipt of payment. Take clear, dated photographs of all damage. Contact the contractor in writing (email is best for documentation) describing the issues and referencing the warranty. Under Ontario's Consumer Protection Act, if the work was performed for a residential property, you have additional protections regarding quality of service.

If the Contractor Is Unresponsive

If the original contractor ignores your claim or has gone out of business, you have several options. You can file a complaint with the Ontario Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery. If the contractor was a member of a trade association, contact them. For claims under \$35,000, Ontario Small Claims Court is an accessible option. Document everything, including your attempts to reach the contractor.

Getting an Independent Assessment

Having another paving professional inspect the driveway and provide a written opinion on whether the damage stems from poor workmanship or natural causes strengthens your position significantly, whether for negotiating with the original contractor or pursuing a formal claim.

Use **Ottawa Driveways** to connect with experienced paving professionals who can provide an honest assessment of your driveway's condition and advise on your warranty options.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- JC Carpentry
- Valcor Construction
- Home Front Services
- Jaiko Cleaning Services

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How can I fix the drainage problem on my driveway at the same time as getting cracks repaired?

Combining Drainage Fixes with Crack Repair Is Smart Planning

Addressing drainage and surface damage together is one of the most cost-effective approaches to driveway repair. Poor drainage is often the root cause of cracking in the first place — standing water seeps into small cracks, freezes during Ottawa's brutal winters, and expands to create larger damage with every freeze-thaw cycle. Fixing the cracks without solving the drainage simply sets you up for the same problems again within a year or two.

Common Ottawa Drainage Problems

Many older driveways in established neighbourhoods like Nepean, Alta Vista, and Gloucester were installed without adequate slope or drainage provisions. Over decades, the driveway surface settles unevenly, creating low spots where water pools. In newer developments in Kanata South and Findlay Creek, clay-heavy soil drains very slowly, which keeps the driveway base saturated for extended periods during spring thaw.

Drainage Solutions That Pair with Repairs

Regrading the surface: When a contractor is already cutting out and replacing damaged sections, they can adjust the grade to create proper slope toward the street or a drainage area. A minimum slope of 2% (about 20mm per metre) is needed for effective water shedding.

Channel drains: A linear drain installed across the driveway at a low point collects water and routes it to a discharge point. This works well when the driveway slopes toward the garage.

French drains along edges: A gravel-filled trench with a perforated pipe along one or both sides of the driveway intercepts groundwater before it reaches the base layer. This is especially valuable on properties with high water tables.

Swale regrading: Adjusting the landscaping alongside the driveway to direct surface water away from the asphalt or concrete edges.

Cost Savings from Combining Work

Doing drainage work during a repair saves significantly on mobilization and excavation costs. Adding a channel drain during a crack repair project typically adds \$800 to \$2,000 to the bill, compared to \$1,500 to \$3,000 as a standalone project. Edge French drains add \$30 to \$50 per linear metre when done alongside driveway work. Surface regrading during asphalt overlay adds minimal extra cost since the equipment is already on site.

Connect with contractors through **Ottawa Driveways** who specialize in both surface repair and drainage solutions so you can address the root cause and the symptoms in a single project.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- Leeds Property Maintenance
- The Next Reno
- Titley Construction

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Q26

The city tore up part of our driveway to fix a water main and the patch job looks terrible — what can we do?

Municipal Restoration After City Work

When the City of Ottawa or a utility company excavates through your driveway for water main, sewer, or gas line work, they are legally required to restore the affected area. However, the standard of restoration often falls short of what homeowners expect. The typical municipal patch uses basic materials and meets minimum standards, which can leave your driveway with visible seams, uneven surfaces, and a patch that deteriorates faster than the surrounding driveway.

Your Rights as an Ottawa Homeowner

Under the City of Ottawa's road cut restoration policies, the contractor performing the utility work must restore the surface to a reasonable condition. If the restoration is substandard — settling, cracking prematurely, or creating drainage issues — you have the right to request a re-inspection and additional repair. The City typically offers a warranty period on restoration work, usually one to two years.

How to Pursue a Better Repair

Start by documenting the condition with dated photographs from multiple angles. File a formal service request through 311 or online at ottawa.ca, referencing the specific project or permit number if you have it. Be specific about the deficiencies: uneven surface, poor compaction, drainage issues, or premature deterioration. The City will send an inspector to assess whether the restoration meets their standards.

When to Hire Your Own Contractor

Many homeowners in Orleans, Kanata, and across the city choose to have the municipal patch properly integrated with the rest of their driveway rather than living with a visible, mismatched repair. A private contractor can cut out the city's patch, extend the repair to natural seam lines, match the existing asphalt grade and compaction, and create a much more seamless result. This typically costs between \$600 and \$2,500 depending on the size of the affected area.

Seeking Reimbursement

If you can demonstrate that the City's restoration was inadequate and you hired a private contractor to complete it properly, you can submit a claim to the City of Ottawa for reimbursement. Keep all receipts, before-and-after photos, and correspondence. Claims are reviewed case by case, and the process can take several months, but many homeowners have been successful.

Preventing Problems During the Work

If you receive notice that utility work will affect your driveway, photograph the entire driveway thoroughly before work begins. Note the condition of edges, surface quality, and any existing features. This documentation is invaluable if you need to file a claim later.

Reach out through **Ottawa Driveways** to find contractors experienced with post-municipal repair restoration who can make your driveway look whole again.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- JC Carpentry
- Prime Property Works
- JMY Renovations
- Humble Homes - property maintenance

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Does home insurance cover driveway damage from a falling tree or vehicle accident in Ottawa?

Home Insurance and Driveway Damage — What's Actually Covered

The short answer is that it depends entirely on the cause of the damage and your specific policy. Home insurance in Ontario is designed to cover sudden, accidental damage from specific named perils, not gradual wear and tear. Understanding the distinction can save you from filing a claim that gets denied and potentially affects your premiums.

Scenarios That Are Typically Covered

Damage from a falling tree during a storm is generally covered under most standard home insurance policies as it falls under wind or storm damage provisions. If a vehicle (yours or someone else's) crashes into your driveway and causes structural damage, this is usually covered. In Ottawa, ice storm damage — such as a large branch brought down by ice loading — would typically qualify. Fire damage, vandalism, and damage from delivery or service vehicles may also be covered depending on your policy.

Scenarios That Are Typically NOT Covered

Cracking from freeze-thaw cycles, settling, heaving, and general deterioration are considered maintenance issues and are excluded from virtually all home insurance policies. Damage from tree roots growing under the driveway is generally excluded as it is considered gradual rather than sudden. Flooding damage may or may not be covered depending on whether you have overland water coverage, which has become increasingly relevant in Ottawa after events like the 2019 spring flooding.

Filing a Successful Claim

If you believe the damage qualifies, document everything immediately. Take photos of the damage, the cause (fallen tree, vehicle marks), and the surrounding area. Get a written estimate from a driveway contractor for the repair cost. Contact your insurance company promptly — most policies require timely notification. Be prepared for an adjuster visit. Having a contractor's professional assessment of the damage cause strengthens your claim.

Deductibles and Practical Considerations

Most home insurance deductibles in Ontario range from \$500 to \$2,500. If your driveway repair estimate is close to your deductible amount, it may not be worth filing a claim, as the claim history could affect your future premiums. For example, if a small section of driveway damaged by a fallen branch costs \$1,200 to repair and your deductible is \$1,000, you would only recover \$200 while having a claim on your record.

Third-Party Damage Claims

If a neighbour's tree fell on your driveway, or a delivery truck caused damage, the responsible party's liability insurance should cover the repair. Document the incident and obtain their insurance information.

Use **Ottawa Driveways** to get a professional damage assessment and repair estimate from a local contractor, which you will need whether you are filing an insurance claim or paying out of pocket.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Leeds Property Maintenance
- Demontigny Carpentry
- Eastern Residential Solution

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How do I get asphalt patches to match the colour of my existing driveway instead of looking like black spots?

Why Patches Never Seem to Match

Fresh asphalt is jet black because the liquid asphalt binder coating the aggregate is dark and rich in oils. Over time, exposure to UV radiation, oxygen, and Ottawa's harsh weather oxidizes the binder, turning it progressively grey. A driveway that is five or more years old has lightened significantly from its original colour, so any new hot-mix patch applied to it will stand out as a conspicuous dark spot. This is purely a cosmetic issue — the patch itself is structurally sound.

The Natural Aging Timeline

In Ottawa's climate, new asphalt typically takes 12 to 18 months to weather enough to start blending with a moderately aged surrounding surface. For older driveways, the colour difference can persist for two to three years before the patch weathers enough to be less noticeable. The intense UV exposure during Ottawa's long summer days and the oxidizing effect of road salt both accelerate the fading process.

Techniques Contractors Use to Improve the Match

Sealcoating the entire driveway after patch repairs is the most effective approach. A uniform coat of asphalt sealer applied across the whole surface creates a consistent dark colour that masks the difference between old and new sections. This costs between \$300 and \$700 for a typical two-car driveway in Ottawa and also protects against further oxidation and water infiltration. Wait at least 60 to 90 days after hot-mix patching before sealcoating to allow the new asphalt to cure fully.

Extending the patch to natural boundaries rather than cutting a minimal repair area helps visually. A patch that runs from one edge of the driveway to a natural seam line or expansion joint looks intentional rather than like a random spot repair.

Infrared asphalt repair heats the existing surface around the damaged area, allowing the old and new asphalt to bond together seamlessly. This creates the best colour integration because the recycled existing material blends with the new material at the repair boundary. Infrared repairs cost more per patch — typically \$400 to \$800 — but the visual result is dramatically better.

What About Colour Additives?

Some homeowners ask about adding colourant to the patch material. This is generally not practical for small repairs, as asphalt plants produce standard mixes. The colour difference is best managed through the approaches

above rather than trying to modify the patch material itself.

Timing Matters for Neighbourhoods with HOA Standards

If you live in a neighbourhood in Stittsville or Kanata where appearance standards are important, schedule your patch repair in early spring and sealcoat in late summer. By the following spring, the surface will look uniform and well-maintained.

Connect with experienced contractors through **Ottawa Driveways** who use infrared technology and proper finishing techniques to minimize the visual impact of asphalt repairs on your driveway.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- JC Carpentry
- Elie The Carpet Guy Inc.
- Dump n Dash Hauling
- ARTEXPRO Tile & Finishes

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Q29

How much does it cost to fill and seal alligator cracking on my asphalt driveway in Orleans?

Alligator cracking — that web of interconnected cracks that looks like reptile skin — is one of the most common asphalt failures Ottawa contractors deal with every spring, and the cost to address it depends on how deep the damage goes.

Cost Ranges for Alligator Crack Repair in Ottawa

For surface-level alligator cracking confined to a small area (under 50 square feet), crack filling and seal coating typically runs **\$300–\$600**. If the cracking covers a larger section and the base beneath has softened, contractors in Orleans and eastern Ottawa usually recommend infrared patching or a cut-and-patch repair at **\$800–\$2,500** depending on the area. When alligator cracking spans more than 30–40% of the driveway surface, full resurfacing

at **\$3.50–\$6.00 per square foot** is usually the more cost-effective path.

Why Alligator Cracking Is So Common in Ottawa

Ottawa's extreme freeze-thaw cycles are the primary culprit. Temperatures can swing from -30°C in January to +5°C during a mid-winter thaw, and that repeated expansion and contraction weakens the asphalt binder over time. Water infiltrates small cracks, freezes and expands, then thaws and settles deeper into the base layer. After a few winters of this — especially on driveways in Orleans, Gloucester, and other areas with high water tables — the subsurface aggregate loses its structural integrity and the surface starts to flex and crack in that telltale pattern.

Repair Methods Ottawa Contractors Use

- **Crack filling with hot rubberized sealant** works when cracks are isolated and the base is still solid. The material flexes with temperature changes, which is critical for Ottawa's climate range.
- **Infrared asphalt patching** heats the damaged area to 175°C, allowing contractors to rake out the failed material, add fresh hot mix, and compact it seamlessly. This method bonds the new material to the old, eliminating cold joints that fail in our winters.
- **Full-depth patching** involves sawcutting the damaged area, excavating the failed base, replacing with fresh Granular A compacted in lifts, and laying new hot mix. This is essential when Leda clay subsoil has allowed moisture to compromise the base.

When Repair Is Not Enough

If the alligator cracking returns within a year of patching, the base layer has likely failed. Continuing to patch over a compromised base is throwing money away. A qualified contractor will probe the area to check base depth and drainage conditions before recommending full reconstruction versus overlay.

Spring Timing Matters

Hot mix asphalt plants in the Ottawa region typically open in late April or early May. Book your assessment in March or early April to get on the spring schedule, as contractors in Orleans and across Ottawa fill up quickly after the snow melts and homeowners see the winter damage.

Connect with a local driveway contractor through **Ottawa Driveways** to get a proper assessment of your alligator cracking and a clear recommendation on whether patching or resurfacing makes sense for your situation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Driveway Sealing Ottawa
- Ottawa Caulking
- Somar Contracting Inc.

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Q30

What should I look for when assessing spring driveway damage after a harsh Ottawa winter?

After an Ottawa winter with over 200 cm of snowfall, sustained -25°C to -30°C cold snaps, and repeated freeze-thaw cycles, your driveway has taken a serious beating. A proper spring damage assessment helps you prioritize repairs and budget before the busy season hits.

When to Do Your Assessment

Wait until the snow and ice have fully melted and the driveway has been through a few rain cycles — usually mid- to late April in Ottawa. This lets you see the true condition, including areas where water is pooling due to frost heave or settling. Walking the driveway after a rainfall is the best time to spot drainage problems.

What to Look For — A Homeowner's Checklist

- **New cracks:** Linear cracks running across the driveway often indicate frost heave underneath. Note their width — anything over 6 mm (quarter-inch) needs attention before water gets into the base.
- **Potholes and depressions:** Even small potholes will grow rapidly with spring rain. Depressions that hold standing water are a sign the base has settled or washed out.
- **Edge crumbling:** Check the sides of the driveway where it meets your lawn. Ottawa snowplows and snow removal equipment frequently chip away at unsupported edges, especially in Barrhaven and Kanata where driveways meet city sidewalks.
- **Heaved sections:** Look for areas that are raised or uneven compared to last fall. Ottawa's frost line penetrates 1.2 to 1.5 metres deep, and inadequate base preparation allows frost to push sections upward.
- **Surface ravelling:** If loose aggregate or small asphalt chunks are scattered across the surface, the binder has oxidized and the surface layer is breaking down. This is especially common on driveways that haven't been

sealed in 3+ years.

- **Drainage changes:** Does water now flow toward your foundation instead of toward the street? Frost heave and settling can alter drainage grades over time.

Prioritizing Repairs

Not everything needs immediate attention. Focus first on anything directing water toward your foundation — the Ontario Building Code requires positive drainage away from the structure, and driveway-related water infiltration is a leading cause of basement moisture issues in Ottawa. Potholes and large cracks are next, as they deteriorate rapidly once spring rains begin. Cosmetic issues like minor surface raveling can wait until you schedule seal coating.

When to Call a Professional

If you see heaving, large depressions, or alligator cracking covering significant areas, have a contractor inspect the base condition. What looks like a surface problem in Nepean might actually be a subgrade failure caused by Leda clay shifting beneath the driveway.

Document the Damage

Take photos with a tape measure or ruler for scale. This helps when getting quotes and ensures you can compare contractor assessments fairly.

Reach out through **Ottawa Driveways** to connect with local contractors who can walk your driveway and give you an honest assessment of what needs repair now versus what can wait.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Best Hand2Hand moving company
- Dreamwood Construction & Renovations
- Vanguard Environmental

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How much does it cost to fix frost heave damage on my driveway in Nepean?

Frost heave is one of the most destructive forces acting on Ottawa driveways, and Nepean properties built on Leda clay or mixed fill soils are particularly vulnerable. Repair costs vary significantly based on how deep the damage goes.

Frost Heave Repair Costs in Ottawa

Minor heaving where the surface has cracked but the base is intact can be patched for **\$400–\$1,200** depending on the area affected. Moderate heaving that has displaced a section of driveway — common in Nepean subdivisions built in the 1970s–1990s with thinner base layers — typically requires full-depth reconstruction of the affected area at **\$1,500–\$4,000**. If frost heave has affected the entire driveway length, full reconstruction runs **\$8,000–\$18,000** for a standard two-car driveway, including excavation, improved drainage, proper Granular A base, and new asphalt.

Why Frost Heave Hits Ottawa Driveways So Hard

Ottawa's frost line penetrates 1.2 to 1.5 metres below grade — among the deepest in southern Ontario. When moisture in the soil freezes, it forms ice lenses that push the ground upward with enormous force. As temperatures cycle between -30°C and above freezing during January thaws and March melt periods, this lifting and settling repeats dozens of times each winter.

The key factor is moisture. Well-drained granular base material resists frost heave because water drains away before it can freeze. Clay-rich soils — and Nepean has plenty of Leda clay — hold moisture like a sponge, making them highly frost-susceptible.

Proper Repair Approach

- **Assessment first:** A contractor should determine whether the heaving is localised or systemic. Poking or drilling test holes reveals whether the Granular A base is still at the proper depth or has been contaminated with clay migrating upward.
- **Base reconstruction:** The permanent fix involves excavating the heaved section down to stable subgrade (often 450–600 mm), installing geotextile fabric to prevent clay migration into the granular base, compacting Granular A in 150 mm lifts, and repaving.
- **Drainage improvement:** Many Nepean driveways lack adequate edge drainage. Adding a French drain or swale along one or both sides prevents water from saturating the base and reduces future frost heave risk.

Temporary Fixes — Worth It?

Cold-patch asphalt can level a heaved area temporarily for **\$50–\$150** in materials, but it will fail within one winter. If you are planning full driveway replacement within a year or two, a temporary fix buys time. Otherwise, invest in the proper base repair — it will outlast the asphalt surface above it.

WSIB and Contractor Selection

Any contractor excavating and working with heavy equipment on your property should carry WSIB coverage. This protects you from liability if a worker is injured during the dig. Confirm coverage before signing a contract.

Get connected with experienced local contractors through **Ottawa Driveways** who understand Nepean's soil conditions and can recommend the right repair approach for your specific situation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- JC Carpentry
- Steven Labelle - Your Complete Home Renovator
- Callandgone
- Prime Property Works

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Q32

My driveway edges are crumbling and breaking apart in Gloucester — what causes this and how is it fixed?

Edge crumbling is one of the most common driveway complaints across Gloucester and eastern Ottawa, and it is almost always caused by a combination of inadequate edge support and the mechanical damage from Ottawa's winters.

What Causes Driveway Edge Crumbling

- **No lateral support:** Asphalt driveway edges that meet grass or garden beds have nothing holding them in place. Over time, vehicle tires rolling near the edge flex and crack the unsupported asphalt. This is worse in Gloucester subdivisions where driveways are narrower and cars regularly track near the edges.

- **Snowplow and snow blower damage:** Commercial and residential snow removal equipment catches driveway edges, chipping away material with each pass. After 10-15 Ottawa winters, the cumulative damage is significant.
- **Water infiltration at the edge:** Water seeps under the asphalt edge where it meets the lawn. During Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles, this water expands and lifts the edge, then the softened base allows the edge to break under vehicle weight.
- **Thin asphalt at edges:** Some paving contractors taper the asphalt thinner toward the edges to save material. This creates a weakness that shows up within a few years.

Repair Options and Methods

Edge sawcutting and patching is the standard repair. The contractor sawcuts a straight line 150–300 mm (6–12 inches) inside the crumbled edge, removes the damaged material, builds up the granular base to the proper height, and lays new hot mix asphalt compacted tightly against the existing driveway. The sawcut creates a clean joint that bonds better than patching against a ragged edge.

Adding asphalt curbing or a paver border along the edges prevents future crumbling by providing lateral support. Asphalt curbing is a rolled bead of asphalt along the driveway edge that holds the surface layer in place. Alternatively, a row of concrete pavers or Belgian block set in concrete along the edge provides a permanent boundary.

Proper base extension is critical for lasting repairs. If the original base did not extend past the asphalt edge, the repair must include extending the Granular A base at least 100 mm beyond the new asphalt edge to provide support underneath.

Cost Expectations in Ottawa

Edge repair along one side of a standard driveway (15–20 linear metres) typically costs **\$600–\$1,500** depending on how much base work is needed. Adding asphalt curbing to both sides runs **\$800–\$2,000**. A decorative paver or Belgian block border costs **\$1,500–\$3,500** but is the most durable long-term solution.

Prevention Tips

Install driveway markers or reflective stakes before the first snowfall so plow operators can see the edges. Avoid driving on the outer 150 mm of the driveway, and keep garden beds from holding water against the edge. These simple habits extend the life of your driveway edges considerably.

Find a qualified local contractor through **Ottawa Driveways** to assess your edge damage and get a quote that includes proper base work, not just a surface patch.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- JC Carpentry
- ARTEXPRO Tile & Finishes
- Steven Labelle - Your Complete Home Renovator
- Dreamwood Construction & Renovations

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Q33

Can I fix driveway cracks and potholes myself in Ottawa, or should I hire a contractor?

It depends on the size and nature of the damage. Some driveway repairs are perfectly suited to DIY, while others require professional equipment and materials that simply are not available to homeowners.

What You Can Realistically DIY

- **Crack filling (cracks under 12 mm wide):** Rubberized crack filler from a hardware store in Kanata or Barrhaven costs **\$15–\$40** per tube or pourable jug. Clean the crack with a pressure washer or garden hose, let it dry, and fill it flush with the surface. The key is doing this before water gets into the base — once water freezes below the crack during an Ottawa winter, the crack expands rapidly.
- **Small potholes (under 300 mm diameter, under 50 mm deep):** Cold-patch asphalt is available at home improvement stores for **\$15–\$30** per bag. Clean out loose debris, fill the hole slightly higher than the surrounding surface, and compact it with a hand tamper or by driving over it with your car tire. Cold patch is a temporary repair that typically lasts 1–2 Ottawa winters before needing reapplication.
- **Surface seal coating:** DIY driveway sealer costs **\$30–\$60** per pail and covers roughly 40–50 square metres. It is a straightforward weekend project if you are comfortable working on your knees. Apply on a dry day above 10°C — in Ottawa, that means late May through September.

What Requires a Professional

- **Cracks wider than 12–15 mm:** Wide cracks indicate base movement, and filling them without addressing the base just delays the inevitable. A contractor can assess whether the base needs work.

- **Potholes larger than 300 mm or deeper than 75 mm:** These need hot mix asphalt, which requires a commercial supplier and compaction equipment. Cold patch in a large pothole will fail within weeks under Ottawa traffic.
- **Alligator cracking:** The interconnected crack pattern means the base layer has failed. No amount of surface filling will fix this — the damaged area needs to be cut out and rebuilt from the base up.
- **Frost heave or sinking sections:** These are base and subgrade problems. Excavation, proper compaction, and professional paving are required.
- **Edge reconstruction:** Rebuilding crumbled edges requires sawcutting equipment, base preparation, and hot mix asphalt.

The Honest Cost-Benefit Analysis

DIY crack filling and small pothole patching saves you **\$200–\$500** compared to hiring a contractor for the same small repairs. But applying cold patch to a large problem area can actually cost you more in the long run — if the temporary repair fails and allows more water into the base over an Ottawa winter, you may end up needing full reconstruction instead of a professional patch that would have lasted years.

Safety Considerations

Hot rubberized crack filler (the professional-grade product) operates at temperatures above 190°C and can cause severe burns. If you choose to use a melter pot, wear proper protective equipment. For most homeowners, the cold-applied products are safer and more practical.

Timing Your DIY Repairs

Do crack filling and patching as early in the Ottawa season as possible — ideally late April or May when temperatures are consistently above 10°C. This seals the damage before summer rain penetrates further into the base. Seal coating should wait until later in the season when overnight temperatures stay above 10°C for the curing period.

If your damage is beyond DIY scope, use **Ottawa Driveways** to connect with local contractors who can handle the repair properly and save you from a costly redo next spring.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry

- Home Front Services
- BFI Renovations
- ARTEXPRO Tile & Finishes

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How do I know when it's time to replace my Ottawa driveway rather than keep repairing it?

This is one of the most important financial decisions Ottawa homeowners face with their driveways. Continuing to patch a driveway past its useful life wastes money, but replacing one prematurely wastes even more. Here is how to evaluate your situation.

Signs That Repair Is No Longer Cost-Effective

- **Alligator cracking covering more than 30% of the surface:** When the interconnected crack pattern spreads beyond a localised area, the base layer has failed systemically. Patching individual sections will not stop the rest from failing.
- **Recurring repairs in the same areas:** If you have patched the same spot two or three winters in a row, the base beneath it is compromised. Each Ottawa freeze-thaw cycle will continue to destroy the patch.
- **Multiple frost heave locations:** One heaved area can be excavated and repaired. Three or four heaved sections across the driveway mean the entire base lacks adequate depth or drainage for Ottawa's 1.2–1.5 metre frost line.
- **Driveway age over 20–25 years:** A well-built asphalt driveway in Ottawa lasts 15–25 years depending on maintenance. If yours is in that range and showing widespread damage, replacement delivers better value than continued repairs.
- **Drainage flowing toward your foundation:** If settling and heaving have altered the grade so water pools near your house, this is a structural issue that patching cannot fix. The Ontario Building Code requires positive drainage away from foundations.
- **The surface is ravelling extensively:** When the asphalt binder has oxidized to the point that aggregate is loose across most of the surface, seal coating can no longer penetrate and bond. The surface layer has reached end of life.

The 30% Rule of Thumb

Many Ottawa contractors use this guideline: if the cost of all needed repairs exceeds 30% of the cost of full replacement, replace it. For a typical two-car driveway in Stittsville or Kanata, full replacement runs **\$8,000–\$18,000** depending on size, base condition, and material choice. If your repair quote is approaching **\$3,000–\$5,000** and you know more repairs are coming, replacement starts to make financial sense.

What Replacement Gets You That Repair Cannot

- **Proper base depth:** Modern Ottawa driveway construction uses 300–450 mm of compacted Granular A over geotextile fabric, designed for our frost conditions.
- **Correct drainage grading:** The driveway is graded to shed water away from your home and toward the street or a catch basin.
- **Fresh asphalt binder:** New asphalt is flexible and water-resistant. It will accept seal coating properly and resist Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles for years.
- **Warranty:** Most reputable Ottawa contractors offer 2–5 year warranties on new driveways. Patch repairs rarely carry meaningful warranties.

Getting an Honest Assessment

Be cautious of contractors who always recommend full replacement — some jobs genuinely only need targeted repairs. Equally, be cautious of those who keep patching a driveway that clearly needs replacement, as you will spend more over time. A good contractor in Ottawa will show you exactly why they are recommending repair or replacement, including probing the base condition.

Reach out through **Ottawa Driveways** to get connected with local driveway contractors who can give you a straightforward assessment and help you decide whether repair or replacement is the right call for your property.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Pure Flow Water Solutions inc.
- Joe Imerti Contracting
- BFI Renovations

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Q35

There's a big oil stain on my driveway in Barrhaven — do I need to clean it before getting repairs done?

Yes, oil stains must be addressed before any asphalt repair or seal coating work, and this is something many Barrhaven homeowners overlook when scheduling driveway maintenance.

Why Oil Stains Matter for Driveway Repairs

Motor oil, transmission fluid, and hydraulic fluid are petroleum-based solvents that actively dissolve the asphalt binder holding your driveway together. The stain you see on the surface is only part of the problem — the oil penetrates into the asphalt, softening it from within. If a contractor applies crack filler, patching material, or seal coating over an oil-saturated area, the new material will not bond properly. It will peel, flake, or crack within weeks because the oil prevents adhesion.

How to Clean Oil Stains Before Repairs

Fresh stains (less than a week old):

- Absorb as much oil as possible with cat litter, sawdust, or commercial oil absorbent. Leave it for 24 hours, then sweep it up.
- Apply a degreaser or dish soap mixed with hot water. Scrub with a stiff bristle brush.
- Pressure wash the area at 2,500–3,000 PSI.
- Repeat if needed. Fresh stains usually come out with 1–2 treatments.

Old or deep stains:

- Apply a commercial asphalt oil stain remover (available at Ottawa hardware stores for **\$15–\$35**). These products use microbes or chemical agents to break down petroleum.
- Some products need 24–48 hours of dwell time. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Pressure wash thoroughly.
- For deeply penetrated stains, a professional power washing service in Ottawa charges **\$150–\$400** depending on the driveway size and number of stains.

When the Stain Has Caused Structural Damage

If the asphalt in the stained area is soft, spongy, or crumbling when you press on it, the oil has compromised the binder beyond what cleaning can fix. In this case, the contractor will need to sawcut and remove the damaged section and patch it with new hot mix asphalt. This is a common scenario for driveways in Barrhaven, Kanata, and other Ottawa suburbs where vehicles sit in the same spot for years with slow leaks.

The cost for cutting out and patching an oil-damaged area is typically **\$300–\$800** depending on the size. This is significantly less expensive than discovering the problem after seal coating fails and having to redo the entire job.

What to Tell Your Contractor

Always point out oil stains to your driveway contractor before work begins. A reputable contractor will either clean the area themselves (sometimes included in the job price) or ask you to clean it beforehand. If a contractor offers to seal coat directly over visible oil stains without addressing them, that is a red flag — the seal coat will fail in those areas, and you will be paying twice.

Preventing Future Stains

Place a drip pan or absorbent mat under your vehicle if it has a known leak. Cardboard works in a pinch but deteriorates quickly in Ottawa rain. Commercial drip mats cost **\$20–\$50** and are reusable. Fixing the vehicle leak is obviously the best long-term solution.

Connect with a local contractor through **Ottawa Driveways** who can assess whether your oil-stained areas need cleaning, patching, or both before proceeding with your driveway repairs.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Somar Contracting Inc.
- Nic's D.U.C.T Works Inc
- Leeds Property Maintenance

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Q36

How much would it cost to repair a sinking section of my driveway near the garage in Kanata?

Sinking or settling near the garage is one of the most common driveway problems in Kanata, and it is almost always related to how the driveway base was originally prepared where it meets the garage slab. Repair costs depend on the method and extent of the settlement.

Cost Ranges for Sinking Driveway Repair in Ottawa

- **Polyurethane foam injection (mudjacking alternative): \$800–\$2,500** for a typical settled area near the garage. Foam is injected through small holes drilled in the asphalt, expanding underneath to lift the surface back to grade. This is the least invasive option and can be done in a few hours.
- **Cut-and-patch reconstruction: \$1,500–\$4,000** depending on the area. The contractor sawcuts around the sunk section, removes the asphalt, excavates the failed base, recompacts with fresh Granular A, and repaves. This is the most durable repair.
- **Full apron replacement (garage to sidewalk): \$3,000–\$7,000** if the settling extends across the full width of the driveway apron. In many Kanata subdivisions built in the 1980s–2000s, the entire transition zone from garage to driveway has settled.

Why Driveways Sink Near the Garage

During home construction, the area directly in front of the garage foundation is backfilled after the foundation walls are poured. This backfill — often a mix of excavated soil, clay, and construction debris — is rarely compacted to the same standard as undisturbed ground. Over 10–20 Ottawa winters, this loosely compacted fill settles under the weight of vehicles and the repeated freeze-thaw action of our climate.

In Kanata specifically, many subdivisions were built on former farmland with variable soil conditions. Some areas have pockets of organic material or soft clay that compress over time. The frost line at 1.2–1.5 metres deep in Ottawa means this settlement is amplified by ice lens formation each winter.

Which Repair Method Is Best?

Foam injection works well when the asphalt surface is still in good condition but has simply dropped. The surface needs to be free of alligator cracking and the base must not have washed away entirely — just settled. It is fast, minimally disruptive, and avoids the cold joint you get with a cut-and-patch repair.

Cut-and-patch is the better choice when the asphalt over the sunk area is cracked, deteriorated, or when the base needs to be completely rebuilt. This is more common for older Kanata driveways where the original base was too thin or used unsuitable fill material.

The Garage Transition Detail

A common mistake is repairing the sinking without addressing the joint between the driveway and the garage slab. This transition should be sealed with a flexible caulk rated for Ottawa's temperature range (-40°C to +40°C). If water continues to seep between the driveway and garage floor, the base will wash out again and the settlement will return.

Drainage Consideration

The repaired grade must ensure water flows away from the garage, not toward it. The Ontario Building Code requires positive drainage away from all structures. If the settling has created a low spot that ponds water against your garage foundation, the repair must correct this grade — not just lift the surface back to where it was.

Use **Ottawa Driveways** to find a local contractor in Kanata who can assess whether your sinking is a base compaction issue, a drainage problem, or both, and recommend the right repair approach.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- ARTEXPRO Tile & Finishes
- Nic's D.U.C.T Works Inc
- Dump n Dash Hauling

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My asphalt driveway has tree root bumps pushing up through the surface in Stittsville — what are my options?

Tree root damage is a frustrating problem for Stittsville homeowners, especially in older neighbourhoods where mature maples, oaks, and silver birches have had decades to spread their root systems under driveways. The good news is there are several repair approaches, but each involves trade-offs.

Understanding the Problem

Tree roots grow toward moisture and nutrients, and the area beneath a driveway often retains moisture longer than surrounding soil — making it attractive to roots. As roots thicken over the years, they push upward against the granular base and asphalt surface, creating humps, cracks, and eventually breaking through. In Stittsville and western Ottawa, the mature tree canopy means this is an extremely common issue.

Option 1: Root Pruning and Driveway Repair

The most common approach is to excavate the affected area, prune the offending roots, and rebuild the driveway section. This involves sawcutting around the damaged area, removing the asphalt and base material, cutting the roots cleanly with a sharp saw (never an axe — ragged cuts invite disease), backfilling with Granular A, and repaving.

Important caution: Removing major structural roots can destabilize or kill the tree. As a general rule, do not cut roots thicker than 75 mm (3 inches) or roots within the tree's critical root zone (a circle with a radius equal to the trunk diameter multiplied by 12). If the root causing the damage is a major structural root, consult a certified arborist before cutting. The City of Ottawa also has a tree protection bylaw that may apply if the tree is on city property or in certain zones.

Option 2: Root Bridge / Ramp Over the Roots

Instead of cutting the roots, the driveway can be rebuilt to accommodate them. The contractor excavates around the roots, installs a rigid base (sometimes a concrete pad or heavy steel plate) that spans over the root zone, and paves on top. This preserves the tree but adds cost and may create a slight grade change.

Option 3: Root Barrier Installation

After pruning and repairing, a root barrier — a rigid plastic or geotextile sheet installed vertically to a depth of 450–600 mm along the driveway edge — prevents roots from growing back under the driveway. This adds **\$300–\$800** to the repair cost but significantly reduces the chance of recurrence.

Option 4: Reroute or Narrow the Driveway

In some cases, especially with large mature trees, the most practical long-term solution is to slightly adjust the driveway alignment to avoid the root zone entirely. This is a bigger project but eliminates the ongoing battle.

Cost Expectations in Ottawa

Root pruning with driveway patching for a single affected area typically runs **\$1,200–\$3,500** in Stittsville and western Ottawa. Adding a root barrier increases the total to **\$1,500–\$4,300**. If the tree needs to be removed entirely (last resort), tree removal in Ottawa ranges from **\$800–\$3,000** depending on size and access, plus the driveway repair cost.

City of Ottawa Considerations

If the tree causing the damage is a city-owned street tree, contact 311 before doing any work. The City may be responsible for the tree management, though they typically do not pay for private driveway repairs. If it is your tree and it is a designated heritage tree or in a mature neighbourhood overlay zone, additional rules may apply.

Connect with a contractor through **Ottawa Driveways** who has experience dealing with root damage in Stittsville's mature neighbourhoods and can coordinate with an arborist if needed.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Geerts Roofing Inc
- The Fixer
- Best Hand2Hand moving company

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Q38

How long does a professional driveway crack repair last in Ottawa before the cracks come back?

The longevity of crack repairs in Ottawa depends heavily on the type of crack, the repair material used, and whether the underlying cause was addressed. Here is what you can realistically expect.

Hot Rubberized Crack Filler (Professional Grade)

This is the standard professional repair for linear cracks up to 20 mm wide. The material is heated to approximately 190°C and poured into the cleaned, dried crack. It cures to a flexible, rubber-like consistency that expands and contracts with Ottawa's extreme temperature swings.

- **Expected lifespan:** 3–5 years in Ottawa's climate when properly applied.
- **Why it eventually fails:** After several hundred freeze-thaw cycles (Ottawa averages 30–40 significant cycles per winter), even the best rubberized filler loses its elasticity. The constant flexing from -30°C to +5°C and back degrades the polymer chains. Additionally, UV exposure oxidizes the material over summers.
- **Key factor:** The crack must be clean and dry before filling. Professional contractors use a hot air lance or router to prepare the crack, which dramatically improves adhesion compared to DIY cold-pour products.

Cold-Pour Crack Filler (DIY Grade)

Available at hardware stores, these products are applied at ambient temperature. They are convenient but significantly less durable.

- **Expected lifespan:** 1–2 Ottawa winters at best.
- **Why it fails faster:** Cold-pour products do not achieve the same bond strength as hot-applied material. They also have lower elasticity, which is a critical weakness in a city where ground temperatures swing over 60 degrees Celsius annually.

Crack Routing and Sealing

Professional crack routing uses a mechanical router to widen the crack to a uniform width and depth (typically 12 mm wide by 12 mm deep), creating a clean reservoir for the sealant. This is the gold standard for crack repair.

- **Expected lifespan:** 5–8 years in Ottawa conditions.
- **Why it lasts longer:** The uniform reservoir shape ensures proper sealant depth-to-width ratio, which allows the material to flex without tearing. The routed walls provide clean bonding surfaces. This method costs more — typically **\$5–\$12 per linear metre** compared to **\$2–\$5** for simple fill — but the extended lifespan makes it more cost-effective.

When Cracks Keep Coming Back

If professionally filled cracks reopen within one season, the problem is not the filler — it is the base. Common causes in Ottawa include:

- **Base settlement over Leda clay:** The clay subsoil shifts seasonally, and the driveway moves with it. No surface filler can withstand this movement indefinitely.
- **Inadequate base depth:** Driveways built with less than 200 mm of compacted Granular A will move more than those built to the recommended 300–450 mm for Ottawa's frost conditions.
- **Water under the driveway:** Poor drainage saturates the base, leading to frost heave in winter and settlement in spring. Until the drainage issue is resolved, cracks will keep returning.
- **Tree root growth:** Roots pushing up from below create stress cracks that reappear after any surface repair.

Maximising Crack Repair Lifespan

Seal coat the driveway within a year after crack repairs. The seal coat protects the filler from UV degradation and prevents water from entering adjacent areas. Ensure your driveway has proper drainage so water is not sitting on or near the repaired cracks. In Ottawa, this means confirming the surface grade still directs water toward the street after each winter.

Book your crack repairs through **Ottawa Driveways** to connect with contractors who use professional-grade materials and proper preparation techniques for lasting results in our climate.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- JC Carpentry
- The Deck Store Inc
- Somar Contracting Inc.
- Renovo Construction

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Q39

Will resurfacing fix drainage issues on my sloped driveway in Stittsville?

Resurfacing alone will not fix drainage issues on a sloped driveway — drainage problems are typically caused by improper grading, base settlement, or inadequate slope, which require more extensive correction than just

adding a new asphalt surface layer.

Understanding Drainage vs. Resurfacing

Asphalt resurfacing involves applying a new 40-50mm layer of hot-mix asphalt over the existing surface. While this can smooth out minor surface irregularities and restore the driveway's appearance, it follows the existing grade and contours. If your Stittsville driveway has drainage issues — water pooling, ice formation, or runoff flowing toward your foundation — these problems stem from the underlying grade, not just the surface condition.

Common Drainage Issues in Stittsville

Stittsville's mix of clay and sandy soils can create unique drainage challenges. Many properties in older Stittsville developments (1980s-1990s) have driveways that were graded with minimal slope or have settled over time due to inadequate base compaction. Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles compound these issues — water pools in low spots, freezes and expands, then creates larger depressions that hold even more water. If your driveway currently has standing water after rain or significant ice buildup in winter, resurfacing will simply create a smooth surface with the same drainage problems.

What Actually Fixes Drainage Problems

Proper drainage correction requires adjusting the grade to achieve a minimum 2% slope away from your home and toward the street or a drainage swale. This often means removing the existing asphalt, regrading the base material, and potentially adding or relocating granular base to create proper slope. In some cases, catch basins or French drains are needed to handle water that cannot be directed to the street. For driveways with significant settlement or base failure, full reconstruction with proper Granular B sub-base (300mm minimum in Ottawa) and Granular A base (150mm minimum) is the only permanent solution.

Cost-Effective Approach for Stittsville

If your driveway surface is in good condition but has minor drainage issues, consider targeted grading improvements along the edges, extending downspouts, and creating swales to direct water away from problem areas. This costs \$500-\$1,500 compared to \$2,500-\$5,500 for resurfacing that won't solve the underlying issue. If the surface also needs renewal, plan for full removal and replacement (\$5,000-\$12,000) rather than resurfacing over drainage problems.

When to Call a Professional

Drainage assessment requires understanding soil conditions, municipal drainage requirements, and proper grading techniques. A qualified paving contractor can evaluate whether your drainage issues can be resolved with minor regrading or require full reconstruction. Given Stittsville's clay soil conditions and Ottawa's extreme freeze-thaw

cycles, proper drainage is critical for long-term driveway performance.

Ottawa Driveways can connect you with experienced local contractors who understand Stittsville soil conditions and can provide drainage solutions that work with your specific property layout and municipal requirements.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Driveways. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any driveway or paving project. Information is current as of April 5, 2026 and may change. Visit ottawadriveways.com for the latest answers.