OTTAWA GARAGES

Garage Doors & Openers

Garage door installation, replacement, openers, and hardware

18 Expert Answers from Garage IQ

ottawagarages.com/construction-brain

Table of Contents

Q1

How much does it cost to install a side-entry pedestrian door in my garage in Ottawa?

Installing a side-entry pedestrian door in your Ottawa garage typically costs between $800 and $2,500, including the door, frame, hardware, and professional installation. The wide price range reflects different door quality levels, insulation requirements, and the complexity of cutting through your existing garage wall structure.

Door and Material Costs

The door itself represents the largest cost component. A basic steel entry door with minimal insulation runs $300 to $600, while an insulated steel door with thermal breaks and weatherstripping costs $500 to $1,200. Fiberglass doors with good insulation properties range from $600 to $1,500. For Ottawa's extreme climate, you want a door with at least R-5 insulation value and quality weatherstripping — heating costs make the upgrade worthwhile if your garage is heated or semi-heated. The door frame, trim, and hardware add another $150 to $400 to material costs.

Installation Complexity

Installation costs vary significantly based on your garage's construction. If you're cutting through a standard wood-framed wall, expect $400 to $800 in labour costs. However, if your garage has concrete block or poured concrete walls, the installation becomes much more complex and expensive, potentially adding $500 to $1,000 for concrete cutting and structural considerations. The installer must also ensure proper header installation above the door opening to maintain structural integrity.

Electrical and Code Considerations

Most Ottawa garages benefit from adding exterior lighting near the pedestrian door, which requires an ESA-licensed electrician and adds $200 to $500 to the project cost. If your garage is attached to your house, the new door opening may affect fire separation requirements under the Ontario Building Code, potentially requiring additional fire-rated materials and inspection.

Seasonal Timing and Permits

While a simple pedestrian door installation typically doesn't require a building permit in Ottawa, it's worth confirming with the city if you're making significant structural changes. The installation is best scheduled during warmer months when cutting into the wall won't compromise your garage's climate control. Winter installations are possible but may require temporary heating during the work.

When you're ready to move forward, you can browse garage contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to compare qualified professionals who handle door installations and understand Ottawa's specific building requirements.

Q2

How much does it cost to replace a garage door opener motor that died from Ottawa's cold?

A new garage door opener motor in Ottawa typically costs $350 to $800 installed, depending on the horsepower, drive type, and smart features you choose. If your opener died from cold weather exposure, you'll want to invest in a model specifically rated for Ottawa's extreme temperature swings rather than replacing it with another basic unit that might fail again.

Ottawa's brutal winters are particularly hard on garage door opener motors, especially older units or those installed in unheated garages. When temperatures drop to -25°C or colder, motor lubricants thicken, plastic components become brittle, and the increased resistance from cold metal tracks forces the motor to work harder. Chain-drive openers are generally more reliable in extreme cold than belt-drive models, though premium belt-drive units with reinforced belts can handle Ottawa winters well. The motor itself may have seized due to condensation freezing inside the housing, or the circuit board may have failed from repeated thermal cycling.

For Ottawa conditions, look for an opener rated for at least 1/2 horsepower with a heavy-duty motor designed for temperature extremes. Models with battery backup are increasingly popular given Ottawa's ice storm history and winter power outages. Smart openers with smartphone connectivity typically cost $100 to $200 more but allow you to monitor and control the door remotely - useful when you're questioning whether you remembered to close the garage door during a snowstorm.

Installation typically takes 2 to 4 hours and includes removing the old unit, mounting the new motor, adjusting the travel limits and force settings, and programming remotes. Most Ottawa garage door companies will dispose of your old opener as part of the service. If your garage is unheated and you're experiencing repeated opener failures, consider adding some insulation around the motor housing or installing a small heater to protect the mechanical components during the coldest months.

When you're ready to replace that failed opener, you can browse garage door specialists through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to compare local contractors who understand how to properly install and adjust openers for our challenging climate.

Q3

How much does it cost to widen my garage door opening from a single to a double in Ottawa?

Widening a garage door opening from single to double in Ottawa typically costs **$8,000 to $18,000** depending on whether it's an attached or detached garage and the structural complexity involved. This includes cutting the new opening, installing a proper header beam, framing the wider opening, siding or brick work to match the existing exterior, and installing the new double garage door.

The cost breakdown varies significantly based on your garage type and construction. For a detached garage with wood siding, expect the lower end of the range since the structural work is straightforward and exterior patching is relatively simple. Attached garages cost more because the work affects the house structure and may require engineered headers to support the load above. If your garage has brick or stone exterior, add $3,000 to $6,000 for masonry work to properly match the existing materials. The new double garage door itself runs $2,000 to $5,000 installed, depending on insulation level and style.

Structural considerations are critical in Ottawa because the header beam must support not just the wall load above but also Ottawa's substantial snow loads. The Ontario Building Code requires engineered headers for openings this wide, and cutting corners on structural support can lead to sagging, cracking, and door operation problems. You'll need a building permit from the City of Ottawa for this work since it involves structural modifications.

The project requires coordinating multiple trades - a structural engineer for header design, framing contractors for the opening work, siding or masonry specialists for exterior finishing, and garage door installers. Winter scheduling can be challenging since exterior work needs decent weather conditions. Many contractors prefer to tackle these projects in late spring through early fall when they can work efficiently on both interior framing and exterior finishing.

If you're considering this upgrade, you can browse experienced garage contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory to get detailed quotes that account for your specific garage construction and exterior materials.

Q4

My garage door track is bent from ice buildup — can it be repaired or does it need replacing in Ottawa?

A bent garage door track from ice buildup can often be straightened if the damage is minor, but severely kinked or cracked tracks need complete replacement. The key is determining whether the track maintained its structural integrity or if the metal has been compromised beyond safe repair.

Ice buildup is a chronic problem for Ottawa garage doors because our extreme freeze-thaw cycles create perfect conditions for ice dams and accumulation. When temperatures swing from -25°C to above freezing repeatedly throughout winter, melting snow and ice refreeze in door tracks, weather seals, and around the door perimeter. As ice expands, it can push door sections off track or bend the metal rails themselves. This is especially common on the bottom track sections where salt-laden slush pools and freezes solid.

For minor bends where the track is still smooth and the metal hasn't cracked, a qualified garage door technician can often straighten the rail using specialized tools. However, if you see sharp kinks, cracks in the metal, or areas where the track has been twisted, replacement is the only safe option. A compromised track can cause the door to bind, jump off the rails, or even fall completely — creating serious safety and property damage risks.

Important warning: Never attempt to repair garage door tracks yourself, especially if torsion springs are involved. The springs store enormous tension and can cause severe injury. Even seemingly simple track adjustments can affect door balance and spring tension in dangerous ways.

To prevent future ice damage, ensure your garage has proper drainage away from the door area, keep door seals in good condition, and consider upgrading to a higher R-value insulated door that reduces condensation and ice formation. Regular winter maintenance like clearing ice buildup before it becomes severe can prevent track damage.

When you need professional track repair or replacement, you can browse experienced garage door contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com/directory to find qualified technicians who understand Ottawa's specific climate challenges.

Q5

What does a proper year-round garage door maintenance schedule look like for Ottawa's climate?

Ottawa's climate is about as tough on garage doors as it gets anywhere in Canada, so a structured maintenance schedule really does make a difference in how long your door and opener last. Most Ottawa homeowners who stay on top of this end up avoiding the big emergency repair bills that come from neglected hardware failing in the middle of January.

In early spring, once temperatures are consistently above freezing, you want to do your most thorough inspection of the year. Start by looking at the springs, cables, rollers, and hinges for any signs of wear or damage that accumulated over winter. Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles are brutal on metal components, and you will often find surface rust or small cracks in rollers that were fine back in October. Lubricate all moving parts with a silicone-based or lithium spray lubricant. Do not use WD-40 as your primary lubricant because it is a solvent and will actually strip existing grease off the parts. Check the bottom seal and weatherstripping on both sides and the top of the door. After a winter of ice buildup and scraping, these seals often crack or pull away from the door, and replacing them in spring means your garage stays dry through the rainy months. A full spring tune-up from a garage door company in Ottawa typically runs $120 to $200.

Summer is the lightest maintenance season. Test the auto-reverse safety feature by placing a 2x4 flat on the ground where the door meets the floor. If the door does not reverse when it contacts the board, the force settings on your opener need adjustment. Also test the photoelectric sensors by waving something through the beam while the door is closing. Clean the tracks with a damp cloth to remove dust and debris but do not lubricate the tracks themselves because that causes the rollers to slide instead of rolling properly.

Fall maintenance is critical in Ottawa and should happen before the first hard freeze, ideally in October. This is when you want to re-lubricate all springs, hinges, rollers, and the opener chain or screw drive. Apply a thin layer of silicone lubricant to the weatherstripping to keep it pliable through winter. Tighten all hardware because vibration from regular use loosens bolts and brackets over months. Check the balance of the door by disconnecting the opener and lifting the door manually to about waist height. A properly balanced door will stay in place. If it falls or rises on its own, the springs need professional adjustment, which typically costs $100 to $175 in Ottawa.

Winter Checks

During Ottawa's coldest months you should do a quick visual inspection monthly. Watch for ice buildup along the bottom seal, which can freeze the door to the garage floor. If that happens, never force the door open with the opener because you will strip the gears or snap the bottom seal right off. Instead, use a heat gun or carefully pour warm water along the seal to free it. Keep the area where the door meets the floor clear of snow and ice. If your opener is struggling more than usual in extreme cold, that is normal to a degree because lubricants thicken below minus twenty, but if it is really laboring you may need a cold-rated lubricant application.

Budget roughly $150 to $250 per year for professional maintenance visits if you prefer not to do it yourself. Most Ottawa garage door companies offer annual maintenance packages in that range. Doing the work yourself costs about $30 to $50 per year in lubricants, weatherstripping, and replacement rollers as needed. Either way, consistent maintenance easily doubles the lifespan of your springs and opener, which is a significant saving when you consider that spring replacement alone runs several hundred dollars.

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

- 613Bins
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Callandgone
- M.O.T. CONSTRUCTION INC.
- Renovo Construction

View all contractors ?

Q6

What is the difference between torsion and extension springs on a garage door and what does each type cost to replace in Ottawa?

This is one of those things most homeowners never think about until a spring breaks, and then suddenly you are stuck with a door that will not open and need to make a decision quickly. Understanding the difference ahead of time can save you from getting oversold on a repair you do not actually need.

Torsion springs mount on a metal shaft directly above the garage door opening, running horizontally along a header bracket. When the door closes, the springs wind up and store energy. When you open the door, that stored energy does most of the heavy lifting. Most modern garage doors in Ottawa use torsion springs because they provide smoother, more controlled operation and last significantly longer. A standard torsion spring is rated for about 10,000 to 15,000 cycles, where one cycle equals one open and one close. If you use your garage door four times a day, a basic torsion spring lasts roughly seven to ten years. High-cycle springs rated for 25,000 or even 50,000 cycles are available and worth considering if your garage door is your primary entry point to your home, which is extremely common in Ottawa where nobody wants to walk through snow to the front door.

Extension springs mount on either side of the door, running parallel to the horizontal tracks. They stretch and contract as the door moves. These are the older style and are still found on many Ottawa homes built before the mid-2000s. Extension springs are cheaper but they have real drawbacks. They wear out faster, typically lasting 8,000 to 10,000 cycles. More importantly, when an extension spring breaks it can fly off violently, which is a genuine safety hazard. Safety cables should always be threaded through extension springs to contain them if they snap, but many older installations in Ottawa are missing these cables entirely.

For replacement costs in Ottawa, expect to pay $200 to $350 for a single torsion spring replacement including labour, or $300 to $500 if both springs need replacing, which is almost always recommended. Even if only one spring broke, the other one has the same amount of wear and will likely fail within months. Replacing both at once saves you a second service call. Extension spring replacement is cheaper at $150 to $250 for the pair with installation, but if you are replacing extension springs I would strongly recommend upgrading to torsion springs instead. The conversion typically costs $350 to $600 in Ottawa because it requires installing a new torsion bar, header bracket, and center bearing plate above the door. That is more upfront but you get a safer, smoother, longer-lasting system.

High-cycle torsion springs add $50 to $150 to the base cost depending on the cycle rating. For a busy household in Ottawa, this upgrade pays for itself because you are extending the time between replacements by years.

Ottawa's extreme cold does affect spring lifespan. Metal becomes more brittle in severe cold, and most spring failures happen during cold snaps in January and February. The temperature swings we get, going from minus twenty-five to plus two within a few days, cause repeated expansion and contraction that accelerates metal fatigue. There is not much you can do about this other than keeping the springs lubricated with a cold-rated lubricant so they flex as smoothly as possible.

One important safety note. Garage door spring replacement is not a DIY job regardless of which type you have. Torsion springs are under enormous tension and can cause serious injury if wound or unwound incorrectly. Even extension springs carry enough force to be dangerous. This is one of the few home repairs where hiring a professional is genuinely the only responsible option. A qualified technician in Ottawa can typically complete the job in under an hour.

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

- Homeupgraders
- JC Carpentry
- GDS - Garage Doors & Openers Ottawa

- Denys Builds Designs Renovations
- Vanguard Environmental

View all contractors ?

Q7

How much does it cost to add insulation to an existing uninsulated garage door in Ottawa?

Adding insulation to an existing garage door is one of the more practical upgrades you can do in Ottawa, especially if your garage is attached to your house and you are losing heat through a thin single-layer steel door. The cost and approach depend on whether you retrofit your current door or replace it with a factory-insulated one, and the right choice is not always what you would expect.

Retrofitting insulation onto an existing door typically costs $150 to $400 if you do it yourself using a garage door insulation kit, or $400 to $800 if you hire someone to install rigid foam or reflective barrier panels into each door section. The kits you will find at Home Depot or Rona in Ottawa usually consist of polystyrene or polyisocyanurate foam panels cut to fit standard door sections, held in place with adhesive or retainer clips. Polystyrene kits run about $100 to $200 for a standard double door and provide roughly R-4 to R-8 insulation value. Polyisocyanurate panels are better, offering R-6 to R-13 per inch, but cost more at $200 to $400 for a full kit.

The issue with retrofit insulation is weight. Adding foam panels to a door that was not designed for them increases the door weight, which means your springs and opener have to work harder. On a standard double garage door, a full insulation retrofit can add 15 to 30 pounds. In most cases your existing springs and opener can handle this, but if your springs are already near the end of their life or your opener is a lower-powered unit, you may need a spring adjustment or replacement. A spring rebalance costs $100 to $175, which eats into the savings of the DIY approach.

Replacing the door entirely with a factory-insulated model is more expensive upfront but gives you a significantly better result. A new insulated steel garage door in Ottawa costs $1,200 to $2,500 for a standard double door including installation, depending on the style, R-value, and brand. Factory-insulated doors use polyurethane injected between two steel skins, achieving R-12 to R-18, which is substantially better than anything you can retrofit. The door is also engineered to handle its own weight properly, so there are no spring balance issues.

When Replacement Makes More Sense

If your current door is more than fifteen years old, has visible dents or rust, or the sections are starting to separate, you are better off replacing it rather than insulating it. The retrofit insulation will not fix structural issues, and you will end up spending money on a door that needs replacing anyway within a few years. On the other hand, if your door is in good shape and relatively modern, retrofitting is a perfectly reasonable approach that can make a noticeable difference in garage temperature for a fraction of the replacement cost.

The energy savings in Ottawa are real but modest. An insulated garage door can raise the temperature inside your garage by 10 to 20 degrees compared to an uninsulated one during winter. That does not mean your garage will be warm, but the difference between minus ten and plus five inside the garage matters for your car, stored items, and any water lines running through the space. It also reduces heat loss from your house into the garage if they share a wall. Most Ottawa homeowners see $50 to $150 per year in heating savings from an insulated garage door, which means a retrofit kit pays for itself within a couple of years while a full door replacement takes longer to recoup in energy savings alone but adds curb appeal and property value.

One thing to watch for with any insulation approach is the weatherstripping and bottom seal. Insulating the door panels is only half the equation. If cold air is pouring in around the edges, through gaps between sections, or under the bottom of the door, you are losing most of the benefit. Budget an extra $50 to $150 for new weatherstripping and a proper bottom seal if yours are worn, which they almost certainly are if the door is old enough to be uninsulated.

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

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- Liftime Ottawa Garage Door Service
- Amigo Door Ltd
- Nic’s D.U.C.T Works Inc

View all contractors ?

Q8

My garage door is making a lot of noise when it opens and closes. What could be causing it and how do I fix it?

A noisy garage door is one of the most common complaints from Ottawa homeowners, and there are several possible causes ranging from simple fixes you can handle in twenty minutes to problems that require professional attention. The good news is that most noise issues are straightforward to diagnose once you know what to listen for.

The most common cause of garage door noise is worn or unlubricated rollers. Metal rollers running in metal tracks create a grinding or rumbling sound that gets louder over time as the rollers develop flat spots or the bearings wear out. If your door has the original steel rollers that came with it, switching to nylon rollers is one of the best upgrades you can make. Nylon rollers are dramatically quieter and do not require lubrication. A set of nylon rollers for a standard double garage door costs $40 to $80, and a garage door technician in Ottawa will charge $100 to $200 to replace them all. If you are handy, you can replace most of the rollers yourself, but do not attempt the bottom rollers on the lowest section because those are under spring tension and can be dangerous.

Hinges are the second most common noise source. Each section of your garage door is connected by hinges, and when these wear out they develop slop that creates a squeaking or popping sound as the door moves. Look at the hole where the hinge pin sits. If the hole has become oblong or the hinge is visibly bent, it needs replacing. Replacement hinges are inexpensive at $5 to $15 each, and a full set for a double door runs $50 to $100 installed.

If the noise is more of a vibration or rattling, the issue is often loose hardware. Every nut, bolt, and bracket on your garage door system vibrates slightly each time the door operates, and over months and years things work loose. Go over every visible fastener with a socket wrench and snug them up. Pay particular attention to the track brackets where they mount to the wall and ceiling, the opener mounting bracket, and the hinges on the door sections. This costs nothing and takes about fifteen minutes.

The opener itself can be a major noise contributor, especially if it uses a chain drive. Chain drive openers are the most common type in Ottawa and they are inherently noisy because you have a metal chain running over a metal sprocket and rail. Lubricating the chain with white lithium grease helps, but if you want a genuinely quiet opener, upgrading to a belt drive system is the way to go. Belt drive openers use a reinforced rubber belt instead of a chain and are noticeably quieter. A new belt drive opener installed in Ottawa costs $350 to $600 depending on the model and features. If your current opener is more than ten years old and noisy, this upgrade makes sense because you are also getting improved reliability and modern safety features.

Spring noise is a different situation. If you hear a loud bang or snap, that could be a spring breaking, which requires immediate professional service. A more subtle creaking or groaning from the spring area usually means the springs need lubrication. Apply a silicone-based lubricant to the torsion springs by spraying along the length of each coil. Do this two or three times per year in Ottawa because the temperature extremes dry out lubricants faster than in milder climates.

The tracks themselves can also cause noise if they are misaligned. If you see the rollers rubbing against one side of the track or the door seems to hesitate or jerk at certain points, the tracks may need adjustment. This is best left to a professional because improperly aligned tracks can cause the door to jam or come off the track entirely. Track realignment typically costs $100 to $175 in Ottawa.

As a starting point, try lubricating everything first. A can of silicone spray lubricant costs about $10 and you can hit all the rollers, hinges, springs, and the opener rail in ten minutes. If that does not solve the noise, work through the other causes systematically. In many cases, a combination of lubrication and roller replacement eliminates the noise completely for under $200.

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

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Ottawa Garage Doors & Openers
- The Next Reno
- Leeds Property Maintenance

View all contractors ?

Q9

My garage door safety sensors keep malfunctioning in cold weather. What is going on and how do I fix this?

This is an extremely common problem in Ottawa during the winter months and it drives homeowners crazy because the door will refuse to close or will reverse immediately after starting to close, even when nothing is blocking the sensor beam. You are not imagining things and you are not doing anything wrong. Cold weather genuinely does affect these sensors, and there are specific reasons why.

The photoelectric safety sensors on your garage door are mounted about six inches off the ground on each side of the door opening. One sensor sends an infrared beam and the other receives it. If anything breaks that beam, the door reverses as a safety measure. The problem in Ottawa's winter climate comes from several angles.

Condensation and frost buildup on the sensor lenses is the number one culprit. When temperatures hover around the freezing mark, moisture condenses on the lens surface and either fogs the beam or freezes into a thin layer of frost that blocks it. The sensors interpret this exactly the same as a child standing in the doorway, so the door will not close. The fix is straightforward. Wipe the lenses with a soft dry cloth. For persistent frost issues, apply a very thin film of rain repellent product like Rain-X to the lens surface. This causes moisture to bead off rather than forming a uniform fog layer. Reapply every few weeks during the winter.

Sunlight interference is another issue, particularly in late fall and early spring when the sun sits low on the horizon. If direct sunlight hits the receiving sensor at the right angle, it can overwhelm the infrared beam and cause false triggers. This tends to happen at specific times of day and can seem random if you do not connect it to the sun position. The solution is to shade the sensors by extending a small cardboard or plastic tube around the receiving sensor like a hood, or by repositioning the sensors slightly so they are recessed further from direct light exposure.

Misalignment from ice and snow impact is the third common cause. Snow clearing near the garage door, whether from shoveling or snow blower spray, can bump the sensors out of alignment. Even a very slight shift makes the beam miss the receiver. Each sensor has a small LED indicator light. On most systems the sending sensor shows a steady light when powered and the receiving sensor shows a steady light when it is picking up the beam. If the receiving sensor light is flickering or off, the alignment is off. Gently adjust the sensor angle until the receiving light goes solid. The mounting brackets usually allow for fine adjustment by loosening the wing nut and tilting the sensor.

Wiring issues caused by temperature cycling are less obvious but worth checking. The low-voltage wires running from the opener to the sensors are often stapled along the wall or ceiling of the garage. Ottawa's temperature swings cause the wires to expand and contract, and over years this can loosen connections at the terminal strips or cause tiny breaks in the wire, especially where it is stapled and cannot move freely. If you have intermittent sensor problems that do not correlate with frost or sunlight, inspect the wiring for loose connections or damage. Tightening the terminal screws on both the sensors and the opener unit sometimes resolves the issue immediately.

If your sensors are older and the problems are chronic through every Ottawa winter, replacing them with a newer sensor set is a reasonable investment. Replacement sensor kits cost $30 to $75 for the parts, and most are universal or brand-specific. Having a technician install them and run fresh wiring typically costs $100 to $175 total in Ottawa. Newer sensors tend to handle temperature extremes and moisture better than units from ten or fifteen years ago.

As a temporary workaround when the sensors are acting up and you need to close the door right now, most openers allow you to hold down the wall-mounted button continuously to force the door closed while overriding the sensor. The door will close as long as you hold the button. This bypasses the safety reversal, so make absolutely sure the doorway is clear before doing this. It is not a long-term solution but it gets you through a cold snap while you sort out the underlying sensor issue.

- Capital City Drywall
- Custom By Arie
- Joe Imerti Contracting

View all contractors ?

Q10

How much does a custom size garage door cost in Ottawa if my opening is not a standard dimension?

Non-standard garage door openings are more common in Ottawa than you might think, especially in older neighbourhoods like the Glebe, Westboro, Old Ottawa South, and Sandy Hill where garages were built decades ago to different size conventions. Homes built before the 1970s often have narrower or shorter openings than today's standard sizes, and some custom-built homes have oversized openings designed for specific vehicles or workshop use. Getting a door that actually fits requires either a custom order or some structural modification, and the costs vary significantly depending on which route you go.

Standard single garage doors come in widths of 8, 9, or 10 feet and heights of 7 or 8 feet. Standard double doors are 16 feet wide by 7 or 8 feet tall. If your opening falls outside these dimensions, you are looking at a custom-sized door.

A custom-width door that is close to a standard size, say 8.5 feet or 11 feet wide, typically costs 30 to 50 percent more than the equivalent standard door. For a basic insulated steel door in a non-standard width, expect to pay $1,500 to $3,000 for the door itself plus $400 to $800 for installation in Ottawa. The premium comes from the fact that the door sections, springs, tracks, and hardware all need to be manufactured to match your specific dimensions. Lead times are longer too, usually four to eight weeks compared to one to two weeks for a stock size.

For truly unusual dimensions, like very narrow openings on older Ottawa homes where the garage was originally designed for a single Model T sized vehicle, or extra-wide openings on rural properties in places like Manotick or Carp, the pricing can go higher. Doors wider than 18 feet or taller than 10 feet start at $3,000 to $5,000 or more for the door alone, and the structural requirements for tracks and springs become more complex.

Before ordering a custom door, it is worth considering whether modifying the opening to accept a standard door might be more cost-effective. Widening or narrowing a garage door opening involves framing work and possibly header beam modifications. In Ottawa, this type of structural work typically costs $800 to $2,500 depending on whether the wall is load-bearing and how much the opening needs to change. If you only need to adjust the opening by a few inches, this approach can save money overall because you get a standard-priced door on a slightly modified opening rather than paying the custom premium.

Getting the Right Measurements

Accurate measurements are absolutely critical for a custom order and you should have a professional take them. The width measurement needs to be taken at the widest point of the opening, the height at the tallest point, and both side rooms and headroom above the opening need to be confirmed for track and spring clearance. If your

headroom is limited, which is common in older Ottawa garages with low ceilings, you may need a low-headroom track system, which adds $200 to $500 to the installation cost.

Material options for custom doors are the same as standard doors. Steel is the most common and cost-effective. Wood custom doors are available but add substantial cost, running $2,500 to $6,000 or more depending on the species and design. Aluminum and glass contemporary doors in custom sizes start around $4,000 and go up from there.

For the best pricing in Ottawa, get quotes from at least three garage door companies and make sure each one is measuring your opening themselves rather than working from measurements you provide. A quarter-inch error on a custom order means the door does not fit, and returns or modifications on custom doors are either impossible or extremely expensive. Most reputable Ottawa garage door companies include the measurement as part of their quote process at no charge.

Spring and opener systems also need to be sized for a custom door because the weight will differ from standard doors. This is included in a professional installation quote but worth confirming so you are not surprised by add-on charges.

Q11

What is the difference between a side-mount and a ceiling-mount garage door opener and which one makes more sense for my garage?

This is a decision that comes up more often now than it did even five years ago because side-mount openers, also called wall-mount or jackshaft openers, have become much more popular as homeowners look for ways to reclaim

ceiling space in their garages. Both types work well, but they suit different situations and the cost difference is significant enough to be worth understanding before you commit.

Ceiling-mount openers are the traditional style that most Ottawa garages have. The motor unit hangs from the ceiling near the back of the garage and connects to the door via a rail that runs along the ceiling to the door header. A chain, belt, or screw drive mechanism moves a trolley along that rail to push and pull the door. The main advantages are cost and familiarity. A quality ceiling-mount opener installed in Ottawa runs $300 to $600 for a chain drive or $400 to $700 for a belt drive. Every garage door company in the city services these units, parts are readily available, and most homeowners are comfortable with how they work.

The downsides of ceiling-mount openers become apparent when your garage has limited headroom, high ceilings you want to use for overhead storage, or if you have a car lift or tall vehicle. The rail and motor unit take up vertical space and limit what you can store or park beneath them. In Ottawa, where many homeowners use their garage for more than just parking, this can be a real limitation.

Side-mount openers attach to the wall beside the door at the top, near the torsion spring assembly. They turn the torsion bar directly to open and close the door, eliminating the need for a ceiling-mounted rail entirely. This frees up the entire ceiling for storage systems, overhead racks, or simply more clearance. They also tend to be quieter because there is no chain or belt mechanism, just a motor turning the spring shaft through a gear system.

The cost for a side-mount opener installed in Ottawa is higher, typically $500 to $900 for the unit plus $200 to $400 for installation. The LiftMaster 8500 and Chamberlain RJO series are the most common models you will find offered by Ottawa installers. Installation is generally faster than a ceiling-mount because there is no rail to hang and level, but it does require the torsion spring system to be in good condition since the opener drives the door through the existing spring bar.

Side-mount openers have some limitations to be aware of. They only work with doors that use torsion springs, not extension springs. If your garage currently has extension springs, you would need to convert to torsion first, which adds $350 to $600 to the project. They also do not work well with one-piece tilt-up doors, which some older Ottawa garages still have. You need a sectional door with a standard torsion spring setup.

For Ottawa specifically, one advantage of side-mount openers is that the motor is mounted on the wall inside the garage rather than hanging from the ceiling where temperatures can be more extreme. In an unheated garage during an Ottawa winter, the ceiling area can be significantly colder than the wall area, and some homeowners report that their side-mount openers handle extreme cold slightly better. That said, modern ceiling-mount openers are built to handle cold climates and most work fine in Ottawa conditions.

If your primary motivation is freeing up ceiling space for storage or vehicle clearance, the side-mount opener is worth the extra cost. If you have a straightforward garage with no space limitations and want the most economical

option, a ceiling-mount belt drive opener gives you quiet operation at a lower price point. For most Ottawa homeowners doing a new opener installation, I would suggest getting quotes for both types and seeing how the total cost compares for your specific garage setup.

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

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Renovo Construction
- Capital City Drywall
- Elie The Carpet Guy Inc.

View all contractors ?

Q12

Should I get a battery backup for my garage door opener in case of power outages from Ottawa ice storms?

If you have lived through even one major Ottawa ice storm, you already know the answer is probably yes. Ottawa averages several significant power outages per year, and the ice storms and windstorms that cause extended outages tend to happen in the exact conditions where you most need your garage to work, cold weather when your garage door is likely your primary way in and out of your house.

There are two ways to get battery backup for your garage door opener. The first is to buy an opener that has battery backup built in. The second is to add an external battery backup unit to your existing opener.

Built-in battery backup openers have become standard in the mid-range and higher models from major manufacturers. The LiftMaster 8550W and Chamberlain B6765 are popular models that Ottawa installers carry, and both include an integrated battery that kicks in automatically when power goes out. These units cost $400 to $700 installed, which is only $50 to $150 more than the equivalent model without battery backup. The integrated battery typically provides 20 to 50 full open-close cycles on a full charge, which is enough to cover most Ottawa power outages that last a day or two.

Adding an external battery backup to an existing opener is also possible but the options are more limited. LiftMaster makes the 485LM battery backup unit designed to work with their openers, and it costs $150 to $250 including installation. Some universal backup systems exist but compatibility can be hit or miss, so check with your opener manufacturer before buying. If your current opener is more than eight to ten years old, it honestly makes more sense to replace it with a new unit that has backup built in rather than retrofitting, because you get the backup plus all the improvements in motor technology, safety features, and smart connectivity that have come along in the past decade.

The batteries in these systems are sealed lead-acid or lithium-ion, and they do degrade over time. Expect to replace the battery every three to five years at a cost of $40 to $80 for the battery itself. The system charges the battery continuously when power is on, so you do not need to think about it until the battery reaches end of life. Most units have an indicator light or will send a notification to your phone if the battery needs replacement.

During a power outage, the opener operates normally on battery power but usually at reduced speed to conserve the charge. The door opens and closes, the lights work, and the safety sensors still function. Some models limit the number of cycles per hour on battery power to extend the backup duration.

The alternative to a battery backup is the manual release, which every garage door opener has. You pull the red emergency release cord hanging from the trolley, which disconnects the door from the opener, and then you lift the door manually. This works fine in theory, but there are practical problems in an Ottawa winter. If the door is frozen to the ground or the springs are not properly balanced, lifting a heavy garage door manually is difficult and potentially dangerous. If you are elderly or have mobility issues, it may not be feasible at all. And if the power is out because of an ice storm, you are dealing with this in the dark and cold.

For most Ottawa homeowners, the cost of battery backup is modest enough that it is worth having, especially if your garage is your primary entry to your home. The peace of mind during the November-to-March storm season alone justifies the $50 to $150 premium on a new opener with backup built in. If you already have a relatively new opener and just want to add backup capability, the $150 to $250 for an add-on unit is reasonable insurance against the inconvenience and potential safety issues of being stuck with a non-functional garage door during a multi-day outage.

- Jaiko Cleaning Services
- Best Hand2Hand moving company

View all contractors ?

Q13

How much does it cost to replace a few damaged garage door panels instead of replacing the entire door in Ottawa?

Panel replacement is one of those repairs where the math can go either way depending on the age and condition of your door, so it is worth running the numbers before committing. In many cases panel replacement makes perfect sense and saves real money, but there are situations where it ends up being a poor investment.

Individual garage door panels in Ottawa typically cost $200 to $600 per panel for the part, depending on the door brand, model, style, and whether the panel is insulated. Installation adds $150 to $300 per panel because the technician needs to disconnect springs, remove and reinstall hardware, and rebalance the door after the new panel is in place. So replacing one damaged panel lands in the $350 to $900 range, and two panels puts you at $700 to $1,500 total.

A complete new standard insulated steel garage door installed in Ottawa costs $1,200 to $2,500 for a double door. You can see where the breakeven point starts to get interesting. If you need three or more panels replaced, you are almost certainly better off replacing the entire door. Even at two panels, the cost starts approaching half the price of a new door, and you are left with a door that still has all the original wear on the remaining panels, springs, tracks, and hardware.

The biggest challenge with panel replacement is actually finding panels that match your door. Garage door manufacturers change their product lines every few years, and if your door is more than ten to fifteen years old, matching panels may no longer be available from the original manufacturer. Some Ottawa garage door companies maintain inventories of older panels or can source them through salvage networks, but this is hit or miss and can add to the cost. If an exact match is not available, a close match will work structurally but may be visibly different in color, texture, or panel profile, which affects curb appeal.

When Panel Replacement Makes Sense

The ideal situation for panel replacement is when you have a relatively new door, maybe two to eight years old, with one panel damaged from a vehicle backing into it or a heavy impact. The rest of the door is in excellent condition, replacement panels are readily available from the manufacturer, and the cost is clearly less than half of a new door. In that scenario, panel replacement is the obvious choice.

It also makes sense as a temporary repair to get you through a season if your budget does not allow for full replacement right now. A cracked or dented bottom panel that is letting cold air and moisture into your garage is worth fixing even if you plan to replace the whole door next year.

Panel replacement does not make sense when the door is old enough that matching panels are unavailable, when multiple panels are damaged, when the door has other issues like worn springs or bent tracks that would need addressing anyway, or when the remaining panels show significant weathering, fading, or rust. In Ottawa specifically, salt spray from vehicles during winter accelerates rust on the lower panels of steel doors, so it is common to see the bottom two panels rusted while the upper panels look fine. Replacing just the rusted panels gives you a visually mismatched door because new steel panels will not have the same patina as panels that have been through ten Ottawa winters.

To get accurate pricing, have a garage door technician assess the damage in person. They can tell you whether your specific door model still has panels available and give you a firm quote for both panel replacement and full door replacement so you can compare. Most Ottawa companies will provide both quotes at no charge during a service call. Make sure the panel replacement quote includes rebalancing the door after installation, because a new panel may have a slightly different weight than the damaged one it replaces, and an unbalanced door wears out springs and openers faster.

Q14

Is it possible to increase the height of my garage door opening and how much would that cost in Ottawa?

Increasing the height of a garage door opening is absolutely possible, and it is a project that comes up fairly often in Ottawa, usually because someone has bought a taller vehicle like a full-size pickup truck, SUV, or work van that does not quite fit through a standard seven-foot opening. Some homeowners also want the extra height for a car lift or to move tall equipment in and out of a workshop garage. It is a significant structural project but a competent

contractor can handle it, and the results can make a real difference in how you use your garage.

The cost in Ottawa ranges from $2,500 to $7,000 or more depending on how much height you are adding, the structural complexity of the wall above the current opening, and whether you need a new door to fit the larger opening. Here is how the costs typically break down.

The structural work is the biggest variable. Your garage door opening has a header beam above it that carries the load of the wall and potentially part of the roof structure. To increase the height, that header needs to be raised or replaced with a new one at a higher position. If your garage has a simple single-story front wall with a truss roof, this is relatively straightforward. The contractor removes the old header, reframes the opening at the new height, installs a new properly sized header beam, and fills in or adjusts the surrounding wall framing. For a typical six to twelve inch height increase on a standard Ottawa detached garage, expect $1,500 to $3,500 for the structural and framing work including permits.

If the wall above your current opening is load-bearing or if you have living space above the garage, the complexity and cost increase substantially because temporary supports are needed while the header is modified, and an engineer may need to specify the new header size. Attached garages with bedrooms above them fall into this category, and the structural work alone can run $3,000 to $5,000.

You will almost certainly need a new garage door because your current door will be too short for the taller opening. A new insulated steel door for the larger opening runs $1,200 to $2,500 installed. New tracks, springs, and hardware are included because these all change with the door height. If your existing opener has enough headroom clearance on the new rail height it can usually be reused, but you may need a new rail section, which costs $50 to $100.

Permits are required in Ottawa for structural modifications to a garage opening. A building permit from the City of Ottawa for this type of work costs $150 to $350 depending on the scope, and the contractor should handle the application as part of the project. An inspection will be required to verify the new header meets the Ontario Building Code.

There are some practical limits to how much height you can add. The main constraint is headroom above the opening inside the garage. Your garage door tracks curve from vertical to horizontal at the top of the opening, and the door sections stack horizontally along the ceiling when open. You need at least 12 to 15 inches of space between the top of the new opening and the ceiling for standard track hardware. If your garage has a low ceiling, you may only be able to gain a few inches of door height before running out of track space. Low-headroom track systems exist and can help, but they add $200 to $500 to the cost and have some limitations on door weight and speed.

The exterior finish work after raising the opening also needs consideration. If your garage has brick or stone facing, cutting and repointing masonry adds $500 to $1,500 to the project. Vinyl or wood siding is simpler to adjust and typically adds only $200 to $500 for the exterior finish work.

Timeline for this project in Ottawa is typically three to five days of on-site work spread over a week or two, accounting for the permit inspection. During the work, your garage will be open and the door non-functional for at least two to three days, so plan accordingly, especially if you are doing this during winter months when an open garage creates real problems for anything stored inside.

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

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- JC Carpentry
- Rrenovatios
- Custom By Arie
- True Fix Garage doors

View all contractors ?

Q15

Can I replace my own garage door springs or is that something I should never attempt?

This is one of the few home improvement questions where the answer is genuinely a safety warning rather than a judgment call about skill level. **Do not attempt to replace garage door torsion springs yourself.** This is not a matter of difficulty or experience — it is a matter of the forces involved being capable of causing severe injury or death, and the risk-to-reward ratio making professional service the only reasonable option.

Garage door torsion springs — the large springs mounted on a shaft above the door opening — are under enormous tension. A standard two-car garage door weighing 150 to 200 pounds requires springs wound to approximately **15,000 to 30,000 inch-pounds of torque** to counterbalance the door's weight. When a spring breaks or is released improperly, that stored energy releases instantaneously. The spring, the winding cone, or the winding bar can become a projectile. Emergency rooms across North America see injuries every year from homeowners who attempted spring replacement — broken bones, lacerations, and worse.

The distinction matters: **torsion springs** (horizontal, mounted above the door on a shaft) are the dangerous ones. **Extension springs** (mounted along the horizontal tracks on either side of the door) operate under tension rather than torsion and are somewhat less dangerous, but they still store significant energy and should include safety cables running through them to contain the spring if it breaks. Even extension spring replacement carries real injury risk if you do not understand how to safely release and reapply the tension.

Professional garage door spring replacement in Ottawa costs between **$200 and $450** for a pair of torsion springs including parts and labour, or **$150 to $300** for extension springs. Given that the tools required for torsion spring work — winding bars, a socket set that fits the winding cones, and proper safety equipment — would cost you **$50 to $100** to acquire and you would likely use them exactly once, the economics of DIY spring replacement do not make sense even before you factor in the safety risk.

A qualified garage door technician in Ottawa can replace springs in **60 to 90 minutes**, will properly balance the door afterward, and will inspect the entire system — cables, drums, rollers, hinges, and tracks — for wear that could cause problems down the road. They also carry liability insurance, which means if something goes wrong during the replacement, you are not personally bearing the consequences.

There are garage door tasks you absolutely can handle yourself. **Lubricating the springs, hinges, and rollers** with a silicone-based spray extends their life and reduces noise — do this twice a year, ideally before and after Ottawa's winter season. **Replacing weather stripping** along the bottom and sides of the door is straightforward and improves energy efficiency. **Tightening hardware** that has loosened from vibration is simple maintenance. **Replacing rollers** on a door with extension springs (not torsion) is manageable if you work one roller at a time with the door in the down position, though even this carries some risk.

But for spring work — call a professional. The price is modest, the risk of DIY is severe, and no amount of YouTube tutorials changes the physics of a wound torsion spring. Find garage door professionals through Ottawa Garages who can handle spring replacement safely and quickly.

Q16

Is DIY garage door weatherstripping worth doing or should I pay someone to install it?

Garage door weatherstripping replacement is one of the most straightforward and rewarding DIY projects you can do, and paying someone to do it for you is almost never worth the cost. The materials are inexpensive, the installation requires basic tools, and the energy savings are noticeable — especially in Ottawa where the temperature difference between a January night at minus 25 and the inside of your garage can drive significant heat loss through worn-out seals.

The three types of weatherstripping on a garage door are the **bottom seal** (the rubber strip along the bottom edge of the door that contacts the floor), the **side and top seals** (rubber or vinyl strips mounted to the door frame that compress against the closed door), and the **threshold seal** (an optional rubber strip mounted to the garage floor that the door closes against). All three are available at Ottawa hardware stores and online, and all three are DIY-friendly.

The **bottom seal** is the most commonly replaced component because it takes the most abuse — dragging across concrete twice a day wears it out within three to five years. Replacement bottom seals come in T-style and U-style profiles that slide into the retainer channel on the bottom edge of the door. You pull out the old seal, clean the channel, lubricate it with silicone spray, and slide the new seal in from one end. Total time: 15 to 30 minutes. Cost: **$15 to $40** for a two-car door seal.

Side and top seals (sometimes called door stop weatherstripping) mount to the door frame with nails or screws. You peel off the old strip, position the new one so it compresses evenly against the closed door, and fasten it in place. Some products are self-adhesive, though the nail-on type holds up much better through Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles. Cost: **$20 to $50** for a full perimeter kit. Time: 30 to 60 minutes.

A **threshold seal** is an upgrade rather than a replacement — many garages do not have one from the factory. It is a heavy rubber strip with a built-in channel that you adhere to the garage floor just inside the door opening using construction adhesive. When the door closes, the bottom seal compresses against the threshold seal, creating a double barrier against drafts, rain, snow, and leaves. This is particularly valuable in Ottawa where wind-driven snow can infiltrate even a well-sealed door through the gap where the floor meets the door. Cost: **$30 to $60** for a two-car door. Installation time: 30 minutes plus adhesive cure time.

Total cost for all three types on a two-car garage: **$65 to $150** and about two hours of work. A garage door company in Ottawa would charge **$150 to $350** for the same service call, with most of that being the minimum service charge rather than the complexity of the work. The materials are identical — the company is using the same weatherstripping products you would buy at the store.

The one scenario where professional installation makes sense is if your garage door is **significantly out of alignment** — sagging on one side, not closing evenly, or leaving gaps that weatherstripping cannot compensate for. In that case, the real problem is the door balance, tracks, or hardware, and new weatherstripping is just masking the underlying issue. A garage door technician should diagnose and correct the alignment before you spend money on seals that will not work properly against an uneven door.

Ottawa's climate makes garage weatherstripping replacement one of the highest-return DIY maintenance tasks you can do. The materials pay for themselves within a single heating season through reduced heat loss. For door alignment or hardware issues that are beyond weatherstripping, connect with garage door professionals through Ottawa Garages.

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

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Garage doors unlimited
- Callandgone
- Epoxy Academy

View all contractors ?

Q17

Why do cheap garage doors fail so quickly in Ottawa winters?

Cheap garage doors fail in Ottawa winters because they are simply not engineered to handle the combination of extreme cold, heavy snow, ice accumulation, and the relentless freeze-thaw cycling that defines our climate from November through April. The failures are predictable, progressive, and ultimately more expensive than buying a quality door in the first place.

The most visible failure mode is **panel warping and buckling**. Budget garage doors use thinner gauge steel — typically **25-gauge or 27-gauge** compared to the 24-gauge or heavier steel used in quality doors. Thinner steel has less resistance to the mechanical stresses caused by thermal expansion and contraction. When Ottawa temperatures swing from minus 20 during the night to plus 2 during a January thaw, the panels expand and contract at different rates than the hardware and framing holding them together. Over multiple cycles, the panels

develop permanent bends, gaps between sections widen, and the door no longer seals properly against the weatherstripping. Those gaps let cold air pour in, defeating whatever insulation you have in the walls.

Weatherstripping and bottom seal failure is the second common problem. Inexpensive doors come with basic rubber seals that harden and crack in Ottawa's cold. Quality weatherstripping uses **thermoplastic** or **EPDM rubber** compounds that remain flexible down to minus 40 degrees. The cheap vinyl or PVC seals on budget doors become rigid and brittle by mid-December, cracking and splitting within the first or second winter. Once the bottom seal fails, snow, ice, and wind-driven rain infiltrate the garage, pooling on the floor and accelerating damage to everything inside.

Spring and hardware failures accelerate dramatically in cold weather. The torsion springs that counterbalance the door's weight are under enormous stress, and cold temperatures make the steel more brittle and less elastic. Budget doors often ship with springs rated for **10,000 cycles** — roughly 5 to 7 years of typical use. Quality doors use springs rated for **25,000 to 50,000 cycles** with better metallurgy that tolerates cold-weather stress. When a torsion spring snaps in the middle of an Ottawa February — and they always seem to break at the worst possible time — you are looking at an emergency service call that costs **$250 to $450** just to get your car out of the garage.

The **insulation factor** is where cheap doors really show their weakness. Many budget doors are either completely uninsulated (single-layer steel) or have minimal polystyrene insulation with an R-value of **R-4 to R-6**. In Ottawa's Zone 6 climate, this is woefully inadequate. Quality insulated doors use **polyurethane foam injected between steel skins**, achieving R-values of **R-12 to R-18**. The difference in a heated garage is measurable in both comfort and energy costs. Over a typical Ottawa heating season of roughly 7 months, the energy wasted through an uninsulated garage door adds **$200 to $500 per year** to heating costs for a heated garage, depending on your heating source and how well-sealed the rest of the building is.

Track and roller problems are another cold-weather failure point. Budget doors use nylon rollers that become stiff and noisy in extreme cold, and lightweight tracks that flex under wind load. Ottawa regularly experiences winter wind gusts of **60 to 80 kilometres per hour**, and a garage door with flimsy tracks and worn rollers can be forced off-track by a strong gust — a situation that is both dangerous and expensive to repair. Quality doors use **steel rollers with sealed bearings** and heavier gauge tracks with reinforced brackets that handle wind loads without flexing.

The price difference between a budget garage door and a quality one is typically **$800 to $2,000** for a standard two-car door, installed. Given that the budget door will likely need seal replacements within two years, spring replacement within five years, and full replacement within eight to ten years, the math strongly favours buying quality from the start.

Explore garage door options through Ottawa Garages where builders and installers can recommend doors rated for our specific climate conditions.

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

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Diamond renovations
- Timely Touchups Construction
- Dump n Dash Hauling

View all contractors ?

Q18

What is the best garage door material for Ottawa's climate when comparing steel, wood, aluminum, and fiberglass?

Ottawa's climate is genuinely one of the hardest environments in Canada for a garage door because the door faces direct exposure to wind, rain, ice, salt spray from plowed roads, and temperature swings that can cover sixty degrees within a single week. The material you choose determines how well the door holds up over ten to thirty years of that abuse.

Steel doors dominate the Ottawa market and account for roughly 80 percent of installations in the city. A basic insulated steel door for a standard double garage costs $1,200 to $2,500 installed, while premium steel doors with higher R-values and better finishes run $2,500 to $4,500. Steel doors come in single-layer, double-layer, and triple-layer construction. For Ottawa, you want at minimum a double-layer door with polystyrene insulation, but a triple-layer door with polyurethane insulation injected between two steel skins is the better choice. Triple-layer steel doors achieve R-12 to R-18, which makes a real difference in a garage that can sit at minus twenty-five all January. The steel skins handle impact well, resist warping, and modern factory finishes hold up for 15 to 20 years before needing attention. The downside is that steel dents and once dented, the panel is permanently marked. Lower-gauge steel like 24-gauge is more dent-resistant than 26 or 28-gauge, so check the gauge if durability matters to you.

Wood garage doors look beautiful and suit heritage neighbourhoods like Rockcliffe Park, the Glebe, and New Edinburgh where architectural character matters. A custom wood door costs $3,000 to $7,000 or more installed depending on the species, design, and hardware. Cedar and hemlock are the most common species used in Ottawa. Wood is a natural insulator and provides decent thermal performance, but it demands ongoing maintenance that most homeowners underestimate. In Ottawa, a wood garage door needs to be stained or painted every two to four years because the freeze-thaw cycles cause finish breakdown much faster than in milder climates. Moisture penetration leads to swelling, warping, and eventually rot if the finish is neglected. Annual maintenance costs of $100 to $300 for refinishing add up over the door's life. A well-maintained wood door lasts 20 to 30 years, but a neglected one can deteriorate badly within ten.

Aluminum doors are lightweight, rust-proof, and work well for modern architectural styles. They cost $2,000 to $5,000 installed for a double garage depending on the design. Full-view aluminum and glass doors have become trendy for garages used as workshops or entertaining spaces. The aluminum frames will never rust or rot, which is a genuine advantage in Ottawa's salt-heavy winter environment. However, aluminum is a poor insulator and these doors typically offer minimal thermal resistance unless you upgrade to insulated glass panels, which pushes the cost toward $4,000 to $6,000. Aluminum also dents more easily than steel and the dents are more visible on the clean modern frames.

Fiberglass doors cost $1,500 to $3,500 installed and their main selling point is that they resist denting, rusting, and rotting. They handle moisture well and do not corrode from road salt. The concern in Ottawa is cold-weather performance. Fiberglass becomes brittle in extreme cold, similar to vinyl siding, and can crack on impact when temperatures drop below minus twenty. A basketball hitting a fiberglass door in July bounces off harmlessly, but the same impact in January could crack a panel. Fiberglass also fades with UV exposure over time and the colour options are more limited than steel.

For most Ottawa garages, an insulated triple-layer steel door in 24-gauge provides the best combination of thermal performance, durability, cost, and low maintenance. If you have a heritage home and the aesthetic matters, budget for the ongoing maintenance that a wood door requires. Aluminum makes sense only for specific modern designs where you accept the thermal trade-off or invest in insulated glass.

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

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- JMY Renovations

- ALM Construction & Landscaping Inc.
- Ottawa Caulking

View all contractors ?

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Garages. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any garage construction project. Information is current as of May 10, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawagarages.com** for the latest answers.