OTTAWA CONCRETE PROS

Overlays & Resurfacing

When a bonded overlay can renew worn concrete,
and when the slab underneath rules it out

4 Expert Answers from Concrete Pro IQ

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Q1

Resurface or reseal a faded patio in Orleans?

Resurfacing and resealing are different scopes of work, and the right choice depends on what the concrete surface actually looks like. Resealing is a surface treatment applied to concrete that is structurally sound but has lost its protective coating; resurfacing means applying a bonded overlay to concrete that has surface deterioration such as scaling or spalling. We found no published price for either service in Ottawa, so get itemized quotes and compare them directly.

Before deciding, have a contractor look at the slab. Scaling, where the surface flakes away in thin layers, can be a sign of frost damage or de-icing salt exposure, as the National Research Council's Canadian Building Digest 116 notes that scaling is most severe on horizontal surfaces subjected to both freeze-thaw cycling and de-icing salts. A contractor can tell you whether the surface is a candidate for an overlay or whether the concrete underneath has deteriorated to the point where replacement makes more sense. We found no source for what an overlay requires in terms of surface condition; that assessment belongs in the contractor's written specification.

On the City of Ottawa rules that apply here: the City's Hardscaping Contractor Licence page lists patios as a hard landscaping feature requiring a licence for installation or alteration. The Licensing By-law excludes the sealing or re-sealing only of driveways or parking areas, and "minor repairs or minor alterations", which it does not define; we found no City statement on resealing a patio alone, so ask the City whether your job counts. For resurfacing, which alters the surface of the patio, ask the contractor whether they hold a current City hardscaping licence; the City's March 2026 guidance says to ask to see it and to check the City's published list of licensed contractors. The licence requires commercial general liability insurance of not less than $2,000,000 per occurrence and automobile liability of not less than $2,000,000, and the contractor must provide a written contract and give you a copy of the City's Landscaping Education Guide.

A building permit is not something we can rule out without knowing the full scope. The City's patio page sets out conditions under which a patio is exempt from a permit, including that it is supported directly on the ground and not raised. We found no City statement specifically on overlays; if you are uncertain, ask the City's Building Code Services.

A few things to confirm before work starts:

- whether the quote covers surface preparation, the overlay material and any crack treatment separately
- whether the contractor will provide a written specification including the concrete strength standard (the 2024 Ontario Building Code sets 32 MPa as the standard for exterior flatwork) and the protection plan if temperatures drop below 5 °C during or after the pour

- whether removal and disposal of any debris is included, and whether the work involves any digging, because if it does, whoever digs must submit a locate request through Ontario Dig Authority before breaking ground

Put this to each contractor: what does your written specification say about surface preparation, and what happens if the overlay does not bond properly?

Q2

Should an Ottawa resurfacing quote name the product used?

Yes, a resurfacing quote should name the product. Without it, you have no way to compare quotes, verify what was installed if something goes wrong, or hold the contractor to a specific specification.

A quote that names only "resurfacing" or "overlay" tells you almost nothing about what you are buying. Each product carries its own maker's instructions for preparation, temperature and curing. The Consumer Protection Act, 2002 says that if an agreement includes an estimate, the supplier shall not charge more than 10 per cent above it, but that protection only helps if the scope is defined clearly enough to measure against. A written contract is also required under the City of Ottawa's Hardscaping Contractor Licence rules, which have applied since March 1, 2026: the City's March 2026 news release says licensed contractors must provide written contracts. A vague scope undermines both protections.

Ask for the quote to include at minimum the product name, the minimum applied thickness, and the surface preparation method. You should also ask whether the existing surface will be tested for soundness before the product goes down, what the warranty covers and for how long, and whether the price includes any base repairs to cracks or spalled areas before resurfacing begins.

On the licensing side, we found no City statement that resurfacing a patio or walkway alone requires a hardscaping contractor licence, and the Licensing By-law excludes the sealing or re-sealing only of driveways or parking areas and "minor repairs or minor alterations", which it does not define; ask the City whether your job counts. Ask the contractor to show you their City of Ottawa hardscaping contractor licence and check the City's published list of licensed contractors yourself. Ottawa Concrete Pros does not verify anyone's licence, insurance or contract.

A few things worth confirming before you sign:

- the product name and minimum thickness in writing
- what surface preparation is included and how it will be done
- whether crack or spall repairs are included or priced separately
- the written contract required under the City's licence rules

- the contractor's City of Ottawa hardscaping contractor licence number

The single most useful question to ask before signing is: if the overlay fails within the warranty period, what exactly does the contractor commit to do, and is that commitment written into the contract?

Q3

Can heaved concrete in Manotick be resurfaced level?

Resurfacing will not fix heaved concrete: an overlay goes on the slab as it is, and the movement comes from below.

The question to answer first is what caused the heave. According to the National Research Council's Canadian Building Digest 182, coarse-grained soils such as sands and gravels do not heave, while clays, silts and very fine sands will support the growth of ice lenses. Whether sensitive marine clay (also called Champlain Sea clay) applies to your lot is a question for a contractor or engineer. The 2024 Ontario Building Code's appendix also notes that fast-growing trees can draw down moisture in clay soils and cause settling. These are possibilities to have a contractor look at, not a diagnosis of your specific slab.

What a contractor needs to assess before recommending any repair path is the extent of the heave, whether the affected slab is a single panel or several, what is underneath it, and whether the cause is still active. Options that exist for heaved concrete include slab lifting, which may be called mudjacking or slab jacking, partial removal and replacement of the affected panels, or full removal and replacement. We found no published Ottawa price range for lifting or partial replacement, so ask for those costs itemized in any quote.

If removal and replacement is the route, the 2024 Ontario Building Code sets 32 MPa as the compressive strength standard for exterior flatwork, and the Code's appendix cautions that adding water to concrete on site can reduce strength and increase the tendency to shrinkage cracking. We found no Code specification for thickness, base depth, reinforcement or a vapour barrier for an exterior patio or walkway; those should be in the contractor's written specification.

A few things worth confirming before work starts:

- The City of Ottawa's Hardscaping Contractor Licence has been required since March 1, 2026 for businesses that install or alter concrete pads, walkways, patios and steps on private property. The Licensing By-law also excludes "minor repairs or minor alterations", which it does not define, so ask the City whether your job counts. Ask to see the licence and check the City's published list of licensed contractors yourself.
- The licence requires the contractor to carry commercial general liability insurance of at least two million dollars and automobile liability insurance of at least two million dollars, and to provide a written contract and a copy of

the City's Landscaping Education Guide.

- If any part of the heaved slab is in or near the City right of way, the Access By-law 2026-139 governs work there. Resurfacing an existing access does not require a permit under that by-law, but any change to the location or dimensions does.
- If the repair involves breaking ground, a locate request must be submitted through Ontario Dig Authority before digging begins. Locates are free and required by the Ontario Underground Infrastructure Notification System Act, 2012. Ask who will submit the request.

Under the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, if the agreement is signed somewhere other than the contractor's place of business and is over fifty dollars, you have ten days to cancel it after receiving the written copy, and the contractor cannot charge more than ten per cent above any estimate included in the agreement.
The most useful question to ask before committing to any repair method is: what is causing the heave, and will this repair address that cause or only the surface?

Q4

Who checks the slab is sound before an overlay in Ottawa?

The contractor doing the overlay is the one who assesses the existing slab before any resurfacing work begins. We found no City of Ottawa inspection step for an overlay, and no provincial requirement for a third-party check.

An overlay will not stop a slab that is moving, because that movement comes from below. The things worth asking about specifically are:

- whether any cracks run through the slab or show movement
- whether any section has heaved or settled
- whether the surface is scaling or spalling, and why

If the slab has sections that have heaved, settled or cracked through their full depth, an overlay will not correct those problems. A contractor should tell you in writing which areas, if any, need repair or removal before the overlay goes down, and what the overlay specification is, including the product and the minimum thickness they are applying.

The City of Ottawa's Hardscaping Contractor Licence, in place since March 1, 2026, is required for businesses that install or alter hard landscaping features including concrete patios, walkways and steps on private property. The Licensing By-law also excludes "minor repairs or minor alterations", which it does not define, so ask the City whether your job counts. Ask any contractor to show you their City licence and check their name against the City's published list of licensed hardscaping contractors. The licence requires the contractor to carry commercial general liability insurance of not less than two million dollars per occurrence and automobile liability insurance of not less than two million dollars, and to give you a written contract and a copy of the City's Landscaping Education Guide.

We found no published price range for resurfacing and overlays with enough Ottawa sources to quote reliably, so get at least two written quotes that itemise the assessment, any preparatory repair, the overlay specification and disposal of any removed material.

If you want quotes from Ottawa concrete contractors, the request form on this site sends your details to contractors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory.

The most useful question to put to each contractor before signing: ask them to describe in writing exactly which sections of the slab they consider sound enough to overlay and which they are recommending be cut out and replaced, and why.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Concrete Pros. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa) before starting any concrete project, and request utility locates before anyone digs. Concrete work in Ontario must meet the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O.

Reg. 163/24) where it applies. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawaconcretepros.ca** for the latest answers.