OTTAWA KITCHEN RENOS

Cabinets & Countertops

New cabinets, refacing and countertops: the City's cabinet exemption, what a quote should list and published per-unit prices

5 Expert Answers from Kitchen Reno IQ

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Table of Contents

1. New cabinets above my range in Ottawa: what clearance applies?
2. Quartz countertop quote in Stittsville: what should it list?
3. How should an Ottawa cabinet quote describe linear feet and materials?
4. Cabinet refacing in an Orleans kitchen: what's replaced, and is it exempt?
5. New countertops with the sink staying in place: Ottawa permit needed?

Q1

New cabinets above my range in Ottawa: what clearance applies?

Ontario's Building Code sets the clearance between the top of your cooktop burners or elements and any framing, finishes or cabinetry installed directly above. The minimum is 750 mm (clause 9.10.22.2.(1)).

That 750 mm drops to 600 mm under one condition: the material above the cooktop is noncombustible, or it is protected by a metal hood that projects at least 125 mm beyond the framing, finishes or cabinets above (9.10.22.2.(2)). So if your range hood projects far enough past the cabinet face, the cabinet itself can sit closer to the burners, down to 600 mm.

The Code also addresses the sides, not just the top. Combustible wall framing, finishes or cabinets within 450 mm of the cooktop must be protected above the burner level by gypsum board at least 9.5 mm thick, or a material with a 10-minute fire-resistance rating and a flame-spread rating of no more than 25 (9.10.22.3.(1)). Cabinets sitting at least 450 mm above the burners are exempt from that side protection, except for any cabinet directly above the cooktop (9.10.22.3.(3)). Countertop splash boards and back plates need no protection (9.10.22.3.(2)).

These are minimums for new work. Ask the City's Building Code Services how they apply to your specific renovation before the cabinets go in.

One more thing to check: the range or cooktop manufacturer's installation instructions. They sometimes call for more clearance than the Code minimum, and your contractor should have those figures before setting cabinet height.

On the permit side, the City's exempt list covers replacing kitchen cabinets where plumbing fixtures stay in place. New upper cabinets above a range are not named on either the City's exempt or permit list; ask the City's Building Code Services whether your job needs a permit before the work starts.

Measure the distance from your cooktop burners to the underside of the planned cabinet, confirm whether your hood projects 125 mm past the cabinet face, and bring both numbers to your contractor so the cabinet height is set before anything is fastened.

Q2

Quartz countertop quote in Stittsville: what should it list?

For quartz, published 2025–2026 Ottawa guides put countertops at about $70 to $130 per square foot installed. Where your quote lands in that range depends on the material and the total area being covered.

A written quote for quartz countertops should itemise these things separately so you can compare it against other quotes line by line:

- The quartz slab: the material, colour and finish selected, and the square footage being supplied.
- Fabrication: cutting the slab to your cabinet layout, including any sink or cooktop cut-outs.
- Installation: setting and securing the countertop to the cabinets.
- Removal and disposal of the existing countertop, if there is one.
- Any backsplash returns or window sills included in the scope, or explicitly excluded.
- The warranty: what the fabricator covers and for how long.

A few things to confirm in writing before the work starts. Countertops are not named on either of the City of Ottawa's lists; the closest exempt line is "Replacing kitchen or bathroom cabinets (provided plumbing fixtures remain in same location)". If your sink is staying put and the countertop work is the whole job, ask the City's Building Code Services whether a permit applies to your specific scope. If the sink is being disconnected and reconnected by a plumber as part of the countertop swap, confirm in the quote who arranges that and whether it is included in the price.
The Consumer Protection Act, 2002 says that if an agreement includes an estimate, the supplier shall not charge an amount that exceeds it by more than 10 per cent, so the quote should be detailed enough that there is no ambiguity about what is and is not in scope.

Before the fabricator takes a template measurement, ask them to confirm in writing exactly which surfaces the quoted price covers and what happens if the slab has to be recut.

Q3

How should an Ottawa cabinet quote describe linear feet and materials?

A cabinet quote for an Ottawa kitchen should break down the linear footage by section, not give one combined number for the whole room. Ask the contractor to list base cabinets, upper cabinets and any tall or pantry cabinets separately, each with its own linear-foot measurement and unit price.

Published 2025-2026 Ottawa guides put stock or melamine cabinets at about $250 to $400 per linear foot installed. Custom cabinets cost more, and the guides we reviewed do not give a second independent range for custom work, so ask for an itemized price rather than a per-foot average when the cabinets are custom-built.

A quote that is worth signing should spell out at least these things:

- the cabinet type (stock, semi-custom or custom) and the material or box construction
- the linear footage for each run, measured separately for base and upper sections
- what is included in the installed price: delivery, hardware, interior fittings such as pull-outs or drawer boxes, and any filler or trim pieces
- what is excluded: countertops, appliances, electrical or plumbing work that the cabinet installation may require access to

The Consumer Protection Act, 2002 says that if a consumer agreement includes an estimate, the supplier "shall not charge the consumer an amount that exceeds the estimate by more than 10 per cent". An agreement negotiated at your home over $50 must also be in writing and delivered to you.
Countertops are priced separately. Published 2025-2026 Ottawa guides put quartz at about $70 to $130 per square foot installed; the price depends on the material and the area being covered.

We found no Ontario or City of Ottawa licence specific to cabinet installation or countertop fabrication. Ask the contractor to confirm in writing who is responsible for any plumbing reconnection if the sink cabinet is being replaced, since a plumber is a compulsory trade in Ontario.

The single most useful question to put to a contractor before signing: ask them to show you the quote broken down by cabinet section, with the linear footage, unit price and a list of exactly what the installed price includes and excludes.

Q4

Cabinet refacing in an Orleans kitchen: what's replaced, and is it exempt?

Refacing keeps the existing cabinet boxes in place and replaces what you see: the doors, the drawer fronts and the finish on the visible frames, with new hardware where the quote includes it. Ask each quote to list what is replaced and what is kept.

On the permit question, the City of Ottawa's exempt list includes "replacing kitchen or bathroom cabinets (provided plumbing fixtures remain in same location)". Refacing is not named on its own, so that cabinet line is the closest exempt line; ask the City if you want it confirmed. The City also says exempt projects must still comply with the Ontario Building Code and any applicable law. Countertops are not named on either the City's exempt or permit list, so if the refacing quote includes a new countertop, ask the City's Building Code Services to confirm before the work starts.

If the job adds anything electrical, such as under-cabinet lighting, that part is an Electrical Safety Authority notification, not a City permit.

What a fair refacing quote covers, in writing:

- which cabinet doors, drawer fronts and face frames are included, by count and location
- the veneer or laminate material going on the box sides and frames
- whether hinges and drawer slides are replaced or reused
- whether the sink cabinet is touched and, if so, that the sink stays in the same position
- the payment schedule, including any deposit amount

We did not find two independent published Ottawa prices for cabinet refacing alone, so ask each contractor for a written itemised quote rather than a per-door or per-linear-foot rate, and confirm what happens if a box is found damaged once the old doors come off.
Make sure the written contract spells out exactly which surfaces are covered and what the process is if the scope changes after demolition starts.

Q5

New countertops with the sink staying in place: Ottawa permit needed?

Countertops are not named on their own in either of the City of Ottawa's lists. The closest exempt line is "Replacing kitchen or bathroom cabinets (provided plumbing fixtures remain in same location)", so a counter swap with the sink left in place sits closest to that exempt line; if you want it confirmed for your job, ask the City's Building Code Services.

The City adds that exempt projects "must still comply with the Ontario Building Code and any applicable law". Near a cooktop, Ontario's Building Code says combustible wall framing, finishes or cabinets within 450 mm of the cooktop are protected above the burners by gypsum board at least 9.5 mm thick, and countertop splash boards or back plates need not be (9.10.22.3). These are minimums for new work; ask the City how they apply to your renovation.

If the house is a designated heritage building or sits in a Heritage District Overlay, the City says it is "not subject to exemptions", so contact the City before work starts.

Published 2025–2026 Ottawa guides put quartz countertops at about $70 to $130 per square foot installed. What moves the price for your kitchen is the counter material and the area, so ask each quote to state:

- the material and the square footage
- the seams and the cut-outs for the sink and cooktop
- whether removing and disposing of the old top is included
- who disconnects and reconnects the sink, and whether that is in the price

Replacing the sink or faucet in the same spot is outside the City's plumbing permit line, which excludes "replacing existing fixtures". Moving the sink is a different job: "Plumbing - alterations, additions or extensions to a plumbing system" is on the City's permit list.
Have the quote name the square footage it is priced on, so two quotes for the same counters can be compared line by line.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Kitchen Renos. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa) before starting any kitchen renovation. Some of this work needs a City building permit, electrical work is filed with the Electrical Safety Authority, and gas work is regulated by TSSA. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawakitchenrenos.ca** for the latest answers.