OTTAWA KITCHEN RENOS

Electrical & ESA

Kitchen wiring is an Electrical Safety Authority notification, not a City permit: who may do it, Licensed Electrical Contractors and general contractors

5 Expert Answers from Kitchen Reno IQ

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Q1

Who files the ESA notification when a general contractor runs my kitchen job?

The ESA requires that "the person doing the work (you or a Licensed Electrical Contractor) files the notification before the work starts." That person is the Licensed Electrical Contractor your general contractor brings in for the electrical portion, not the general contractor themselves.

Ontario's O. Reg. 570/05 says no person shall operate an electrical contracting business without an electrical contractor licence. The ESA puts it plainly: if you hire someone to do electrical work in your home, by law it must be a Licensed Electrical Contractor. The ESA also says to make sure your general contractor hires a Licensed Electrical Contractor and that they get a permit from the Electrical Safety Authority for the job. So the filing obligation sits with the LEC, not with whoever is coordinating the broader renovation.

One thing worth confirming before work starts: your general contractor may or may not be a Licensed Electrical Contractor themselves. Some are; most are not. Ask directly. If they are not, ask who the LEC is, ask to see that contractor's seven-digit ECRA/ESA licence number, and confirm in writing that the LEC will file the ESA notification before any electrical work begins. After the work passes review, the LEC receives an ESA Certificate of Acceptance, which your insurer or a future buyer may ask for.

The same logic applies to gas. O. Reg. 212/01 requires that anyone who installs, alters or connects a gas appliance holds a certificate for that purpose, and that the contractor they work for is registered with TSSA. A general contractor who is not a TSSA-registered contractor must bring in one who is. TSSA notes that where a contractor sub-contracts gas work, both contractors must meet the registration and certification requirements.

The practical question to settle in writing before you sign is: which specific company files the ESA notification and which TSSA-registered contractor connects the gas, and are both named in the contract.

Q2

Do I need both a building permit and ESA for my Ottawa kitchen?

The short answer is: it depends on what your kitchen job includes. A building permit and an ESA notification are separate requirements, triggered by different parts of the work, and you may need one, both, or neither.

When each one applies

The City of Ottawa requires a building permit when work falls under its permit list. Replacing cabinets and countertops with the sink staying in place is on the City's exempt list. Moving the sink, adding a dishwasher drain

run, or opening a wall to change room sizes lands on the permit list. The City's own guidance puts it plainly: "If your renovation activity includes installation, erection, extension or material alteration or repair, a Building Permit is required." It is the owner's responsibility to get one when it is required, and both the owner and the contractor are equally liable under the Building Code Act.

The ESA notification is a separate track entirely. The City does not regulate electrical installations, so a building permit does not cover electrical work. The Ontario Electrical Safety Code requires almost all electrical work to be reported to the Electrical Safety Authority by filing a notification before the work starts. ESA says it plainly: "Having a building permit isn't the same as filing an electrical notification. You may need both." If you hire someone for the electrical, it must be a Licensed Electrical Contractor.

So a kitchen that involves new circuits, a relocated outlet, or wiring for a new appliance needs an ESA notification regardless of whether a building permit is also in play. A kitchen that involves only cabinet swaps with no electrical changes may need neither.

A few things are not named on either of the City's lists: a new gas line, a range hood duct through an exterior wall, and a short partition that does not change room sizes. For those, ask the City's Building Code Services before the work starts.

When you get quotes, ask each contractor to spell out in writing which permits and notifications apply to your specific scope, who pulls the building permit, and who files the ESA notification. Those responsibilities belong in the contract, not left as assumptions.

The most useful question to put to any contractor you are considering: ask them to walk you through, line by line, which parts of your job trigger a City permit and which trigger an ESA notification, and confirm who is responsible for each one before a single wall opens.

Q3

Can I hire a master electrician directly for my Kanata kitchen?

Not directly. ESA says "Master Electricians and Certified Electricians cannot be hired directly to do electrical work in your home." The business you hire for electrical work in your Kanata kitchen is a Licensed Electrical Contractor.

The licence rules sit in Ontario's O. Reg. 570/05. It says "No person shall operate an electrical contracting business without an electrical contractor licence", and a licensed contractor "shall designate one or more master electricians". So a master electrician is part of how a licensed contracting business is set up; the person you sign with is the business.

How to check before you sign:

- ask for the contractor's 7-digit ECRA/ESA licence number, which ESA says will be visible on their van or truck
- look the number up in ESA's public look-up
- electrician is a compulsory trade in Ontario, and the province points homeowners to the Skilled Trades Ontario Public Register to check that the individuals doing compulsory trade work are authorized

If a general contractor runs the kitchen, ESA says to make sure they hire a Licensed Electrical Contractor and that a notification is filed with ESA for the job. The notification is filed before the work starts, and it is separate from any City of Ottawa building permit; the City says a building permit "is not required for work that is exclusively electrical." The kitchen's other parts follow their own rules. Moving the sink is on the City's building permit list, and a gas range is connected by a TSSA-certified gas technician working for a TSSA-registered contractor.

Have the quote name the licensed contracting business and its licence number before you agree to anything.

Q4

What does an ESA notification cost for a small Ottawa kitchen job?

ESA says notification fees "may vary based on the complexity of the job, but for many small residential projects can be less than $100." We did not find another ESA figure for a kitchen, so that sentence is the published guide.

The notification is filed with the Electrical Safety Authority: "The person doing the work (you or a Licensed Electrical Contractor) should file the notification before the work starts." If you hire someone for the electrical work in your home, ESA says by law it must be a Licensed Electrical Contractor, so on a hired job the notification is theirs to file. A homeowner doing their own electrical work in their own home files it themselves, and ESA says "Friends, family members or neighbours cannot perform electrical work in your home."

The notification is not a City permit. The City of Ottawa says "a Building Permit is not required for work that is exclusively electrical." A kitchen job that also moves the sink or a wall can need both, because those are on the City's permit list; ESA's own words are "Having a building permit isn't the same as filing an electrical notification. You may need both."

We did not find two independent published prices for kitchen electrical work in Ottawa, so no range is shown for the work itself. Ask each written quote to say:

- what electrical work is included (new circuits, lights, outlets)
- who files the ESA notification, and whether its fee is in the price
- the name and licence number of the Licensed Electrical Contractor

If a general contractor runs the job, ESA says to make sure they hire a Licensed Electrical Contractor and that the ESA notification is filed for the job.
Ask whether the notification fee is inside the quoted price or billed separately.

Q5

Does an induction cooktop need its own circuit in an Ottawa kitchen?

ESA's homeowner guidance says an induction cooktop will need to be on a dedicated circuit. That is ESA's homeowner guidance, not Electrical Code text.

We did not find circuit sizes for a cooktop in the sources we checked, so your electrical contractor or ESA confirms the Electrical Code requirements for the cooktop you choose. The work itself is reported to the Electrical Safety

Authority: "The person doing the work (you or a Licensed Electrical Contractor) should file the notification before the work starts." The City of Ottawa says a building permit "is not required for work that is exclusively electrical", so a new cooktop circuit on its own is an ESA matter, not a City one.

On who does the work: if you hire someone for electrical work in your home, ESA says by law it must be a Licensed Electrical Contractor; the crew question has its own answer on this site.

ESA's homeowner guidance also says "all major appliances in a kitchen, including microwaves, require a dedicated outlet". If the same kitchen job moves the sink or a wall, those parts are on the City of Ottawa's building permit list; ESA's own words are "Having a building permit isn't the same as filing an electrical notification. You may need both." We did not find two independent published prices for kitchen electrical work, so ask each quote to list the new cooktop circuit as its own line.

For the specific circuit requirements, counter receptacle layout and any other Electrical Code questions that come up during the project, electricalottawa.ca covers those in detail.

Before work starts, ask the electrical contractor to confirm in writing that they will file the ESA notification for the new cooktop circuit.

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.