OTTAWA KITCHEN RENOS

Hiring & Quotes

Choosing a kitchen renovation contractor in Ottawa: renovators are not licensed like builders, who does the electrical, plumbing and gas parts, and comparing quotes

5 Expert Answers from Kitchen Reno IQ

ottawakitchenrenos.ca/construction-brain

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Q1

Does WSIB matter when I hire a kitchen contractor for my Ottawa home?

WSIB coverage in construction is more complicated than a yes-or-no answer, so here is what the rules actually say and what to ask before you hire.

WSIB requires people who own or run a business in construction to register and carry coverage, with or without employees. There are exceptions. WSIB's policy exempts independent operators, sole proprietors, partners and executive officers whose business does exclusively exempt home renovation work for the person who lives in the home or their family. That sounds like it covers a kitchen contractor working at your house, but the exemption has a hard limit: it does not apply to subcontractors retained by the contractor. So if your contractor brings in a subcontractor for any part of the job, that subcontractor's exemption disappears under WSIB's own policy.

What this means for your kitchen job

A kitchen renovation can involve more than one trade. Electrical work goes to a Licensed Electrical Contractor, gas connections go to a TSSA-certified technician working for a TSSA-registered contractor, and plumbing changes go to a plumber. Any of those people, if retained as a subcontractor by your general contractor, falls outside the home renovation exemption. WSIB says the exemption for home renovation work does not apply to subcontractors, full stop.

The practical step is to ask each contractor and subcontractor directly whether they have WSIB coverage and to request their WSIB clearance certificate before work starts. A clearance certificate is a document WSIB issues that confirms a business's account is in good standing. You can also verify coverage through WSIB's online clearance system. Never take a contractor's word alone on this; the certificate is the check.

One more thing worth knowing: WSIB says nothing in its rules about homeowner liability in plain terms, and this site is not the place to interpret that. If you want to understand what your exposure is if an uninsured worker is injured at your home, that question belongs to a lawyer or your home insurer, not a contractor matching service.

Ask each person coming onto your site for their WSIB clearance certificate before any work begins, and ask your general contractor which parts of the job they are subcontracting, so you know whose certificate to request.

Q2

My Ottawa kitchen contractor subcontracts the gas work. What should I ask?

Under O. Reg. 212/01, s.21(1), "No person shall act as a contractor unless the person is registered for the purpose." When your contractor subcontracts the gas work, TSSA's rules say both the contractor and the subcontractor must fulfill the appropriate registration and certification requirements. That means you have two parties to verify, not one.

The questions worth asking before the work starts:

- Is the subcontractor a TSSA-registered contractor? You can check the TSSA public registry yourself; TSSA notes that information in the registry is not an endorsement or referral.
- Does the person who will physically connect the range hold a TSSA certificate? O. Reg. 212/01, s.6(1) requires the person doing the work to be a certificate holder.
- Who is responsible to you if something goes wrong with the gas connection: your main contractor or the subcontractor? Get the answer in writing, because your contract is with the main contractor.
- Is the gas subcontractor named in your written contract, or added later? If they are added later, ask for their registration and certificate details before they arrive.
- Who schedules the gas work relative to the rest of the job? Ask your contractor for a written schedule that shows when the gas subcontractor comes in.

One thing the contract should spell out clearly: whether your main contractor remains your single point of accountability for the gas work, or whether you are expected to deal with the subcontractor directly on deficiencies. If anyone asks you to sign a separate agreement at your home, the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 says a direct agreement over $50 must be in writing and delivered to you, and you can cancel it without any reason within 10 days of receiving your written copy.
Before the gas subcontractor begins, confirm in writing which TSSA-registered contractor's name covers the work, and ask your main contractor to give you the subcontractor's TSSA registration number so you can verify it in the public registry yourself.

Q3

Orleans kitchen reno: is the wiring a Licensed Electrical Contractor's job?

Yes, if you hire someone to do the electrical work in your Orleans kitchen, Ontario law requires that person to be a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC). The Electrical Safety Authority is clear: "if you hire someone to do electrical work in your home, by law, it must be a Licensed Electrical Contractor."

A few points follow from that rule. Friends, family members or neighbours cannot do the electrical work in your home. Master Electricians and Certified Electricians cannot be hired directly to do electrical work in your home either. If you are using a general contractor to manage the kitchen, the ESA says to make sure your general contractor hires a Licensed Electrical Contractor and that the LEC gets a permit from the Electrical Safety Authority for the job. The electrical notification is separate from any City of Ottawa building permit you may need for other parts of the renovation.

One way to confirm you have the right contractor: an LEC's seven-digit ECRA/ESA licence number will be visible on their van or truck, and ESA maintains a public look-up. Once the work passes review, the LEC receives an ESA Certificate of Acceptance, a document your insurance company may request and that can matter at resale.

There is one alternative: a homeowner may do electrical work in their own home, but must file a notification with ESA before the work starts and have the work reviewed by ESA as soon as it is complete. That exemption covers only the homeowner, not anyone else they bring in.

The ESA notification is filed before the work starts, whether by the LEC or by you as the homeowner doing your own work. For counter receptacle layout, island outlets and any other Electrical Code specifics, electricalottawa.ca covers those details.

The single most useful thing to confirm before any electrical work begins: ask the contractor for their seven-digit ECRA/ESA licence number and confirm it is active on the ESA public look-up.

Q4

How do I check the electrical contractor on my Barrhaven kitchen job?

ESA says that if you hire someone to do electrical work in your home, "by law, it must be a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC)". To check one, ask for the contractor's 7-digit ECRA/ESA licence number, which ESA says "will be visible on their van or truck", and look it up in ESA's public look-up before the work starts.

ESA also says "Master Electricians and Certified Electricians cannot be hired directly to do electrical work in your home", so the agreement is with the licensed contracting business. Ontario's licensing regulation says no person shall operate an electrical contracting business without an electrical contractor licence (O. Reg. 570/05).

If a general contractor runs your Barrhaven kitchen job, ESA says to "make sure that your General Contractor hires a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC), and that they get a permit from the Electrical Safety Authority for the job." Ask the general contractor to name the LEC in the quote.

Electrician is a compulsory trade in Ontario, and the province points homeowners to the Skilled Trades Ontario Public Register to check that the individuals they hire for compulsory trade work are authorized.

After the work passes ESA's review, the LEC receives an ESA Certificate of Acceptance, which ESA describes as "a document that may be requested by your insurance company, and could be necessary for home resale." Ask for a copy.

The ESA notification is separate from any City of Ottawa building permit. The City says "a Building Permit is not required for work that is exclusively electrical", while moving the sink or a wall is on the City's own permit list. ESA puts it this way: "Having a building permit isn't the same as filing an electrical notification. You may need both."

Before the work begins, have the quote name the Licensed Electrical Contractor, its licence number and who files the ESA notification.

Q5

Can my general contractor's own crew do the kitchen electrical in Kanata?

No. In Ontario, if you hire someone to do electrical work in your home, the law requires that it be a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC). A general contractor's own crew members, unless they are operating as or through an LEC, cannot legally do the wiring.

The Electrical Safety Authority is clear on this: "Master Electricians and Certified Electricians cannot be hired directly to do electrical work in your home." The business doing the electrical work must hold an electrical contractor licence under O. Reg. 570/05. ESA also says that if you have a general contractor running the job, you should "make sure that your General Contractor hires a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC), and that they get a permit from the Electrical Safety Authority for the job." That ESA notification must be filed before the electrical work starts.

A few other points that follow from this:

- Friends, family members or neighbours cannot do the electrical work either.
- A homeowner may do electrical work in their own home, but must file an ESA notification and have the work reviewed by ESA as soon as it is complete.
- After the work passes review, the LEC receives an ESA Certificate of Acceptance, which your insurance company may request and which can matter at resale.

An LEC's seven-digit ECRA/ESA licence number will be visible on their van or truck, and ESA keeps a public look-up so you can confirm the licence before work begins.
Your general contractor can still manage the overall kitchen job and coordinate the LEC as a subcontractor. What you want confirmed in writing is who specifically is filing the ESA notification, the name of the LEC doing the wiring, and their licence number. Counter receptacle layout and circuit requirements are questions for your electrical contractor or ESA directly; electricalottawa.ca covers those details.

Before you commit to a general contractor for this kitchen, ask them to name the Licensed Electrical Contractor they plan to use and confirm that the LEC will file the ESA notification before any wiring begins.

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.