DECK BUILDERS OTTAWA

Replacement & Removal

When a deck is replaced instead of repaired, tearing out an old deck, treated-wood safety and where the old lumber goes in Ottawa

6 Expert Answers from Deck IQ

deckbuildersottawa.ca/construction-brain

Table of Contents

1. Disposal on a deck tear-out quote in Ottawa: what to look for?
2. Taking down a deck in Kanata myself: safety steps?
3. What goes in a deck removal quote in Nepean?
4. Rebuilding an old deck bigger in Kanata: new zoning check?
5. Zoning check needed for a same-size replacement deck in Ottawa?
6. Does a replacement deck in Orleans need new drawings?

Q1

Disposal on a deck tear-out quote in Ottawa: what to look for?

When reviewing a tear-out quote in Ottawa, the first thing to check is whether disposal is included at all, and if so, what it covers. Some published packages name a price for removal without specifying where the material goes or who pays the tipping fee.

The City of Ottawa is clear that wood from a deck tear-out, including pressure-treated lumber, is construction and demolition waste. It is not collected with regular garbage. The City says it must be brought to the Trail Road Landfill Site or another landfill. A quote that says "haul away included" but does not name a disposal site leaves open whether the builder will charge you separately once the truck is loaded.

A few things worth confirming in writing before the work starts:

- Does the price include the full load, or only a single truck run? A larger deck can fill more than one load.
- Who pays if the landfill charges a gate fee above what the builder estimated?
- Are there any materials the builder plans to keep, sell or reuse, and does that affect your price?
- If a hot tub, concrete footing pads or metal hardware are on the deck, are those covered under the same disposal line, or priced separately?

On the permit side, a replacement deck is treated as a new deck for permit purposes. The City of Ottawa's permit rules apply to the new structure, and the drawings must show the foundation, framing, guards and stairs. If the new deck's walking surface will be more than 600 mm (24 in.) above adjacent grade and it is attached to or adjacent to the house, a building permit is required. The builder or the homeowner applies through the My ServiceOttawa portal, and three inspections are required: excavation or foundations, framing, and final. The homeowner or the builder books them at least 48 hours in advance.

On zoning, both Zoning By-law 2008-250 and Zoning By-law 2026-50 apply to permit applications deemed complete on or after March 11, 2026, with the most restrictive provisions from both applying. Setbacks and yard projections depend on the deck's height, location and lot dimensions. Confirm the rules for your specific lot with the City of Ottawa's Building Code Services before the new structure is designed.

If the quote bundles removal and new construction together, ask the builder to break out the disposal cost as its own line so you can see exactly what is and is not covered.

The most useful question to put to any builder before signing is: which line items in this quote could change once the work is underway, and what would trigger that change?

Q2

Taking down a deck in Kanata myself: safety steps?

Before you start pulling boards, request a locate through Ontario One Call at least five business days ahead. Any digging, even for a post you plan to cut off at grade, makes you an excavator under the Ontario Underground Infrastructure Notification System Act, 2012, and you must have locate responses from every affected member before breaking ground. The locate is free.

On the permit question: the City of Ottawa's Decks page does not include a specific statement about whether demolishing an existing deck requires a permit. The Building Code Act, 1992 section 8(1) covers both construction and demolition, so it is worth confirming with the City's Building Code Services before you start, rather than after.

For the physical work, a few things to check before you touch a fastener. If the deck is raised and has a guard, treat that guard as load-bearing until you know it is not: removing decking boards first can leave a guard with nothing to anchor to. Work from the top down, removing decking, then guards and stairs, then joists, then beams, then posts. Keep the structure braced laterally at each stage so nothing shifts unexpectedly. If the deck is attached to the house with a ledger, the ledger connection holds the rim of the deck against the band joist or rim joist of the house: removing it carelessly can open the house structure to weather or leave fastener holes that let water in, so have a plan to seal that wall before you finish.

For disposal, the City of Ottawa says wood from construction, renovation or demolition, including pressure-treated lumber, is not collected with regular garbage. You need to bring it to the Trail Road Landfill Site or another landfill. If the deck was built before 2004, Health Canada notes it may have been made from CCA-treated lumber: wear a dust mask, eye protection, gloves and long sleeves when cutting or handling it, and never burn it indoors or outdoors.

A few practical points worth keeping in mind:

- Private lines, including electrical feeds to sheds, gas lines to barbecues or pool heaters, and sewer or septic piping, are your responsibility to have marked before digging. Ontario One Call covers public utilities; private lines need a separate arrangement.
- If any post is set in concrete below grade, extracting it involves digging, which brings you back to the locate requirement.
- If the deck carried a hot tub or a pool enclosure, the pool enclosure by-law (By-law 2013-39) requires a permit for any replacement enclosure, and zoning still applies to what goes in that space afterward.

If you decide partway through that you want a builder to take over, the local deck builders listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory can be reached through the request form on this page.

When comparing any quotes for removal as part of a larger project, ask each builder to list every line item separately so you can see exactly what the demolition, disposal and site-clearing work costs on its own.

Q3

What goes in a deck removal quote in Nepean?

A deck removal quote in Nepean should itemise the work clearly enough that you can compare it line by line against another quote. We found no published Ottawa price range for deck removal or demolition with enough sources to give you a number, so the figures below are what to look for in the quote itself, not what to expect to pay.

A complete removal quote covers at least these items:

- Dismantling the deck structure: boards, joists, beams, posts and any guards or stairs.
- Footings or piles: whether they are being pulled, cut off below grade or left in place.
- Disposal: the City of Ottawa says construction and demolition wood, including pressure-treated lumber, is not collected with regular garbage and must go to the Trail Road Landfill Site or another landfill. The quote should say who hauls it and whether disposal fees are included or billed separately.
- Any deck attached to the house: the quote should address how the ledger board connection is removed and how the house wall is made weather-tight afterward.
- Site condition on completion: what the yard looks like when the crew leaves, whether holes from pulled footings are backfilled, and whether any concrete is broken out or left.

On permits: the Building Code Act, 1992 says no person shall demolish a building unless a permit has been issued by the chief building official. Whether a permit is required to remove a deck is not addressed on the City of Ottawa's Decks page, so ask the City's Building Code Services before the work starts. If a permit is required, the quote should say who applies for it and who books any required inspections.
On Ontario One Call: anyone digging to pull footings is an excavator under the Ontario Underground Infrastructure Notification System Act, 2012 and must submit a locate request through Ontario One Call at least five business days before breaking ground. The quote should confirm the builder will do this, or that you will, before any digging starts. Private lines from the house to outbuildings, pools or exterior fixtures are your responsibility to have marked separately.

If a new deck is going in the same spot, the quote should also address whether the existing footings can be reused or whether new ones are needed, because that affects both cost and the permit drawings for the new structure.

When you have two written quotes in front of you, set them side by side and check that each one spells out the same things: what happens to the footings, what boards and framing materials are included in the scope, how guards and stairs are handled if they are part of the structure, and exactly what the removal and disposal line covers.

Q4

Rebuilding an old deck bigger in Kanata: new zoning check?

A bigger new deck is measured against today's rules for its size, height and position, which in Ottawa now means both Zoning By-law 2008-250 and Zoning By-law 2026-50 apply simultaneously, with the more restrictive provision from each winning out.

What triggers a permit for the new deck

The City of Ottawa's permit rules are straightforward. If the new deck is attached to the house and its walking surface will be more than 600 mm (24 in.) above the adjacent grade, a permit is required regardless of size. If it is an elevated deck providing principal access to the house, a permit is required. A freestanding deck needs a permit only when it is both greater than 10 square metres (approximately 108 square feet) in area and more than 600 mm above grade.

Ottawa enacted Zoning By-law 2026-50 on March 11, 2026. Building permit applications deemed complete on or after that date must comply with both by-laws, with the most restrictive provisions applying. For a deck, the key questions are setbacks from rear and interior side lot lines, how much of the yard the deck can occupy, and whether any part of the deck projects into a required yard.

Under Zoning By-law 2026-50 section 204, an uncovered, unenclosed deck with a walking surface not higher than 0.6 metres above the adjacent ground has no minimum setback in the rear or interior side yard. In all other cases, the minimum setback is 1 metre from any lot line and the maximum projection into a yard is 2 metres. The deck may also have a maximum of two enclosed sides. Because both by-laws apply and the more restrictive provision governs, you cannot rely on one by-law alone to confirm what is allowed on your specific lot. A designer or the City can run that check for you.

Going bigger also raises the question of soft landscaping. Zoning By-law 2026-50 defines a deck as hard landscaping, so if your zone sets a minimum soft-landscaped area, the new deck area does not count toward it. We did not research the specific minimums for your lot's zone, so confirm that with the City.

The City requires scaled, fully dimensioned drawings: a site plan showing the deck dimensioned to the house, property lines and any septic system; a foundation and framing plan covering footing type, size and location, joists, beams, posts, decking and the deck-to-house connection; and elevations showing the walking surface height above grade, stair rise and run, and guard information. If the decking material is anything other than conventional lumber, a CCMC or BMEC material testing report is also required. The City's first review target is 5 business days. The permit fee is $12.75 per $1,000 of assessed value of all materials, labour and professional fees, with a minimum of $117.

Before anyone digs new footings, a locate must be requested through Ontario One Call at least 5 business days before digging starts. That applies whether the builder digs or you do.

A designer who knows both by-laws is the right first call here, because the setback and soft-landscaping questions depend on your specific lot dimensions and zoning subzone, and getting those wrong before drawings are submitted costs time.

Q5

Zoning check needed for a same-size replacement deck in Ottawa?

For a same-size replacement deck in Ottawa, a zoning check is still worth doing even though you are not changing the footprint. Both Zoning By-law 2008-250 and Zoning By-law 2026-50 apply to permit applications deemed complete on or after March 11, 2026, and the most restrictive provisions of the two by-laws govern your lot.

What zoning looks at for a replacement deck

The key questions are setbacks from your property lines, how high the walking surface sits above grade, and whether the deck is attached to the house or freestanding. Under Zoning By-law 2026-50 section 204, an uncovered, unenclosed deck with a walking surface no higher than 0.6 metres above adjacent ground has no minimum setback in the rear or interior side yard, and in the front or exterior side yard may project the greater of 2 metres or 50 per cent of the required yard, but no closer than 1 metre to a property line. In all other cases, the minimum setback is 1 metre from any lot line with a maximum projection of 2 metres. Zoning By-law 2008-250 section 65, Table 65 row (6) sets the same general framework, and whichever provision is more restrictive applies to your lot.

If your existing deck sits closer to a property line than the current rules allow, ask the City how the rules apply to a replacement in the same spot; we did not research that question. Where a design does not fit, a minor variance through the Committee of Adjustment is the formal route. The urban minor variance fee is $3,759 in total, and we cannot predict whether one would be granted.

A permit is required if the walking surface is more than 600 mm (24 in.) above adjacent grade and the deck is attached to or adjacent to the house, or if it is an elevated deck providing principal access to the building, regardless of size. Even if your replacement falls below that height threshold, the City notes that exempt projects must still comply with the Ontario Building Code and the Zoning By-law, and that heritage properties are not subject to the exemptions. If you are unsure whether your property is in a Heritage District Overlay, check with the City before assuming no permit is needed.

The permit application, where one is required, needs a site plan showing the deck dimensioned to the property lines, a foundation and framing plan, and elevations. The City's first review target is 5 business days. The permit fee is $12.75 per $1,000 of assessed value of all materials, labour and professional fees, with a minimum of $117.

A few things to confirm before work starts: whether the replacement uses the same foundation or new footings (new excavation means a locate request through Ontario One Call before anyone digs), whether the decking material is something other than conventional lumber (a CCMC or BMEC material testing report is needed with the permit application), and whether any guards need to be brought up to current Code height.

When you get quotes, ask each builder to spell out exactly which line items are included in the price and which ones, such as railings, stairs, removal of the old deck, permit drawings and foundation work, are priced separately or not priced at all.

Q6

Does a replacement deck in Orleans need new drawings?

Whether a replacement deck in Orleans needs new drawings depends on whether the new deck triggers a building permit. If it does, the City of Ottawa requires a complete set of scaled, fully dimensioned drawings submitted through the My ServiceOttawa portal, even if a deck previously stood in the same spot.

The City's permit rules apply to the new structure, not the old one. A deck attached to the house with a walking surface more than 600 mm (24 in.) above adjacent grade needs a permit regardless of size. An elevated deck that is the principal access to the house needs a permit regardless of size. A freestanding deck needs a permit only if it is both more than 600 mm above grade and greater than 10 square metres (approximately 108 square feet) in area. If the replacement deck meets any of those triggers, the City asks for a site plan, a foundation and framing plan, and elevations, all scaled and fully dimensioned.

What the drawings must show includes the deck dimensioned to the property lines and any other buildings, the footing or foundation type and location, the size and spacing of joists and beams, the deck-to-house connection if there is one, stair construction and location, guard heights, and the dimension from the walking surface to adjacent grade. Schedule 1 must name a BCIN designer, an architect, an engineer, or the homeowner taking design responsibility under the homeowner exemption. If the decking material is anything other than conventional lumber, the application also needs a material testing report, either CCMC or BMEC. Published permit drawing fees from Ottawa and Ontario drafting firms run about $399 to $2,500 per set.

Zoning is a separate question. For applications deemed complete on or after March 11, 2026, both Zoning By-law 2008-250 and By-law 2026-50 apply in Orleans, with the most restrictive provisions from each by-law governing the outcome. Setbacks, yard projections and soft-landscaping rules all apply to the replacement deck. Some provisions of 2026-50 are still under appeal, including rear yard setbacks in some Neighbourhood subzones. Confirming the current rules for your specific lot with the City before finalising the design is worth doing.

Three City inspections are tied to the permit: an excavation and foundations inspection before backfill if new in-situ piers or pads are poured, a framing inspection once structural framing and guards are complete, and a final inspection at completion. The City says to book inspections 48 hours in advance. Before any footing holes are dug, a locate request through Ontario One Call is required by law, at no charge, with at least five business days' notice.

If the replacement deck sits entirely below 600 mm above grade, is not the principal access, and is freestanding, it may not need a permit. The City notes that even exempt projects must still comply with the Ontario Building Code and the Zoning By-law, and that heritage properties are not subject to the exemptions. Whether replacing deck boards only on existing framing needs a permit is not addressed on the City's Decks page: ask the City's Building Code Services directly.

When you have two written quotes in hand, put the foundation type and depth, the board material and grade, the guard and stair specifications, and the removal and disposal of the old deck side by side to see what each price actually covers.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Deck Builders Ottawa. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa's Building Code Services) before starting any deck project. Decks in Ottawa are built under the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24) and the City's permit and zoning rules. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **deckbuildersottawa.ca** for the latest answers.