OTTAWA HOUSE INSPECTION

Hiring an Inspector

Choosing a home inspector in Ottawa: what ontario.ca and the federal consumer office suggest asking, sample reports, written contracts and comparing quotes

9 Expert Answers from Inspection IQ

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Q1

What does CSA A770 mean for a home inspection in Ontario?

CSA A770 is a national home inspection standard that CSA Group, a non-profit standards organization, published in 2016 for voluntary use by home inspectors. The federal Office of Consumer Affairs suggests asking a prospective inspector whether they will apply it, but it is not required by law in Ontario.

Ontario passed a Home Inspection Act in 2017, but it has not been brought into force, so there is no provincial licence today and no mandatory standard an inspector must follow. That means the scope, depth and format of an inspection are set by whatever the inspector offers and whatever you agree to in writing, not by a government rule.

What CSA A770 does in practice is give you a reference point when you are comparing inspectors. The Office of Consumer Affairs recommends asking whether the inspector will apply it, and asking for a sample report so you can see what their inspection actually covers. If an inspector says they follow CSA A770, ask what that means for the areas they will examine and how they will document findings. We have not read the standard's own text, so we cannot tell you what it requires; the Office of Consumer Affairs' own list of what a good inspection covers is site, structure, envelope, plumbing, interior finishes, heating, ventilation and cooling, life safety systems and fire separation, and electrical systems. What the inspector can actually see or access on the day is still limited to what is visible and non-invasive, whatever standard they apply.

The Office of Consumer Affairs also suggests considering a member of an association or professional order, citing liability insurance in case of malpractice; membership in any association is voluntary and not a licence to practise in Ontario. Ontario.ca suggests asking whether the inspector carries insurance and getting the details in writing.

Ask any inspector who mentions CSA A770 to show you, in a sample report, how they apply it.

Q2

What belongs in a written home inspection contract in Ontario?

We found no Ontario rule in force on what a home inspection contract must contain; the Home Inspection Act, 2017 would require a written contract, but it has not been brought into force. The federal Office of Consumer Affairs advises asking for a written contract before work starts that spells out the items to be inspected, the report deadline, and the total cost.

Beyond that starting point, the Office of Consumer Affairs suggests confirming in writing whether the inspector carries professional liability insurance. Ontario.ca adds that you should ask to see accreditation showing the

inspector's training and experience, and to see a copy of the inspection report they use.

A few things are worth watching for in whatever contract you are handed:

- Scope: the contract should list which systems and areas will be examined, so you know if anything is excluded.
- Report: it should say when the written report will be delivered and in what form.
- Fee: the Office of Consumer Affairs says the total cost should be stated before work begins. Under the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, if the contract includes an estimate, the final charge cannot exceed that estimate by more than 10 per cent.
- Insurance: ask whether the inspector carries errors and omissions coverage or general liability, and ask for the details in writing. Ontario.ca notes that inspectors are not required by law to carry insurance, but many do.
- Limitation clauses: if the contract limits the inspector's liability to the inspection fee, we found no rule on whether that holds in Ontario; that is a question for a lawyer.

One more thing to know about the contract itself: if you book online, the agreement may be an internet agreement under the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, which carries certain disclosure requirements. If you sign it in person at the property, it may be a direct agreement with a 10-day cancellation right after you receive your written copy. Whether either category applies to your situation is something a lawyer can confirm.
The inspector is the right first call to get the contract wording in advance so you can read it before the day of the inspection; your lawyer is the right call if any clause in it raises a question you cannot resolve with the inspector directly.

Q3

Why ask a Barrhaven inspector for a sample report first?

A sample report shows you exactly what you will get before you commit to anything. Ontario passed a Home Inspection Act in 2017, but it has not been brought into force, so there is no provincial licence today, and ontario.ca says Ontario does not have mandatory requirements for home inspectors.

The federal Office of Consumer Affairs puts it plainly: ask for a sample report before hiring. Ontario.ca's first suggested question is the same: "May I see a copy of the inspection report you use?" The Office of Consumer Affairs also suggests a written contract that lists the items to be inspected, the report deadline and the total cost. Reading a sample first lets you judge whether the report names specific conditions, notes what is unsafe or needs repair, and covers the areas ontario.ca says an inspector will typically examine: foundation, roof (where safe to access), exterior walls, attic, plumbing and electrical systems where visible, heating and cooling, ceilings, walls,

floors, insulation where visible, ventilation, and drainage away from the building.

What you are looking for in that sample:

- Does it describe the condition of each system, or does it just tick boxes?
- Does it note what is not working properly, is unsafe, or may need attention in the near future?
- Does it explain what the inspector could not see or access, so you know where the limits are?

The Office of Consumer Affairs notes that a home inspection report is limited to conditions the inspector can see or has access to, and advises making sure all areas of the home are accessible on the day. A sample report will tell you whether this inspector records those access limits clearly, which matters if you later want to refer back to the report after possession.
Ontario.ca also suggests asking whether the inspector has experience with the type of home you are considering, and asking for references. Those questions sit alongside the sample report request; none of them costs you anything before you book.

If anything in the sample report raises questions about what is or is not covered, put those questions to the inspector directly before you sign a contract.

Q4

Signed an inspection contract at the house in Orleans: can I cancel?

A contract signed in person at the property for more than $50 may be a "direct agreement" under Ontario's Consumer Protection Act, 2002, which can give you a 10-day cancellation right after you receive a written copy of the agreement. Whether your inspection contract qualifies depends on how the agreement was formed and what it contains, and that is a question for a lawyer rather than something this site can answer definitively.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2002 deems services supplied under a consumer agreement to be of a reasonably acceptable quality, and any term in the contract that tries to eliminate that protection is void. Beyond that statutory floor, we found no government rule on refunds, report delivery times, or liability-limitation clauses in home inspection contracts, so the enforceability of any specific term in your agreement is genuinely a legal question.

A few things worth checking on your own before you call anyone:

- Does your signed contract include a written copy you received at or after signing? The 10-day window, if it applies, runs from when you receive that copy.
- Does the contract name a cancellation procedure or a notice address? Follow whatever it says while you sort out your rights.

Ontario.ca's consumer complaint page notes that the Ministry may not be able to help with quality complaints beyond the basic guarantees in consumer protection law, or with complaints older than two years. That page is a starting point if a dispute arises later.
Ask a lawyer whether the 10-day right applies to your contract and what notice to give, before the inspection date arrives.

Q5

Should I get quotes from more than one inspector in Kanata?

Yes. Ontario.ca suggests getting quotes from more than one inspector, and the federal Office of Consumer Affairs suggests a written contract before the work starts.

Kanata is in the City of Ottawa service area, so the same Ontario rules apply as anywhere else in the city. Published Ottawa-area inspector pricing gives you a sense of the range to expect: a condo apartment runs roughly $350 to $470 plus HST, a townhouse roughly $400 to $515, and a detached or semi-detached home up to about 2,000 sq ft roughly $450 to $640. Ontario.ca puts the broader range at $350 to $600, and notes fees may be higher

depending on the size and condition of the home. A larger home should come with a written quote specific to that property.

Comparing quotes also gives you a reason to ask each inspector the questions ontario.ca and the Office of Consumer Affairs suggest:

- May I see a sample inspection report?
- Do you have experience inspecting this type of home?
- Do you have insurance, and can you give me the details in writing?
- Can you show me accreditation or training that reflects your experience?
- Can you provide references?

The Office of Consumer Affairs also suggests asking whether the inspector will apply the CSA A770 voluntary standard for home inspections, and asking for a written contract that sets out what will be inspected, the report deadline, and the total cost before any work begins.
One thing worth knowing: Ontario passed a Home Inspection Act in 2017, but it has not been brought into force, so there is no provincial licence today. So a provincial licence is not something you can compare across quotes. The written contract, the sample report, and the answers to those questions are the practical tools you have for comparing inspectors.

The most useful question to put to each inspector before you decide: ask them to walk you through their sample report and explain what they would and would not be able to see in the specific type of home you are buying.

Q6

Where do I complain about a home inspector in Ontario?

Start with ontario.ca's consumer complaint page. Ontario passed a Home Inspection Act in 2017, but it has not been brought into force, so there is no provincial licence today and no licensing body for home inspectors. Ontario.ca links complaints about a home inspector or a home inspection to its general consumer complaint process.

That page sets limits: it says the Ministry may not be able to help if a complaint focuses on the quality of a good or service beyond the basic guarantees in consumer protection legislation, or if it happened more than two years ago. RECO, which regulates real estate agents, says it does not regulate home inspectors.

The consumer protection law that does apply is the Consumer Protection Act, 2002:

- It deems services supplied under a consumer agreement to be of a reasonably acceptable quality, and says a contract term that tries to negate that is void.
- If the agreement included an estimate, the supplier cannot charge more than 10 per cent above it.

Anything beyond that, including whether a clause limiting the inspector's liability to the fee holds up, or whether a claim for something the report missed is worth pursuing, is a question for a lawyer.

Before you complain, gather the written contract, the report, your emails with the inspector, and written quotes from the trades who looked at the problem. Ontario.ca's list of what a report will normally show, and its plain statements that an inspection is visual and that an inspector cannot see or find everything, are the reference points for whether something was in scope.

Start with the written contract: it says what the inspector agreed to examine, which is the first thing any complaint turns on.

Q7

Are references worth checking for an Orleans home inspector?

References can tell you things that no credential or association membership will: whether the inspector communicated clearly, whether the report was readable, and whether anything was missed that showed up later. Ontario passed a Home Inspection Act in 2017, but it has not been brought into force, so there is no provincial licence today, so the checks are the ones you make.

Ontario.ca lists references as one of the questions to ask before booking: "Can you provide references?" The federal Office of Consumer Affairs adds that referrals from friends and family are a reasonable starting point for finding names in the first place. Neither source tells you how many references to ask for or what weight to give them, so treat them as one input alongside a sample report and a written contract.

What makes a reference more useful for your situation in Orleans:

- Ask whether the reference had a similar type of home inspected: a detached house, a townhouse or a condo.
- Ask whether the reference was present during the inspection, as ontario.ca suggests buyers should be.
- Ask whether the report matched what ontario.ca says a report should show: the condition of every major system and component, anything unsafe or needing repair, and evidence of past problems.
- Ask whether anything came up after possession that the report did not mention, and how the inspector responded.

A reference who had a different type of home, or who was not present, can still tell you something about communication and report quality, but less about whether the inspector covered what yours will need to cover. The Office of Consumer Affairs also suggests asking whether the inspector will apply the voluntary national standard CSA A770, and asking for a sample report before you commit. Neither is a requirement, but both give you something concrete to compare across inspectors you are considering.

Ask each inspector for two or three references from homes like yours, and call them before you book.

Q8

Which questions does ontario.ca suggest putting to an Ottawa home inspector?

Ontario.ca suggests five questions to put to a home inspector before you book:

- May I see a copy of the inspection report you use?

- Do you have experience inspecting the type of home I am considering?
- Do you have insurance?
- May I see accreditation that shows what kind of training and experience you have?
- Can you provide references?

Ontario.ca also says to get quotes from more than one inspector and to ask whether they choose to carry insurance. The federal Office of Consumer Affairs adds a sixth question worth putting alongside those: will you apply the CSA A770 national standard for home inspections? That standard is voluntary, not required, but asking the question tells you something about how the inspector approaches their work.
On credentials, one thing to keep in mind: Ontario passed a Home Inspection Act in 2017, but it has not been brought into force, so there is no provincial licence today. So a provincial licence number is not something an inspector can give you. What you can ask for instead is evidence of training, association membership or a sample report, and then judge for yourself.

Ontario.ca is clear that if you are the buyer, you should be present for the inspection itself, not just for the report afterward.

Before any work starts, the Office of Consumer Affairs recommends getting a written contract that sets out three things in plain terms: exactly which items and systems are to be inspected, when the report will be delivered, and the total cost. Having those three points in writing before the inspector arrives gives you a clear record if anything is unclear later.

Q9

Does experience with century homes matter for a Glebe inspection?

Yes, it is worth asking. One of ontario.ca's suggested questions for any inspector is: "Do you have experience inspecting the type of home that I'm considering?" For a century home in the Glebe, that is the question to put first.

Ontario.ca describes a home inspection as a visual inspection of major elements and systems. Its list of what an inspector will typically examine covers the foundation, doors and windows, the roof if they are able and it is safe to do so, exterior walls, attics, plumbing and electrical systems where visible, heating and air conditioning, ceilings, walls and floors, insulation where visible, ventilation, drainage away from the building, and the overall structural integrity. The federal Office of Consumer Affairs adds that a report is limited to the areas the inspector can see or has access to, so ask the seller or agent to make every area accessible.

An answer about experience is only as useful as what backs it up. Ontario.ca's other questions help with that:

- May I see a copy of the inspection report you use?
- May I see accreditation that shows what kind of training and experience you have?
- Can you provide references?
- Do you have insurance? Ontario.ca says it is not required by law, so ask whether they choose to carry it.

Ontario passed a Home Inspection Act in 2017, but it has not been brought into force, so there is no provincial licence to look up. The federal Office of Consumer Affairs also suggests asking whether the inspector will apply CSA A770, a voluntary national standard published in 2016.

A sample report from a house of a similar age is the most direct evidence of experience you can ask for. Ontario.ca also suggests getting quotes from more than one inspector, and the Office of Consumer Affairs suggests a written contract that lists the items to be inspected, the report deadline and the total cost before the work starts.

Ask each inspector you call for a sample report from a home like the one you are buying.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa House Inspection. It does not constitute professional or legal advice. A home inspection is a visual inspection with limits: it is not a pass or fail test, does not assess zoning or building codes and comes with no warranty (ontario.ca). Ask your agent or lawyer about offers and conditions, and Tarion about new-home warranties. Information is current as of November 8, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawahouseinspection.ca** for the latest answers.