

OTTAWA CONSTRUCTION CLEANING

Exterior Pressure Washing

Post-build exterior cleaning including siding, concrete, driveways, walkways, and removing construction grime from outdoor surfaces.

5 Expert Answers from Clean IQ

ottawaconstructioncleaning.com/construction-brain

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What is the cost of pressure washing new exposed aggregate steps after they cure in Ottawa?

Pressure washing new exposed aggregate steps in Ottawa typically costs between \$150 and \$400, depending on the size of the area, accessibility, and timing of the cleaning.

New exposed aggregate concrete requires careful pressure washing after the initial curing period to reveal the decorative stone surface properly. In Ottawa's climate, exposed aggregate steps should cure for a minimum of 7 to 14 days before pressure washing, though this timeline extends during cold weather. The pressure washing removes the surface cement paste that obscures the aggregate stones, creating the attractive textured finish that exposed aggregate is known for.

The process requires precise pressure settings — typically 1,500 to 2,500 PSI for exposed aggregate, which is lower than standard concrete cleaning. Too much pressure can dislodge the aggregate stones or create uneven surfaces, while too little pressure won't properly expose the decorative stone. Professional cleaners use specialized nozzles and maintain consistent distance and movement patterns to ensure even exposure across the entire surface.

Seasonal Considerations for Ottawa

Ottawa's extreme temperature swings significantly affect exposed aggregate pressure washing timing and costs.

Spring cleaning from April through June represents peak demand as winter-delayed concrete projects rush to completion, potentially increasing prices by 10 to 20 percent during busy periods. Summer pressure washing dries quickly in Ottawa's heat but requires careful timing to avoid working during the hottest parts of the day when rapid drying can cause streaking.

Winter pressure washing of exposed aggregate is challenging but sometimes necessary for projects that must be completed before freeze-up. Water used in pressure washing can freeze in surface pores if temperatures drop below 5 degrees Celsius within 24 hours of cleaning. Professional contractors may add freeze-protection additives to wash water or use heated pressure washing systems during cold weather, which increases costs by \$50 to \$100.

Cost factors include the total square footage of steps, with typical residential front steps ranging from 20 to 80 square feet. Simple straight steps cost less per square foot than curved or multi-level designs that require more detailed work around edges and corners. Accessibility affects pricing — steps that require equipment to be carried long distances or worked around landscaping cost more than easily accessible front entrances.

For a standard set of residential front steps (approximately 30 to 50 square feet), expect to pay \$150 to \$250. Larger step installations or complex designs with multiple levels can reach \$300 to \$400. Always get written quotes

that specify the PSI rating to be used, curing time requirements, and weather contingencies.

When hiring a professional makes sense for this specialized work, homeowners can browse pressure washing and cleaning contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com to compare local options and pricing.

Q2

What detergent is safe to use with pressure washing on new Ottawa brick facades?

For new brick facades in Ottawa, use only pH-neutral masonry cleaners specifically designed for pressure washing, never household detergents or acidic products that can permanently damage fresh mortar joints.

New brick and mortar require extremely gentle cleaning products because the mortar hasn't fully cured for 28 to 30 days after installation. During Ottawa's construction season, this curing process is critical - summer heat accelerates curing while cool spring and fall temperatures slow it down. Using the wrong detergent can dissolve lime from fresh mortar, creating white efflorescence stains and weakening the structural bond between bricks.

Safe detergent options for new Ottawa brick include Simple Green Pro HD diluted to manufacturer specifications, Prosoco Sure Klean Vana Trol at 1:10 dilution with water, and Diedrich 101 Lime Mortar Remover used only according to label directions. These products are formulated to clean construction residue without attacking calcium hydroxide in fresh mortar. Always test any cleaning product on an inconspicuous area first - typically behind downspouts or in a corner that won't be highly visible.

The Ontario Building Code requires that masonry cleaning products meet environmental standards, and these pH-neutral cleaners comply with provincial VOC regulations. In Ottawa's climate, timing matters significantly for pressure washing new brick. Spring cleaning after winter construction should wait until nighttime temperatures consistently stay above 5 degrees Celsius to prevent freeze-thaw damage to wet mortar. Summer cleaning is ideal but requires working in early morning or evening to prevent rapid evaporation that leaves detergent residue streaks.

Pressure settings must be kept low for new brick - never exceed 1,500 PSI, and start at 800 PSI to test the surface response. Use a 25-degree spray tip held at least 18 inches from the wall. Work from bottom to top when applying detergent, then rinse from top to bottom to prevent streaking. Ottawa's hard water can leave mineral deposits, so a final rinse with distilled water prevents white spotting on dark brick.

Never use muriatic acid, bleach, dish soap, or general-purpose cleaners on new masonry. These products either attack mortar chemically or leave residues that attract dirt. The investment in proper masonry detergent - typically

\$40 to \$80 for enough product to clean a typical Ottawa home's brick facade - prevents thousands of dollars in mortar repair costs later.

For complex brick cleaning projects or heritage brick in Ottawa's conservation districts like Centretown or New Edinburgh, professional cleaning contractors have the experience and insurance to handle specialized masonry safely. You can browse masonry and exterior cleaning contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com.

Q3

What is the cost of pressure washing a new retaining wall after construction in Ottawa?

Pressure washing a new retaining wall after construction in Ottawa typically costs between \$300 and \$800, depending on the wall's height, length, and material. The price varies significantly based on whether you're dealing with a small residential garden wall or a larger structural retaining wall, and the type of cleaning required to remove construction residue.

For a typical residential retaining wall measuring 50 to 100 linear feet at 4 to 6 feet high, expect to pay **\$400 to \$600** for professional pressure washing. Larger commercial or municipal retaining walls can cost \$800 to \$1,500 or more. The pricing generally breaks down to **\$4 to \$8 per linear foot** for standard height walls, with additional charges for walls over 8 feet that require scaffolding or specialized equipment access.

Material Considerations for Ottawa Retaining Walls

The retaining wall material significantly affects both cleaning methods and costs. **Concrete block and poured concrete walls** can handle aggressive pressure washing at 2,500 to 3,000 PSI to remove mortar residue, concrete dust, and construction staining. **Natural stone walls** require more careful pressure settings around 1,500 to 2,000 PSI to avoid damaging mortar joints or displacing stones. **Segmental retaining wall blocks** need gentle cleaning at 1,200 to 1,500 PSI because excessive pressure can shift interlocking units.

Fresh mortar joints are particularly vulnerable during the first 28 days after construction. Ottawa's extreme temperature swings mean mortar cures differently in winter versus summer conditions. **Winter-constructed walls** with mortar that cured in sub-zero temperatures may have weaker surface bonds that aggressive pressure washing can damage. Professional cleaners adjust their PSI settings and nozzle distances based on mortar age and curing conditions.

Ottawa's **Leda clay soil** creates specific challenges for retaining wall cleaning. This reddish-brown clay bonds tenaciously to concrete and stone surfaces during construction. Standard pressure washing may not fully remove clay staining - it often requires specialized masonry cleaners applied before pressure washing. The clay content also means construction sites stay muddy longer after rain, extending the period when walls accumulate soil staining.

Seasonal timing affects both cost and effectiveness in Ottawa. Spring cleaning after winter construction deals with salt residue, freeze-thaw damage to surface mortar, and debris trapped under snow. Summer pressure washing dries quickly in hot weather but requires careful timing to avoid streaking. Fall cleaning prepares walls for winter but must be completed before temperatures drop below freezing to prevent water damage in cracks and joints.

Professional retaining wall pressure washing includes debris removal, pre-treatment of stains, controlled pressure washing with appropriate PSI for the material, and post-cleaning inspection for any damage that occurred during construction. Many contractors also apply a concrete sealer after cleaning to protect the wall from Ottawa's harsh winter conditions, which adds \$150 to \$400 to the total cost.

For substantial retaining walls or those with complex access requirements, consider getting quotes from contractors experienced with both cleaning and hardscaping work. The Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com includes both cleaning specialists and landscape contractors who regularly handle retaining wall projects and understand the specific requirements for post-construction cleanup in Eastern Ontario conditions.

How much does it cost to pressure wash a new interlock patio after installation in Ottawa?

Pressure washing a new interlock patio after installation in Ottawa typically costs between \$300 and \$800, depending on the size of the patio and the level of cleaning required. The price varies significantly based on square footage, with most contractors charging \$0.75 to \$1.50 per square foot for post-installation interlock cleaning.

Understanding Post-Installation Interlock Cleaning Needs

New interlock patios require specialized cleaning to remove construction residue that standard installation doesn't address. **Polymeric sand haze** is the most common issue - this fine film appears on paver surfaces after polymeric sand installation and requires careful removal to avoid damaging the sand joints. Construction dust, mortar residue from adjacent work, and **Leda clay soil** tracked onto the surface during installation also need professional attention. Ottawa's clay-rich soil is particularly problematic because it bonds strongly to paver surfaces and creates persistent reddish-brown staining that household cleaning cannot remove.

The pressure washing process for new interlock requires **1,200 to 1,500 PSI maximum** - higher pressure can damage new sand joints or dislodge pavers that haven't fully settled. Professional cleaners use specialized surface cleaners that distribute pressure evenly and contain overspray, preventing damage to surrounding landscaping or home siding. **Chemical pre-treatment** is often necessary to break down polymeric sand haze and construction adhesive residue before pressure washing.

Ottawa's extreme climate affects timing and methods for interlock cleaning. **Spring cleaning after winter installation** often reveals salt staining, freeze-thaw damage to loose material, and debris trapped under snow. Summer cleaning dries quickly in Ottawa's heat but requires careful timing to avoid streaking. The short building season from May through October means most interlock installations happen during peak construction months, creating concentrated demand for post-installation cleaning services.

For a typical 200-square-foot patio, expect to pay \$200 to \$400. Larger patios of 500 square feet run \$400 to \$750. **Additional services** like sealing after cleaning add \$150 to \$400 depending on patio size and sealer type. Always get quotes that specify whether polymeric sand haze removal, efflorescence treatment, and final sealing are included.

Professional pressure washing makes sense for any interlock patio over 100 square feet or when polymeric sand haze is present. The Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com connects you with experienced contractors who understand Ottawa's specific soil and climate challenges for interlock cleaning.

Can pressure washing remove dried mortar drips from a new stone foundation in Ottawa?

Pressure washing can effectively remove dried mortar drips from new stone foundations in Ottawa, but the technique and timing are critical to avoid damaging both the mortar joints and the stone surface itself.

Fresh mortar drips and splashes are much easier to remove than fully cured mortar, but Ottawa's extreme winter conditions often mean foundation work gets completed in cold weather when immediate cleanup isn't practical. Dried mortar on natural stone foundations like limestone, sandstone, or granite requires a methodical approach with the right pressure settings and proper timing.

For dried mortar removal on stone foundations, use a pressure washer set between 1,500 and 2,500 PSI depending on the stone hardness. Limestone and softer sedimentary stones common in Ottawa-area foundations should never exceed 1,800 PSI, while harder granite can handle up to 2,500 PSI. **Always start with the lowest effective pressure and work up gradually.** Use a 25-degree spray tip positioned 12 to 18 inches from the surface, moving in steady, overlapping passes. Never use a zero-degree or pinpoint tip, as this concentrates too much force and can chip or etch the stone.

The key consideration for Ottawa foundations is **timing your pressure washing around our climate extremes.** Never pressure wash when temperatures are below 5 degrees Celsius, as the water will freeze in stone pores and cause spalling damage when it expands. Similarly, avoid pressure washing in direct summer sun when stone surfaces exceed 35 degrees Celsius, as rapid water evaporation leaves mineral streaks and soap residue. Early morning or late afternoon during moderate weather provides the best conditions.

Pre-treat stubborn mortar drips with a diluted muriatic acid solution (10 percent acid to 90 percent water) applied with a brush, allowing 10 to 15 minutes of dwell time before pressure washing. This chemical pre-treatment softens the mortar bond without requiring excessive pressure. Always wear protective equipment and thoroughly rinse the treated area. Be extremely cautious with acid on limestone foundations, as it can permanently etch the surface.

For new foundations where mortar is less than 30 days old, the mortar joints themselves are still vulnerable to pressure damage. **Keep the spray pattern parallel to mortar joints rather than perpendicular** to avoid washing out fresh pointing compound. If you notice any mortar particles coming loose from the joints themselves, stop immediately and reduce pressure or switch to manual scraping methods.

Ottawa's clay-rich soil often creates additional challenges during foundation cleaning. The reddish Leda clay that's prevalent throughout the region bonds tenaciously to both stone and dried mortar, requiring a two-stage cleaning

process. First, remove the bulk mortar drips with pressure washing, then follow up with a clay-specific cleaner to eliminate the persistent soil staining that pressure washing alone cannot address.

Professional post-construction cleaning contractors have the experience to assess stone hardness, mortar age, and appropriate pressure settings without risking expensive foundation damage. They also carry specialized equipment like heated pressure washers that work more effectively in Ottawa's cooler temperatures and rotary surface cleaners that provide even pressure distribution across large foundation areas.

For extensive mortar cleanup on valuable natural stone foundations, consider browsing cleaning contractors through the Ottawa Construction Network directory at justynrookcontracting.com, where you can compare local professionals experienced with Ottawa's unique stone and climate conditions.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Construction Cleaning. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any post-construction cleaning or renovation cleanup project. Information is current as of May 24, 2026 and may change. Visit ottawaconstructioncleaning.com for the latest answers.