OTTAWA SIDING CONTRACTORS

Cedar & Board-and-Batten

Cedar, lumber siding, cedar shingles and board-and-batten: Code sizes and overlaps, clearances and heritage questions

4 Expert Answers from Siding IQ

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Q1

Vertical board-and-batten nailing to studs in Kanata?

Board-and-batten is vertical lumber siding, and the 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.27.6.) sets the rules for it directly. The Code (9.27.5.1.) says cladding is fastened to framing, furring or blocking.

For the lumber itself, the Code (9.27.6.) requires vertical lumber siding to be at least 14.3 mm thick and no more than 286 mm wide. Battens must overlap the boards by at least 12 mm (9.27.6.3.). Nails are corrosion-resistant (9.27.5.5.), at least 51 mm long for lumber siding, spaced no more than 600 mm apart (Table 9.27.5.4.-A), and must penetrate at least 25 mm into framing (9.27.5.7.).

Because board-and-batten is vertical lumber, the Code (9.27.5.1.) also permits fastening to sheathing alone, but only if the sheathing is at least 14.3 mm lumber, 12.5 mm plywood or 12.5 mm OSB. If the sheathing is thinner or a different product, the boards go to studs.

Behind the siding, the Code (9.27.2.2.(4)) requires two planes of protection: the cladding as the first plane, and a drainage plane as the second. That second plane needs a sheathing membrane conforming to CAN/CGSB-51.32-M (9.27.3.2.), lapped at least 100 mm at joints, with upper sheets over lower sheets (9.27.3.3.). The Code's explanatory notes (Appendix A-9.27.3.1.) say a drained space at least 10 mm deep behind the cladding is recommended for walls other than masonry; that is a recommendation in the notes, not a Code requirement.

Flashing is required at every horizontal junction between cladding elements and at every horizontal offset (9.27.3.7., 9.27.3.8.). Over wall openings, flashing is required where the vertical distance from the bottom of the eave to the top of the trim is more than one-quarter of the eave's horizontal overhang. Sealant goes between the siding and any adjacent window or door frames (9.27.4.).

The Code (9.27.2.4.) sets a minimum 200 mm clearance between finished ground and cladding adversely affected by moisture, and names untreated wood as an example. Untreated lumber siding falls in that category, so its bottom edge needs at least 200 mm above finished ground. There is also a minimum 50 mm clearance from any roof surface.

A fair quote for this job should spell out the wall area, the lumber species and thickness, removal of any existing siding and disposal, the sheathing membrane, flashing at all horizontal transitions and openings, trim at corners and around windows and doors, and what happens if damage is found in the sheathing or framing once the old cladding comes off. Ask whether the crew's Working at Heights training is current (an employer duty under O. Reg. 297/13), and ask for a WSIB clearance, which is valid for up to 90 calendar days.

Before signing, ask the contractor what species and grade of lumber they are quoting. Local siding contractors in the Ottawa Construction Network directory can receive your project details through the request form on this page.

Q2

Can wood siding go on a wall near my neighbour in Hintonburg?

Whether wood siding can go on a wall close to your neighbour depends on how far that wall sits from the property line, and the 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.10.15.5.) sets out the rules.

What the Code says about walls near the lot line

The Code measures a "limiting distance" from the wall face to the property line. At 1.2 metres or more, the cladding choice is not restricted by the lot-line rule. From 0.6 metres to less than 1.2 metres, the exposing building face needs a fire-resistance rating of not less than 45 minutes; that clause does not restrict the cladding type. Under 0.6 metres, the wall needs that same 45-minute rating and the cladding must be either metal or noncombustible, or vinyl siding meeting 9.27.12. installed without furring over at least 12.7 mm gypsum sheathing with a flame-spread rating not more than 25 and no more than 2 mm thick, or a tested assembly.

So the answer depends on the measured distance: ask the City's building official which cladding your wall allows before choosing wood.

Your limiting distance is measured by a designer or the City's building official, not estimated by eye. Before choosing a material, ask the City's Building Code Services what limiting distance applies to your wall.

A few other things matter for this wall regardless of the lot-line distance. The 2024 Ontario Building Code (9.27.2.2.(4)) requires two planes of protection on any exterior wall enclosing residential space: the cladding itself as the first plane, and a drainage plane behind it as the second. For wood siding, that second plane is a sheathing membrane conforming to CAN/CGSB-51.32-M (9.27.3.2.), lapped at least 100 mm at joints with upper sheets over lower. Wood and similar moisture-sensitive cladding also needs at least 200 mm of clearance between the finished ground and the bottom of the siding (9.27.2.4.). The Code's explanatory notes recommend a drained space at least 10 mm deep behind the cladding, though that is a recommendation in the notes, not a Code requirement.

If the house is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or sits within a Heritage Conservation District, changing the siding may affect its heritage attributes and needs City approval before work begins.

The City of Ottawa's permit pages do not list siding either way, so ask Building Code Services before starting, particularly for a wall this close to the lot line.

When you speak with a siding contractor, ask them to show you in writing how they plan to meet the lot-line rule for your specific limiting distance before you agree to a material.

Q3

What does board-and-batten siding involve on an Ottawa house?

Board-and-batten is a vertical siding style: wide boards go up first, then narrower strips (battens) cover the vertical joints between them. On an Ottawa house it is done in lumber, fibre cement, engineered wood or vinyl panels designed to mimic the look, and the material decides which price range and which Code rules apply.

Published Ontario contractor price pages from 2025 to 2026 put lumber siding at roughly $10 to $28 per square foot installed, fibre cement at about $10 to $25, and engineered wood at about $9 to $23. Removing the old siding first adds about $1 to $3 per square foot. Too few published prices exist for steel or insulated vinyl board-and-batten to quote a range.

The 2024 Ontario Building Code (Div. B, 9.27.2.2.(4)) requires two planes of protection on every exterior wall enclosing residential space. The first plane is the siding itself; the second intercepts any water that gets past it and drains it back out. That second plane starts with a sheathing membrane conforming to CAN/CGSB-51.32-M, installed with joints lapped at least 100 mm and upper sheets overlapping lower sheets (9.27.3.2., 9.27.3.3.). Flashing is required at every horizontal junction between cladding elements and at every horizontal offset (9.27.3.7., 9.27.3.8.), and sealant goes between the siding and any door or window frame (9.27.4.).

For lumber board-and-batten specifically, the Code (9.27.6.) sets the board thickness at not less than 14.3 mm and the batten overlap at not less than 12 mm. Nails for lumber siding penetrate at least 25 mm into framing (9.27.5.7.). The Code's explanatory notes say a drained space at least 10 mm deep behind the siding is recommended for walls other than masonry; that is not a requirement, but it is worth discussing with the contractor.

If the wall is close to the lot line, the Code (9.10.15.5.) limits which cladding can be used; ask the City's building official before choosing a material.

A complete written quote should cover wall area, the board and batten material and profile, removal and disposal of the old siding, sheathing membrane, flashing at all offsets and openings, trim at corners and around windows and doors, what happens if damaged sheathing or framing is found behind the old layer, and the manufacturer's installation instructions for the chosen product. Ask whether the crew's Working at Heights training is current (O. Reg. 297/13 puts that duty on the employer). If this is a rental or investment property, ask for a WSIB clearance certificate.

Keep the written contract, the itemized quote, the manufacturer's warranty card, and photos of the wall before it was covered, because those documents are what you have if a question comes up about the work later.

Q4

Wood siding on a heritage Sandy Hill house, repair or replace?

If the house is designated or in a Heritage Conservation District, the repair-versus-replace decision is not only a materials question. Changing the siding on a designated heritage property, or one in a Heritage Conservation District, requires City approval under the Ontario Heritage Act before work begins that could affect heritage attributes. Talk to the City's heritage staff before you choose a direction, and ask the City's Building Code Services whether a building permit is also required. The City's permit pages do not list siding either way, and heritage buildings are not covered by any permit exemption.

On the repair side, the 2024 Ontario Building Code's renovation provisions (Part 11) treat existing cladding as acceptable under compliance alternative C196, so the original wood that stays can stay as it is; the new boards, membrane and flashing in a repair are done to today's Code. Ask the contractor to check whether the boards themselves are sound, whether the sheathing membrane and any flashing behind them are intact, and whether the sheathing is solid. If the damage is limited to a few boards, ask for a price on replacing them with matching wood. Drop, lapped and vertical lumber siding must be at least 14.3 mm thick (9.27.6.2.).

If the assessment turns up widespread rot, failed membrane or damaged sheathing, ask for a full re-side price as well. For a heritage property, the material choice matters: tell the City's heritage staff what you are proposing; replacing original wood with a different material may affect heritage attributes and require a heritage permit. A staff-level heritage alteration permit is $309.00, though restoration and preservation projects meeting the Standards and Guidelines are fee-exempt. Ask the heritage staff which category your project falls into before budgeting.

Whatever the scope, the 2024 Ontario Building Code requires the wall to have two planes of protection: the cladding itself as the first plane, and a sheathing membrane conforming to CAN/CGSB-51.32-M as the second, with joints lapped not less than 100 mm and upper sheets overlapping lower ones (9.27.3.2., 9.27.3.3.). Flashing is required at horizontal junctions in the cladding, and over a wall opening where the vertical distance from the bottom of the eave to the top of the trim is more than one-quarter of the eave's overhang (9.27.3.8.). Sealant goes between the siding and window or door frames (9.27.4.). Wood cladding must sit not less than 200 mm above finished grade and not less than 50 mm above any roof surface (9.27.2.4.). Health Canada advises that a house built before 1960 probably contains lead-based paint, and one built between 1960 and 1990 may; do not sand or use heat to remove old paint, and have the wall tested before work begins.

Ask any contractor quoting this job to itemize: assessment of the substrate and membrane, matching lumber sourcing, removal and disposal of old material, membrane and flashing work, trim and corner details, and what happens to the price if more damage is found once the old boards come off. Ask for a WSIB clearance certificate and confirm the crew's Working at Heights training is current.

Keep the written contract, the itemized quote, the manufacturer's warranty on any new materials, and photos of the wall taken before anything is covered over: those records are worth having if a question comes up later about what was done and what was found.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Siding Contractors. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified contractors and your local building authority (the City of Ottawa or your own municipality) before starting any siding project, and have old siding on a house built before 1990 tested before it is disturbed. Siding work in Ontario must meet the 2024 Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 163/24). Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawasidingcontractors.ca** for the latest answers.