TORONTO DRYWALL INSTALLERS

Permits & Building Code

Ontario Building Code requirements, fire separation ratings, vapour barriers, permits for basements and renovations

19 Expert Answers from Drywall IQ

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Q1

What Ontario Building Code fire rating is required for drywall ceilings in a Toronto home with a wood-burning pizza oven?

The Ontario Building Code requires a minimum 1-hour fire resistance rating for any ceiling assembly above a solid fuel-burning appliance like a wood-fired pizza oven. This means you'll need 5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall on the ceiling, properly installed with all joints taped and finished to maintain the fire rating.

The specific requirements depend on where your pizza oven is located and how it's classified. **Indoor wood-burning pizza ovens are considered solid fuel-burning appliances** under the Ontario Building Code and must comply with strict clearance and fire separation requirements. The ceiling above must achieve a 1-hour fire resistance rating, which typically requires 5/8-inch Type X gypsum board (fire-rated drywall) installed over the structural ceiling assembly.

For outdoor pizza ovens under a covered porch or gazebo, the fire rating requirements may be different, but you'll still need adequate clearances from combustible materials. The Ontario Building Code requires minimum 18-inch clearances from combustible surfaces for most solid fuel appliances, though specific pizza oven manufacturers may require greater clearances.

Critical installation details for maintaining the fire rating: All joints in the Type X drywall must be properly taped and finished with appropriate joint compound. Any penetrations through the fire-rated ceiling (for lighting, ventilation, or structural elements) must be properly fire-stopped with approved materials. Simply installing Type X drywall isn't enough — the entire assembly must be installed according to the tested fire-rated configuration.

You'll definitely need building permits for this installation. Wood-burning pizza ovens require permits for the appliance itself, the venting system, and any structural modifications. The permit process ensures proper clearances, fire separations, and ventilation are designed by qualified professionals. Toronto Fire Services may also need to inspect the installation.

GTA-specific considerations: Many Toronto neighbourhoods have bylaws restricting outdoor burning or solid fuel appliances. Check with your local municipality before proceeding. In condos or townhomes, additional restrictions may apply through your property management or homeowners association.

This is absolutely professional territory — never attempt to install or modify fire-rated assemblies yourself. The fire rating depends on precise installation techniques, proper materials, and compliance with tested assemblies. A qualified contractor familiar with solid fuel appliance installations and Ontario Building Code fire separations should handle both the oven installation and any required drywall work.

The combination of high heat, fire safety requirements, and permit complexity makes this a project where cutting corners could create serious safety hazards. Work with contractors experienced in both pizza oven installations and fire-rated construction assemblies.

Need help finding contractors experienced with fire-rated drywall installations? Toronto Drywall Installers can match you with professionals through the Toronto Construction Network who understand these specialized requirements.

Q2

What are the drywall fire separation requirements for a Toronto home with an attached in-law suite?

In-law suites (secondary suites) in Toronto require a minimum 1-hour fire separation between the primary dwelling and the secondary unit, achieved with 5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall on both sides of the separating wall and ceiling assemblies.

The **Ontario Building Code treats in-law suites as separate dwelling units**, which triggers specific fire separation requirements that are more stringent than typical interior walls. The separating wall between your main home and the in-law suite must achieve a **1-hour fire resistance rating** — this means the assembly can withstand fire exposure for 60 minutes before structural failure or flame penetration.

Standard Fire Separation Assembly for In-Law Suites: The most common compliant assembly uses **5/8-inch Type X gypsum board on both sides** of the separating wall, installed over 2x4 or 2x6 wood framing with insulation in the cavity. All joints must be properly taped and finished — gaps, cracks, or incomplete taping compromise the fire rating. The ceiling separating the units (if the in-law suite is in a basement) requires the same 1-hour rating, typically achieved with **5/8-inch Type X on the underside of the floor joists** above the suite.

Critical Installation Details: Every penetration through the fire separation (electrical outlets, light switches, plumbing, HVAC ducts) must maintain the fire rating using **fire-rated electrical boxes, fire-stopping compound, and proper sealing**. A single unsealed electrical box or gap around a pipe can void the entire fire separation. The door between units must be a **solid-core door with a self-closing mechanism** — hollow-core doors do not meet fire separation requirements.

Toronto-Specific Considerations: Many GTA homes adding in-law suites are older properties where the existing basement ceiling is standard 1/2-inch drywall that doesn't meet current fire separation requirements. **The existing ceiling drywall must be removed and replaced with 5/8-inch Type X**, or a second layer of 5/8-inch Type X can be installed over the existing ceiling if ceiling height permits. In Toronto's older housing stock (especially pre-1980

homes), this often requires lowering the basement ceiling by 5/8 inch, which can be problematic if ceiling height is already minimal.

Sound Transmission Requirements: Beyond fire separation, the Ontario Building Code requires the wall assembly to achieve **STC 50 (Sound Transmission Class 50)** to limit noise transfer between units. The standard 5/8-inch Type X on both sides typically achieves STC 45-48, so additional sound control measures may be needed — **resilient channel, double drywall layers, or sound-dampening insulation** in the wall cavity.

Permit and Inspection Requirements: Creating an in-law suite requires a building permit in Toronto, and the fire separation work must be inspected before the drywall is closed up. The inspector will verify proper Type X installation, fire-stopping of penetrations, and compliance with the approved drawings. **Attempting to create a secondary suite without permits is illegal** and creates liability issues for insurance and resale.

Professional Installation Recommended: Fire-rated drywall assemblies require precise installation — **incorrect screw spacing, gaps at joints, or improper fire-stopping eliminates the fire rating**. Most GTA drywall contractors are familiar with fire separation requirements for secondary suites, but verify they understand the specific 1-hour rating requirement and have experience with fire-rated installations.

Cost Expectations: Fire-rated drywall installation typically costs **$3.50-$6.00 per square foot** in the GTA, including Type X board, proper taping, and fire-stopping of penetrations. For a typical basement in-law suite separation wall (200-300 square feet of wall and ceiling area), expect **$1,500-$3,500** for the fire-rated drywall scope, not including framing, insulation, electrical, or finishing work.

Need help finding a drywall contractor experienced with fire-rated assemblies? Toronto Drywall Installers can match you with professionals familiar with secondary suite requirements through the Toronto Construction Network.

Q3

How does Toronto's new multiplex zoning affect drywall fire separation requirements between dwelling units?

Toronto's new multiplex zoning significantly increases fire separation requirements for drywall installations, as converting single-family homes into 2-4 unit buildings requires creating new fire-rated assemblies between dwelling units that didn't exist before.

The Ontario Building Code requires a **minimum 1-hour fire resistance rating** between separate dwelling units, regardless of whether it's a purpose-built duplex or a newly converted multiplex under Toronto's Housing Charter amendments. This means every wall and floor/ceiling assembly separating one unit from another must achieve this

fire rating through proper drywall specification and installation.

For wall separations between units, you'll need either a **double-layer 5/8-inch Type X drywall assembly** on both sides of the wall, or a **staggered-stud wall with single-layer 5/8-inch Type X on each side**. The staggered-stud approach is often preferred because it also improves sound isolation — another critical requirement. All joints must be properly taped and finished, and any penetrations (electrical boxes, plumbing, HVAC) must maintain the fire rating using approved fire-stop materials. A single missed joint or improperly sealed penetration voids the entire fire rating.

Floor/ceiling separations are more complex in multiplex conversions. The assembly typically requires **5/8-inch Type X drywall on resilient channel** attached to the ceiling joists below, plus proper insulation in the joist cavity. If you're converting a basement into a separate unit, the main floor structure above becomes a fire separation that must be upgraded to meet code. This often involves removing existing ceiling drywall and rebuilding the entire assembly.

Sound transmission requirements add another layer of complexity. The Ontario Building Code requires **STC 50 (Sound Transmission Class 50)** between dwelling units. Standard drywall assemblies typically achieve STC 35-40, so you'll need enhanced assemblies using resilient channel, double drywall layers, or specialized soundproof drywall like QuietRock. A common approach is **5/8-inch Type X drywall on resilient channel with R-12 insulation**, which achieves both fire and sound requirements.

Practical considerations for GTA multiplex conversions include working within existing room layouts and ceiling heights. Many Toronto homes built in the early-to-mid 1900s have 8-foot ceilings, and adding resilient channel plus 5/8-inch drywall reduces ceiling height by nearly 2 inches. This can push finished ceiling height below the 2.1-metre (6'11") minimum required for habitable rooms. Basement conversions are particularly challenging, as many older Toronto basements have 7-foot ceilings that become non-compliant after adding the required fire-rated ceiling assembly.

Electrical and mechanical coordination becomes critical in multiplex fire separations. Each unit needs separate electrical panels, and running new circuits through fire-rated walls requires approved fire-stop sealants around every penetration. HVAC systems must be carefully planned — shared ductwork between units can compromise fire ratings and requires fire dampers at separation walls.

Permit and inspection requirements are strict for multiplex conversions. The City of Toronto requires detailed drawings showing all fire separation assemblies, and building inspectors will verify proper Type X drywall installation, taping, and fire-stopping before approving occupancy. Any deviation from approved plans can halt the project and require costly corrections.

Cost implications are significant — fire-rated drywall assemblies cost **$5.00-$10.00 per square foot** compared to $2.50-$4.00 for standard wall drywall. A typical Toronto home conversion might require 800-1,200 square feet of fire-rated wall and ceiling assemblies, adding $4,000-$12,000 to the drywall scope alone.

This is exclusively professional contractor territory — fire separation assemblies must be installed exactly to manufacturer specifications and Ontario Building Code requirements. Improper installation creates life-safety hazards and legal liability. The complexity of coordinating fire ratings, sound isolation, electrical/mechanical systems, and building permits requires experienced contractors familiar with multiplex conversions.

Need help finding a drywall contractor experienced with multiplex fire separations? Toronto Drywall Installers can match you with professionals familiar with Toronto's new zoning requirements and Ontario Building Code fire rating assemblies.

Q4

What Ontario Building Code requirements apply to drywall in a Toronto home daycare operating from a basement?

Home daycares operating in Toronto basements must meet specific Ontario Building Code requirements for fire separation, ceiling height, egress windows, and occupancy limits that directly affect drywall installation and finishing.

The **Ontario Building Code classifies home daycares as Group E occupancy** when caring for more than 5 children (including the operator's own children under 2.5 years). This triggers several critical requirements that affect your drywall scope. For 5 or fewer children, the space remains residential Group C occupancy but still requires compliance with basic safety requirements.

Fire separation requirements are the most important consideration for basement daycare drywall. The ceiling separating the daycare from the floor above must achieve a **minimum 45-minute fire resistance rating**. This requires 5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall on the basement ceiling, properly taped and finished with fire-rated joint compound. All penetrations (pot lights, HVAC ducts, electrical boxes) must maintain the fire rating using appropriate fire-rated assemblies. Standard 1/2-inch drywall does not meet this requirement.

Ceiling height must be **minimum 2.1 metres (6 feet 11 inches) clear** in all areas used by children. This is measured from the finished floor to the lowest point of the finished ceiling, including any bulkheads, beams, or HVAC ducts. If your basement has low-hanging ducts or beams, you may need to frame and drywall bulkheads to enclose them, but the remaining clear height must still meet the 2.1-metre minimum. Many older Toronto basements struggle to meet this requirement, especially with the additional thickness of fire-rated ceiling drywall.

Egress window requirements affect drywall installation around basement windows. Each room used for the daycare must have either direct access to grade or an **egress window with minimum 0.35 square metres (3.8 square feet) of opening area**. The window sill cannot be more than 1.5 metres above the floor. When framing and drywalling around egress windows, maintain these clearances and ensure the window well meets code requirements for drainage and access.

Moisture and mould prevention becomes critical in basement daycares due to higher occupancy and activity levels. Install **moisture-resistant drywall (green board or purple board) in any areas with sinks, food preparation, or high humidity**. Ensure proper vapour barrier installation behind all exterior wall drywall — 6-mil polyethylene on the warm side of insulation is code-required in Ontario's Climate Zone 6. Poor moisture control in basement daycares leads to mould growth, which creates serious health risks for children and regulatory compliance issues.

Electrical and mechanical considerations affect drywall installation. GFCI protection is required for all basement electrical outlets, and the electrical system must handle increased load from additional lighting, outlets, and ventilation. Plan drywall installation around required electrical upgrades. Enhanced ventilation is typically required for daycare occupancy — coordinate drywall bulkheads and ceiling layout with HVAC contractor to accommodate larger ductwork.

Permit requirements vary by municipality within the GTA. Toronto requires a **building permit for basement finishing** that will be used as a daycare, regardless of the number of children. The permit application must show compliance with fire separation, ceiling height, egress, and accessibility requirements. Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, and other GTA municipalities have similar requirements but may differ in details — check with your local building department.

Accessibility considerations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) may require wider doorways, accessible washroom facilities, and barrier-free access routes. This affects door opening framing and drywall installation — standard 32-inch door openings may need to be widened to 36 inches.

Sound transmission is crucial in basement daycares to minimize noise transfer to living areas above. Consider **soundproof drywall assemblies** using resilient channel, double layers of drywall, or specialized products like QuietRock. The Ontario Building Code doesn't specify STC requirements for home daycares, but good sound isolation protects family privacy and reduces neighbour complaints.

Professional installation is strongly recommended for daycare basement drywall due to fire rating requirements, permit compliance, and inspection requirements. Fire-rated assemblies must be installed exactly per manufacturer specifications to maintain their rating — a single incorrect screw or gap voids the fire protection. Building inspectors will verify fire separation compliance before issuing occupancy permits.

The total drywall cost for a basement daycare renovation typically ranges **$8,000-$15,000** including fire-rated ceiling drywall, moisture-resistant wall boards, proper taping and finishing, and coordination with other trades. This is 30-50% higher than standard basement finishing due to fire-rated materials and enhanced requirements.

Need help finding a drywall contractor experienced with commercial and daycare requirements? Toronto Drywall Installers can match you with professionals familiar with Ontario Building Code compliance for Group E occupancy through the Toronto Construction Network.

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- Neo Group Inc.
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- Olkron Developments

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Q5

Do I need a building permit to install drywall in a Toronto basement that has never been finished?

Yes, finishing a previously unfinished basement in Toronto requires a building permit — and this is not just a formality, it is a critical step that protects your investment and your family's safety. The permit requirement is not specifically about the drywall itself; it is about the entire scope of work involved in converting a raw basement into habitable living space, which includes framing, insulation, vapour barrier, electrical, plumbing (if adding a bathroom), HVAC modifications, fire safety, and egress requirements under the Ontario Building Code.

The City of Toronto's building department requires a permit for basement finishing because the work involves multiple code-regulated elements. Even if you think of it as "just putting up drywall," the reality is that properly finishing a basement requires new framing against the foundation walls (or insulated stud walls), minimum **R-20 insulation** for below-grade walls, a **6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier** on the warm side, electrical wiring for outlets, switches, and lighting, and the drywall itself — each of which has specific Ontario Building Code requirements that inspections verify.

What the Permit Process Involves

You apply for a building permit through the City of Toronto (or your local municipality if you are in Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, Vaughan, or elsewhere in the GTA — each has its own building department). The application typically requires **floor plans** showing the proposed layout, room locations, electrical plan, and any plumbing. Permit fees vary by municipality but generally run **$200–$500** for a residential basement finish in the GTA.

Once the permit is issued, the work proceeds in stages with **mandatory inspections** at key points. For a typical basement finish, expect inspections at the framing stage (before insulation), after insulation and vapour barrier installation (before drywall), after electrical rough-in, and a final inspection after everything is complete. **Drywall cannot go up until the framing, insulation, vapour barrier, and electrical rough-in have been inspected and approved.** This is critically important — if you drywall before the pre-drywall inspection, the inspector can require

you to remove the drywall to verify what is behind it, which is enormously expensive and wasteful.

Why This Matters Beyond Just Following Rules

The permit and inspection process catches problems that are invisible once the drywall is up — and in GTA basements, these problems can be serious. Inspectors verify that the **vapour barrier is continuous and properly sealed**, preventing the moisture condensation inside wall cavities that causes mould growth (the most common and costly basement finishing problem in Toronto's climate). They verify that **electrical wiring is properly run and connected**, reducing fire risk. They confirm that **fire separation requirements** are met — if your furnace and water heater are in the basement, the mechanical room typically requires fire-rated enclosure with 5/8-inch Type X drywall.

Perhaps most importantly, inspectors verify **egress requirements**. The Ontario Building Code requires that finished basement bedrooms have a **window large enough for emergency escape** — minimum 380mm wide, 558mm high, with a minimum area of 0.35 square metres and a maximum sill height of 1,500mm from the floor. Many older GTA homes — particularly the post-war bungalows and split-levels across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke — have small basement windows that do not meet current egress requirements. Enlarging a window well and installing an egress-compliant window is a common requirement discovered during the permit process, and it is far better to address this before the drywall goes up than after.

The Real Cost of Skipping the Permit

Some homeowners are tempted to finish a basement without a permit to save time and money. This is a significant risk in the GTA real estate market. **Unpermitted basement finishes must be disclosed when selling the home**, and many buyers (and their lawyers) will either demand a price reduction or require the seller to obtain a retroactive permit — which can mean opening up finished walls for inspection. Home insurance may not cover damage or liability in unpermitted finished spaces. And if something goes wrong — a fire that spreads because the furnace room was not properly fire-separated, or mould growth from a missing vapour barrier — the homeowner bears full liability.

The permit fee of $200–$500 is a trivial cost on a basement finishing project that typically runs **$25,000–$60,000** for a complete renovation. Work with your drywall contractor and any other trades involved to ensure the permit is pulled and inspections are scheduled at the right stages. Toronto Drywall Installers can match you with basement finishing specialists who are experienced with the GTA permit process and know what inspectors look for.

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Q6

What Ontario Building Code requirements apply to drywall installation in a legal basement apartment in the GTA?

A legal basement apartment (secondary suite) in the GTA must meet extensive Ontario Building Code requirements that go far beyond standard basement finishing — the drywall scope alone involves fire separations, sound ratings, specific board types, and assembly configurations that are significantly more demanding than a typical rec room or home office. Getting these requirements right is essential because the municipality will inspect every element before issuing occupancy, and failure to meet code means tearing out finished work and redoing it.

The most critical drywall-related requirement is the **fire separation between the basement apartment and the main dwelling above**. The Ontario Building Code requires a minimum **1-hour fire resistance rating** for the floor-ceiling assembly separating the two dwelling units. This typically means **5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall** on the basement ceiling, installed as part of a fire-rated assembly that includes the floor structure above. Depending on the assembly design, this may require a single layer or double layer of Type X — a common configuration is two layers of 5/8-inch Type X on resilient channel, which achieves both the fire rating and the sound transmission requirements simultaneously.

Sound transmission between the basement apartment and the main dwelling must meet a minimum **STC 50 (Sound Transmission Class 50)** rating under the Ontario Building Code. Standard drywall on regular framing achieves roughly STC 33–38, which is well below the requirement. To reach STC 50, the ceiling assembly typically needs **resilient channel** (metal hat channels screwed to the joists with drywall screwed to the channels, creating a decoupled connection), combined with **batt insulation in the joist cavities** and the fire-rated drywall. It is absolutely critical that no drywall screw penetrates through the resilient channel into the joist above — a single short-circuiting screw transmits vibration directly through the assembly and can reduce the effective STC rating by 10–15 points, defeating the entire purpose of the resilient channel installation.

For even higher sound isolation — which many GTA landlords pursue to minimize tenant complaints — options include **double-layer drywall with Green Glue compound between layers** ($15–$25 per tube, one tube per 4x8 sheet), **QuietRock soundproof drywall** ($55–$90 per sheet), or **staggered-stud wall assemblies** at the perimeter that mechanically decouple the basement walls from the main structure.

Fire Separation Details

The 1-hour fire separation extends beyond just the ceiling. **Every wall, floor, and ceiling element** that separates the basement apartment from the main dwelling, from common areas (shared hallways, stairwells), and from service rooms (furnace room, electrical panel room) must achieve the required fire resistance rating. This means:

The **furnace/mechanical room** must be enclosed with fire-rated drywall if it serves both units or is accessible from the basement apartment. All **penetrations through fire separations** — electrical wires, plumbing pipes, HVAC ducts, recessed lights — must be sealed with **fire-rated caulking or intumescent fire stop** to maintain the fire separation integrity. Recessed pot lights in a fire-rated ceiling assembly must be **IC-rated (insulation contact) and fire-rated** or enclosed in fire-rated boxes.

The **door between the basement apartment and any shared area** must be a **solid-core or fire-rated door** with a **self-closing device**. The drywall framing around this doorway must maintain the fire-rated assembly continuously — no gaps, no unsealed headers.

Additional Code Requirements Affecting Drywall

Vapour barrier: A continuous 6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier on the warm side of all insulated exterior walls and any wall assembly against the foundation, sealed at all seams and penetrations with acoustic sealant. This goes up before drywall and must be inspected before boarding begins.

Ceiling height: The Ontario Building Code requires a minimum clear ceiling height of **1.95 metres (6 feet 5 inches) in basements** and **2.1 metres (6 feet 11 inches) in habitable rooms**. This measurement is taken from the finished floor to the finished ceiling (bottom of the drywall, including any resilient channel depth). In many older GTA homes with 7-foot basement ceilings, the combination of resilient channel (approximately 1/2 inch), drywall (5/8 inch), and any dropped framing for ductwork or plumbing can eat into the available headroom significantly. Careful planning of the ceiling assembly is essential to maintain minimum height requirements.

Egress: Every bedroom in the basement apartment must have an **egress window** meeting minimum size requirements (0.35 square metres, minimum 380mm wide and 558mm high, maximum 1,500mm sill height). The drywall framing around egress windows must not reduce the clear opening size below these minimums.

Moisture-resistant drywall: The bathroom in a basement apartment should use **moisture-resistant (green board) or mould-resistant (purple board)** drywall on walls and ceilings. Shower and tub surrounds require **cement board** — never drywall of any type — as the tile substrate.

Cost Implications

The drywall scope for a legal basement apartment is substantially more expensive than a standard basement finish due to the fire-rated board, resilient channel, sound insulation, fire stopping, and the additional labour involved in meeting code requirements. Expect the drywall scope alone to run **$8,000–$18,000** for a typical 600–900 square foot basement apartment, compared to **$5,000–$12,000** for a standard basement finish of similar size. The total cost for a complete legal basement apartment conversion in the GTA — including electrical, plumbing, HVAC, egress windows, separate entrance, and all finishes — typically ranges from **$50,000–$120,000**.

This is emphatically a project for experienced professional contractors. The interplay between fire ratings, sound transmission, vapour management, and code compliance requires expertise across multiple trades, and the consequences of errors are expensive to fix and potentially dangerous. Find experienced basement apartment conversion contractors through the Toronto Construction Network at torontoconstructionnetwork.com.

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Q7

Does the City of Toronto require inspection of framing and insulation before drywall can be hung?

Yes — in any permitted project in Toronto, framing and insulation must pass inspection before drywall can be installed. The City of Toronto's building inspection process requires a framing inspection (and in most cases a separate insulation and vapour barrier inspection) before the drywall stage can proceed. If you close up walls with drywall before the inspector signs off, you may be ordered to remove the drywall at your own expense so the inspector can verify what's behind it.

The framing inspection verifies that all structural elements — studs, headers, load-bearing walls, blocking, and fire stops — are installed correctly and match the approved drawings. The inspector also checks that rough-in work for electrical, plumbing, and HVAC has been completed and inspected by those respective trades. In a typical basement finishing project in Toronto, the sequence goes: framing inspection, then electrical and plumbing rough-in inspections, then insulation and vapour barrier inspection, and only then can drywall be hung.

The insulation and vapour barrier inspection is particularly critical in Ontario's Climate Zone 6. The inspector will verify that insulation meets the required R-values — **R-20 minimum for below-grade basement walls** and **R-24 for above-grade walls** in renovations — and that a **6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier** is properly installed on the warm (interior) side of the insulation. The poly must be continuous, lapped at least 100mm at seams, and sealed around electrical boxes, plumbing penetrations, and window openings with acoustic sealant or approved tape. Missing or improperly installed vapour barrier is one of the most common reasons for failed inspections in GTA basement projects, and it's a critical detail because moisture trapped inside wall cavities leads to mould growth that you won't discover until the drywall is ruined.

For projects that don't require a permit — such as replacing damaged drywall on existing walls, patching, or removing ceiling texture — no inspection is required and you can proceed directly with drywall installation.

What Triggers the Permit and Inspection Requirement

Any project that involves new framing, changes to the building envelope, fire separations, or conversion of unfinished space to habitable space requires a building permit in Toronto. The most common residential drywall projects requiring permits include **basement finishing** ($5,000–$12,000 for drywall scope alone), **garage-to-living-space conversions** ($4,000–$10,000 for drywall scope), **secondary suite creation**, and **adding new interior partition walls**. In all of these cases, multiple inspections are required before and after drywall.

The City of Toronto typically charges **$200–$600+** for a residential building permit depending on project scope and valuation. Inspection requests are made through the City's online portal, and you generally need to give **48 hours'**

notice for scheduling. Inspectors are busy in the GTA, especially during peak renovation season (spring through fall), so plan your project timeline accordingly — a failed inspection can delay your drywall phase by a week or more while corrections are made and a re-inspection is scheduled.

One important detail that catches many homeowners off guard: if you're hiring a drywall contractor for a permitted project, make sure they understand that they cannot begin hanging until all inspections are passed. A professional drywall crew working in the GTA will know this, but it's worth confirming the schedule. Some contractors will show up ready to hang and discover that the insulation inspection hasn't been done yet, resulting in a wasted trip that may incur a service charge of **$300–$500**.

For permitted basement finishing or renovation projects in Toronto, expect the full inspection process to add **2–4 weeks** to your project timeline between framing and drywall stages. This is normal and non-negotiable — the inspections exist to ensure your renovation is safe, energy-efficient, and code-compliant. Skipping them puts your family's safety at risk and can create serious problems when you sell the home, as unpermitted work discovered during a home inspection can derail a sale or reduce your property value.

Need help finding a drywall professional who understands Toronto's permit and inspection process? Toronto Drywall Installers can match you with local contractors for a free estimate.

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Q8

What fire-rated drywall is required between an attached garage and living space under Ontario Building Code?

Under the Ontario Building Code, the wall and ceiling between an attached garage and the living space must achieve a minimum 45-minute fire resistance rating, which requires 5/8-inch Type X drywall on the garage side with all joints fully taped and finished. This is one of the most critical fire safety requirements in residential construction, and it applies to every home in the GTA with an attached garage — whether it's a new build in Vaughan, a 1970s bungalow in Scarborough, or a semi-detached in the Annex.

Type X drywall is specifically engineered for fire resistance. It contains glass fibres within the gypsum core that hold the board together as it's exposed to fire, buying time for occupants to evacuate and for fire crews to respond. A single layer of 5/8-inch Type X drywall on wood framing provides a 45-minute fire resistance rating when properly installed. Standard 1/2-inch regular drywall does **not** meet this requirement and cannot be substituted. In the GTA, Type X 5/8-inch drywall costs **$20–$28 per 4x8 sheet**, compared to **$14–$20** for regular 1/2-inch — a modest premium for life-safety protection.

The fire separation must be continuous and complete. This means **every gap, penetration, and joint must be properly sealed**. All joints in the Type X drywall must be taped and finished with joint compound — you cannot leave unfinished joints in the garage even though it's not a living space, because gaps in the fire separation defeat its purpose. Electrical boxes, plumbing penetrations, and any other openings through the fire-rated wall must be sealed with fire-rated caulking or approved fire stop materials. HVAC ducts passing through the garage-to-house wall require fire dampers.

Key Details Homeowners Often Miss

The fire separation includes the **ceiling of the garage** if there is living space above. If you have a bedroom, bonus room, or home office above your garage, the entire garage ceiling must also have 5/8-inch Type X drywall. This is common in many GTA two-storey homes built from the 1980s onward, particularly across Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, and Richmond Hill where two-storey homes with living space over garages are the dominant housing type.

The **door between the garage and living space** is also part of the fire separation assembly. It must be a solid-core wood door or a fire-rated door (minimum 45 minutes), equipped with a **self-closing device** (spring hinges or a door closer). Hollow-core interior doors do not meet this requirement. The door must also have weather-stripping to prevent carbon monoxide and exhaust fumes from entering the living space.

One common violation that GTA building inspectors flag is **installing the Type X drywall on the house side instead of the garage side** of the shared wall. The fire-rated drywall must face the garage because that's where a vehicle fire would originate. On the house side of the same wall, standard 1/2-inch drywall is acceptable.

Another frequent issue involves **garage conversions**. If you're converting your garage to living space — a popular project in Toronto given the city's housing costs — the fire separation requirements change because the garage is

no longer a garage. However, this type of conversion requires a building permit, and the City of Toronto inspector will verify that all new wall assemblies meet current code requirements for insulation (**R-24 above grade**), vapour barrier, and fire separation from adjacent units in semi-detached or row house configurations.

For a typical two-car attached garage in the GTA, installing fire-rated Type X drywall on the walls and ceiling runs approximately **$3,500–$6,000** including materials, labour, taping, and finishing. This covers roughly 600–900 square feet of fire-rated assembly at **$3.50–$6.00 per square foot**. It's a worthwhile investment in safety, and it's not optional — building inspectors will flag non-compliant fire separations during permitted renovations, home inspections during sales, and insurance assessments.

If you're unsure whether your garage fire separation meets current Ontario Building Code requirements — especially in older GTA homes where the original drywall may have been damaged, removed, or improperly replaced — a professional drywall contractor can assess the situation and bring it up to code. Browse drywall professionals in your area through the Toronto Construction Network directory.

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Q9

Do I need a permit to remove a non-load-bearing wall with drywall in my Toronto semi-detached home?

In most cases, yes — you need a building permit to remove a wall in your Toronto semi-detached home, even if you believe it's non-load-bearing. The City of Toronto requires a building permit for the removal of interior walls because determining whether a wall is truly non-load-bearing requires professional structural assessment, and removal affects the overall building performance including fire separations, sound transmission, and potentially the structural system.

The critical issue with semi-detached homes specifically is the **shared party wall** between your unit and your neighbour's. The party wall is a fire separation that must maintain a minimum **1-hour fire resistance rating** under the Ontario Building Code, and it also must meet **STC 50** (Sound Transmission Class 50) requirements. While you wouldn't be removing the party wall itself, removing an interior wall that connects to or intersects with the party wall can compromise the fire separation's integrity. A building inspector needs to verify that the fire rating is maintained after any wall removal.

Even for interior walls that don't connect to the party wall, the City of Toronto's permitting requirements apply when you're removing partition walls because of the potential structural implications. Many walls that homeowners assume are non-load-bearing actually carry some structural load — particularly in older Toronto semi-detached homes in neighbourhoods like Leslieville, Riverdale, the Annex, and Roncesvalles, where the original construction may have been modified over decades in ways that changed how loads are distributed. A wall that was originally non-structural may have become load-bearing if previous renovations altered the framing above.

Getting the permit is straightforward. You'll need to submit drawings showing the existing layout and the proposed changes. The City will likely require a **structural engineer's letter or stamped drawings** confirming that the wall is non-load-bearing and that its removal won't affect the building's structural integrity. A structural engineer's assessment typically costs **$300–$800** in the GTA, and it's money well spent — removing a load-bearing wall without proper support can cause sagging floors, cracked ceilings throughout the house, and potentially catastrophic structural failure.

The building permit for a wall removal in Toronto typically costs **$200–$500** depending on the scope of the project. The process usually involves two inspections: one after demolition to verify the removed wall's connections have been properly addressed, and one after the drywall finishing is complete.

What the Drywall Work Involves

Once the wall is removed, you'll need drywall work to patch and finish the ceiling where the wall was attached, blend the floor-to-wall transitions, and finish any newly exposed surfaces. In a semi-detached home, this typically involves **patching the ceiling** along the line where the wall was removed (often a 4–8 foot run), **finishing the adjacent walls** where they connected to the removed wall, and potentially **skim coating a larger area** of the ceiling to blend the patch seamlessly.

The drywall patching and finishing after a wall removal in a semi-detached home typically runs **$800–$2,500** depending on the size of the wall, the condition of the surrounding drywall, and the finish level required. If the existing ceiling has a textured finish (stipple, popcorn, or knockdown), matching that texture on the patched area adds complexity and cost — many homeowners take the opportunity to remove the old texture from the entire ceiling and go with a smooth **Level 4 or Level 5 finish** for a clean, modern look. Ceiling texture removal runs

$2.00–$5.00 per square foot including skim coating.

One practical tip: in older Toronto semi-detached homes, the walls may contain **plaster and lath** rather than modern drywall. Removing a plaster wall generates significantly more dust and debris than removing drywall, and the patching work to blend new drywall into existing plaster surfaces requires a skilled finisher. If your home was built before 1990, have the wall materials **tested for asbestos** before any demolition begins — joint compound and textured finishes from that era frequently contain asbestos, and Ontario Regulation 278/05 requires certified abatement if asbestos is present.

Need a drywall professional to handle the finishing work after your wall removal? Toronto Drywall Installers can match you with experienced local contractors for a free estimate.

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- Vista Builders Ltd
- LMP Scaffolding Services
- Metro Rent-All
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Q10

What are Toronto's building code requirements for drywall around a wood-burning fireplace or stove?

Drywall around a wood-burning fireplace or stove must maintain specific clearance distances and use fire-rated materials as required by the Ontario Building Code and CSA B365 (Installation Code for Solid-Fuel-Burning Appliances and Equipment). The exact requirements depend on the type of appliance, its listing and certification, and whether you're dealing with a factory-built fireplace, a masonry fireplace, or a freestanding wood stove.

The fundamental rule is that **standard drywall — even 5/8-inch Type X — cannot be in direct contact with a wood-burning appliance or its chimney connector (stovepipe)**. Drywall is a combustible material for the purposes of clearance requirements because the paper facing can ignite. The required clearances between a wood-burning appliance and combustible materials (including drywall) are specified by the appliance manufacturer and enforced by the Ontario Building Code. Typical minimums are **36 inches (900mm)** from a single-wall stovepipe to combustible walls and **18 inches (450mm)** from a double-wall insulated stovepipe, though manufacturer specifications may differ.

For the wall and ceiling areas within the clearance zone, you have several options that the building code and WETT (Wood Energy Technology Transfer) inspectors will accept. A **non-combustible wall shield** can be installed to reduce the required clearances — this typically involves mounting cement board, sheet metal, or a manufactured heat shield on non-combustible spacers that create a minimum **1-inch (25mm) air gap** behind the shield. The air gap is critical because it allows air to circulate behind the shield, preventing heat buildup that could ignite the wall framing and drywall behind it. The shield must extend beyond the appliance on all sides by the distance specified in the manufacturer's installation manual.

Fire-Rated Assemblies Near Fireplaces

For **factory-built (zero-clearance) fireplaces**, the manufacturer's installation instructions are the governing document. These fireplaces are tested and listed to specific standards (ULC S610 in Canada), and the installation manual specifies exactly what materials can be used around the unit and at what distances. Most factory-built fireplaces allow standard drywall on the surrounding wall at specified clearances (typically **0–2 inches** from the fireplace cabinet, depending on the model), with a non-combustible mantel clearance specified separately. A building inspector in Toronto will check that the installation matches the manufacturer's listing exactly — any deviation voids the listing and creates a fire hazard.

For **masonry fireplaces**, the Ontario Building Code requires that the firebox be constructed of fire brick and refractory mortar, surrounded by a minimum **2-inch air space** between the masonry and any combustible framing or drywall. The hearth extension must project at least **400mm (16 inches)** in front of the fireplace opening and **200mm (8 inches)** beyond each side. Drywall on the wall above and beside the fireplace must maintain these clearances from the masonry structure.

For **freestanding wood stoves**, the clearance requirements are the most significant concern for drywall installers. The area behind and beside the stove typically requires a **wall protection system** — this is not just extra drywall, but a dedicated non-combustible assembly with proper air spacing. Simply adding a second layer of drywall does not meet code requirements because drywall's paper facing remains combustible.

The chimney penetration through the ceiling is another critical area. Where the chimney passes through a ceiling, a **manufactured ceiling support box** (firestop) is required, maintaining the specified clearances to all combustible materials including drywall and framing. The drywall must be cut to the exact specifications of the ceiling support box — too tight and you risk combustible material within the clearance zone, too loose and you have an unsealed penetration.

Building permits are required for all wood-burning appliance installations in Toronto, and a **WETT-certified inspector** should inspect the completed installation. The permit ensures that all clearances, materials, and installation details meet code. For drywall contractors, the key takeaway is that drywall around wood-burning appliances isn't standard framing-and-boarding work — it requires careful coordination with the appliance installer to maintain proper clearances and use appropriate materials where required. The cost for drywall work around a wood stove or fireplace installation typically runs **$500–$2,000** depending on the scope, clearance requirements, and finish level.

If you're planning a wood-burning appliance installation or renovation around an existing fireplace, find a drywall contractor experienced with fire-rated assemblies through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=insulation.

Q11

How much does a building permit cost for a basement finishing project with drywall in Mississauga?

A building permit for a basement finishing project in Mississauga typically costs between $350 and $1,200, depending on the declared project value and the scope of work involved. The City of Mississauga (Region of Peel) calculates permit fees based on the total construction value of the project, using a formula of approximately

$12–$15 per $1,000 of construction value, with minimum fees applying for smaller projects.

For a typical basement finishing project in a Mississauga home — which includes framing, insulation, vapour barrier, electrical rough-in, plumbing (if adding a bathroom), drywall hanging and finishing, and flooring — the declared construction value usually falls between **$25,000 and $60,000** depending on the size and complexity. An 800-square-foot basement with a bathroom, basic bedroom, and living area might be valued at $35,000–$45,000, putting your permit fee in the **$400–$700 range**. Larger or more complex projects with multiple bathrooms, wet bars, or home theatres push the value and permit cost higher.

The permit fee covers multiple inspections throughout the project, including **framing inspection, electrical rough-in, plumbing rough-in, insulation and vapour barrier inspection, and final inspection**. All of these inspections must be completed and passed before drywall can be hung (with the exception of the final inspection, which happens after everything is complete). The drywall phase cannot begin until the insulation and vapour barrier inspection is approved — this is a hard stop that catches many homeowners off guard when scheduling their drywall contractor.

What the Permit Process Looks Like

To apply for a basement finishing permit in Mississauga, you'll need to submit **floor plans** showing the proposed layout, including room dimensions, window locations (egress windows are required for bedrooms), electrical panel location, bathroom plumbing connections, and the location of the furnace and water heater. If you're creating a **secondary suite** under Mississauga's Additional Residential Unit (ARU) bylaws, additional requirements apply — including separate entrance, fire separation, and larger minimum room sizes — which significantly affects the drywall scope and cost.

The permit review process in Mississauga typically takes **2–4 weeks** for a standard basement finishing application. During busy spring and summer months, review times can stretch longer. Many homeowners start the permit process first and then line up their drywall contractor once the permit is issued, since a professional crew can hang and finish an 800–1,200 square foot basement in **5–10 working days**.

In addition to the building permit, you'll likely need an **electrical permit** (separate application, approximately **$100–$250**) and a **plumbing permit** if you're adding a bathroom or wet bar (approximately **$100–$300**). These are issued through the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) and the City of Mississauga respectively. All permits must be posted visibly at the job site during construction.

Drywall Costs to Budget Alongside the Permit

The drywall scope for a Mississauga basement finishing project typically runs **$5,000–$12,000** depending on the basement size and finish level. This includes framing on exterior walls (if not already in place), **R-20 insulation**

(code minimum for below-grade walls), **6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier**, drywall hanging, taping, and finishing to a **Level 4 paint-ready standard**. For an 800–1,200 square foot basement, you're looking at roughly 2,500–4,000 square feet of wall and ceiling surface area when you account for all walls and the ceiling.

Budget for **moisture-resistant drywall** (green board at **$20–$28 per sheet** or purple/mould-resistant board at **$24–$32 per sheet**) in the bathroom and laundry areas. Standard 1/2-inch drywall (**$14–$20 per sheet**) is used on walls, while **5/8-inch drywall** (**$18–$26 per sheet**) is recommended for ceilings to prevent sagging — especially important in basements where slightly higher humidity levels can cause 1/2-inch ceiling boards to sag over time.

Don't forget to budget for the **furnace and water heater enclosure**, which requires **5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall** (**$20–$28 per sheet**) to meet Ontario Building Code fire separation requirements. This is a detail that building inspectors in Mississauga consistently check.

The total cost of a finished basement in Mississauga — including permits, all trades, materials, and finishes — typically ranges from **$30,000 to $60,000**, with the drywall representing roughly 15–25% of that total. Get matched with a local drywall contractor for a free estimate through Toronto Drywall Installers to get accurate pricing for your specific project.

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Q12

What drywall requirements must be met for a legal secondary suite under Toronto's multiplex zoning rules?

A legal secondary suite in Toronto requires fire-rated drywall assemblies achieving a minimum 1-hour fire resistance rating between the suite and the primary dwelling, along with sound isolation meeting STC 50

requirements under the Ontario Building Code. Toronto's multiplex zoning rules (adopted in 2023–2024) allow up to four units on most residential lots, and each unit must meet the full Ontario Building Code requirements for a separate dwelling unit — which has significant implications for drywall specifications, materials, and installation quality.

The **fire separation** between dwelling units is the single most important drywall requirement. The Ontario Building Code requires a minimum **1-hour fire resistance rating** for walls and floor/ceiling assemblies separating dwelling units within the same building. This typically requires one of the following drywall assemblies on the separating wall:

- **Two layers of 5/8-inch Type X drywall** on each side of the wall framing (four layers total) on standard wood stud framing
- **One layer of 5/8-inch Type X drywall** on each side of a **staggered-stud or double-stud wall** assembly with insulation in the cavity
- A tested and listed assembly from the Gypsum Association's Fire Resistance Design Manual that achieves the required 1-hour rating

  The fire separation must be **continuous from floor to ceiling and wall to wall**, with no gaps, unsealed penetrations, or interruptions. Every electrical box, plumbing penetration, HVAC duct, and structural connection through the fire-rated wall must be fire-stopped with approved materials. In practical terms, this means the drywall contractor must coordinate closely with electrical and plumbing trades to ensure that all penetrations are properly sealed before the final layer of drywall is installed.

Sound Transmission Requirements

STC 50 (Sound Transmission Class 50) is the minimum requirement for walls and floor/ceiling assemblies between dwelling units under the Ontario Building Code. Standard single-stud walls with one layer of drywall on each side achieve roughly **STC 33–38** — well below the requirement. Meeting STC 50 requires deliberate acoustic design in the wall and floor assemblies.

Common approaches to achieve STC 50 in GTA secondary suite projects include **resilient channel** on one or both sides of the separating wall, with **two layers of 5/8-inch Type X drywall** mounted on the resilient channel and fibreglass or mineral wool insulation in the cavity. This assembly can achieve **STC 50–55** when properly installed. The critical detail with resilient channel is that **no screw can penetrate through the resilient channel into the stud behind it** — a single screw that short-circuits the channel dramatically reduces the sound isolation. This is a common installation error that defeats the entire purpose of the resilient channel, and it's why sound isolation work should always be done by experienced drywall professionals.

For floor/ceiling assemblies between stacked units (common in Toronto's new multiplex conversions), achieving STC 50 typically requires **two layers of 5/8-inch Type X drywall on resilient channel** on the ceiling below, mineral wool insulation in the joist cavity, and a **sound-dampening underlayment** beneath the flooring above. **QuietRock** sound-dampening drywall ($55–$90 per 4x8 sheet) can simplify these assemblies by providing higher STC performance in a single layer compared to standard drywall.

Additional Drywall Requirements for Secondary Suites

Each dwelling unit must have its own enclosed entry with fire-rated drywall separating shared corridors or vestibules from the living spaces. Ceiling heights must meet the Ontario Building Code minimum of **2.1 metres** in habitable rooms and **1.95 metres** in basements, which affects bulkhead planning around mechanical systems and ductwork.

Moisture-resistant drywall (green board or mould-resistant purple board) should be used in all bathrooms, kitchens, and laundry areas within the secondary suite. In basement secondary suites — the most common type in Toronto — the exterior walls require **R-20 insulation** with a **6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier** before drywall installation.

The drywall scope for a typical basement secondary suite in Toronto runs **$8,000–$18,000** depending on size, number of rooms, and the complexity of the fire-rated and sound-rated assemblies. For a full secondary suite conversion including all trades (electrical, plumbing, HVAC, framing, drywall, flooring, kitchen), budget **$50,000–$120,000** in the current GTA market.

A building permit is mandatory, and the City of Toronto inspector will specifically check the fire separation assemblies, sound isolation details, and vapour barrier installation before and after drywall is hung. Get matched with a drywall contractor experienced in secondary suite fire-rated assemblies through Toronto Drywall Installers — it's free and ensures you're working with someone who understands these code requirements.

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Q13

Does Ontario Building Code require WSIB-covered workers for drywall installation on residential projects?

The Ontario Building Code itself does not mandate WSIB coverage — but Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA) does require most drywall contractors performing residential work to carry WSIB coverage for their workers. The distinction matters because WSIB requirements come from workplace safety legislation, not the building code, though both apply simultaneously to any residential drywall project in the GTA.

Under Ontario law, any employer in the construction industry — including drywall contractors — must register with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and maintain active coverage for all workers. This means that if you hire a drywall company with employees, those workers must be covered by WSIB. The only exception is an **independent operator** (a sole proprietor with no employees) who may choose voluntary (optional) WSIB coverage. However, even independent operators face risks without coverage: if they're injured on your property while performing drywall work, you as the homeowner could potentially be held liable for medical costs, lost wages, and damages if the worker doesn't have their own coverage.

This is why verifying WSIB coverage is one of the most important steps when hiring a drywall contractor in Toronto. You can verify any contractor's WSIB coverage status online through WSIB's Independent Operator Status tool or by requesting their **WSIB clearance certificate**. A valid clearance certificate confirms that the contractor is registered, their account is in good standing, and their premiums are paid up to date. If a contractor cannot produce a current clearance certificate, that's a significant red flag.

Why WSIB Matters for Homeowners

Drywall installation is physically demanding work that carries real injury risk. Hanging ceiling sheets requires lifting 60–80 pound boards overhead repeatedly. Stilts are commonly used for taping and finishing high walls and ceilings. Power tools including drywall saws, routers, and screw guns create injury potential. Dust from sanding is a respiratory hazard. In the GTA, drywall crews work in all conditions — cold basements in winter, hot upper floors in summer, tight condo spaces with limited ventilation.

If a worker is injured on your property and doesn't have WSIB coverage, the consequences for you as the homeowner can be severe. Under Ontario law, you could face a **claim for damages including medical expenses, rehabilitation costs, and lost income**. WSIB coverage protects both the worker and you as the property owner — it's a no-fault insurance system that covers workplace injuries without the need for litigation.

WSIB premiums for drywall contractors in Ontario are based on the industry classification rate, which for drywall installation and finishing falls under construction rate groups. The premium rate is typically **$2.00–$4.00 per**

$100 of insurable earnings, which means WSIB coverage adds roughly **2–4%** to a contractor's labour costs. This cost is built into legitimate contractors' pricing — if a quote seems unusually low compared to others, one reason may be that the contractor is not carrying WSIB coverage.

What to Ask Your Drywall Contractor

Before hiring a drywall contractor for any GTA project — from a small patch job to a full basement finish — ask for the following: a **current WSIB clearance certificate** (issued within the last 60–90 days), proof of **commercial general liability insurance** (minimum $2 million is standard in the GTA), and if the project requires a building permit, confirmation that they understand the inspection process and will coordinate with inspectors.

For larger projects like basement finishing ($5,000–$12,000 for drywall scope) or secondary suite creation, you should also ask whether the contractor hires subcontractors and whether those subcontractors also carry WSIB coverage. Under Ontario law, a general contractor is responsible for ensuring WSIB coverage for all workers on site, including subcontractors' employees.

The bottom line is straightforward: **always hire WSIB-covered drywall contractors for your Toronto-area project.** The cost difference is minimal, and the protection it provides — for the workers and for you as the homeowner — is invaluable. Browse drywall professionals through the Toronto Construction Network directory to find contractors who operate professionally and carry proper coverage.

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Q14

What are the fire separation requirements for drywall in a Toronto semi-detached or row house shared wall?

The shared wall (party wall) between units in a Toronto semi-detached or row house must achieve a minimum 1-hour fire resistance rating under the Ontario Building Code, which requires specific drywall assemblies — typically two layers of 5/8-inch Type X drywall on each side of the framing. This fire separation requirement exists to prevent fire from spreading between dwelling units, giving occupants time to evacuate and fire services time to respond.

The 1-hour fire resistance rating is a performance standard, meaning the wall assembly as a whole must withstand fire exposure for at least 60 minutes before failure. The specific drywall configuration depends on the framing type. For **standard single-stud party walls** (common in older Toronto semi-detached homes in neighbourhoods like Leslieville, the Danforth, Roncesvalles, and the Junction), achieving a 1-hour rating typically requires **two layers of 5/8-inch Type X drywall on each side** — four layers total. Each layer must be screwed with the joints staggered between layers, and all joints must be fully taped and finished with joint compound.

For **staggered-stud party walls** (more common in newer construction and renovations), a 1-hour rating can be achieved with **one layer of 5/8-inch Type X drywall on each side**, with the staggered studs providing the additional fire resistance through separation. Mineral wool insulation in the cavity further enhances both fire resistance and sound isolation.

Sound Transmission Requirements

The party wall must also meet **STC 50** (Sound Transmission Class 50) under the Ontario Building Code, which governs sound transmission between dwelling units. Fire-rated assemblies and sound-rated assemblies often go hand in hand, since the same design principles — mass, air space, and decoupling — serve both purposes.

A common GTA party wall assembly that meets both the 1-hour fire rating and STC 50 consists of **double 5/8-inch Type X drywall on resilient channel on one side**, standard 5/8-inch Type X drywall on the other side, mineral wool insulation in the cavity, and all joints taped and sealed with acoustical sealant at the perimeter. This assembly can achieve **STC 52–56** depending on construction quality.

The installation of **resilient channel** is a critical detail that must be done correctly. Resilient channel is a thin metal furring strip that decouples the drywall from the framing, breaking the rigid connection that transmits sound vibrations. The drywall screws must go only into the resilient channel — never through the channel into the stud behind. A single screw that short-circuits the resilient channel creates a rigid bridge that can reduce the STC rating by 10–15 points, effectively negating the entire sound isolation benefit of the assembly.

Maintaining the Fire Separation During Renovations

If you're renovating a semi-detached or row house in Toronto, **maintaining the party wall fire separation is a critical code requirement** that building inspectors will specifically check. Common renovation activities that can

compromise the fire separation include:

Electrical work — running new wiring through the party wall requires fire-rated electrical boxes (or putty pads around standard boxes) and fire caulking around all penetrations. Standard electrical boxes create a gap in the fire separation that can allow fire to pass through in minutes rather than the required 60.

Removing or modifying drywall on the party wall — if drywall on the party wall is damaged, cracked, or needs to be replaced, the replacement must match or exceed the original fire-rated assembly. You cannot replace Type X drywall with standard drywall and maintain the fire rating.

Plumbing and HVAC penetrations — any pipe, duct, or mechanical connection that passes through the party wall must be sealed with approved fire stop materials. Expanding foam is not an acceptable fire stop — ULC-listed fire caulking, fire stop collars, or intumescent sealants are required.

The cost for drywall work on a party wall fire separation depends on the scope. Replacing damaged Type X drywall on one side of a typical semi-detached party wall runs **$2,000–$5,000** for materials and labour. If the entire party wall assembly needs to be upgraded to meet current code — which is sometimes required during major renovations — the cost can reach **$5,000–$12,000** including double layers of Type X, resilient channel, insulation, and fire stopping at all penetrations.

For any renovation work involving the party wall in a Toronto semi-detached or row house, **a building permit is required**. The City of Toronto inspector will verify that the fire separation is maintained and that all penetrations are properly fire-stopped. Get matched with a drywall contractor experienced in fire-rated party wall assemblies through Toronto Drywall Installers — this is specialized work where proper installation is literally a life-safety issue.

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- Olkron Developments

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Q15

Do I need a permit to add drywall to an unfinished area above a Toronto detached garage?

Yes, you almost certainly need a building permit to finish the space above your detached garage in Toronto. Adding drywall to an unfinished area above a detached garage involves converting that space from unfinished storage or attic area to habitable or semi-habitable space, and the City of Toronto requires a building permit for this type of conversion because it triggers multiple Ontario Building Code requirements related to structural capacity, fire safety, insulation, and egress.

The reason a permit is required even if you're "just adding drywall" is that the Ontario Building Code treats finishing a previously unfinished space as creating new habitable area. This triggers a chain of requirements that go well beyond the drywall itself. The building inspector will want to verify that the **floor structure can support the intended live load** (minimum 1.9 kPa for habitable space versus 0.5 kPa for attic storage — roughly four times the load), that proper **insulation and vapour barrier** are installed, that **electrical wiring** meets current code, that the **stairway or access** meets code requirements for width, headroom, and handrails, and that the space meets minimum **ceiling height** requirements (2.1 metres for habitable rooms).

Key Code Requirements That Affect the Drywall Scope

Insulation is a major factor. Since the space above a detached garage is essentially an exposed structure — roof above, unheated garage below — the insulation requirements are significant. The roof/ceiling assembly needs a minimum of **R-31** insulation (attic insulation standard), and the floor above the garage needs a minimum of **R-31** as well since the garage is considered an unheated space. The walls (gable ends and any knee walls) require **R-24** insulation. All insulated assemblies need a **6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier** on the warm side before drywall is installed. This means the drywall scope is inseparable from the insulation scope — your drywall contractor will need to install or verify insulation and vapour barrier before boarding.

Fire separation between the garage and the living space above requires **5/8-inch Type X drywall** on the garage ceiling. If you're only finishing the space above and not the garage ceiling below, you'll still need to install Type X drywall on the underside of the floor assembly (the garage ceiling) to achieve the required **45-minute fire resistance rating**. This is the same garage-to-living-space fire separation required for attached garages under the Ontario Building Code.

Egress is another critical consideration. If you're creating a habitable room (bedroom, home office, living area), the Ontario Building Code requires an **egress window** in each bedroom — minimum 0.35 square metres of unobstructed opening with a minimum dimension of 380mm. In a garage loft, this typically means adding or

enlarging windows in the gable ends or installing dormers, which significantly increases the project scope and cost.

Realistic Costs for a Garage Loft Finish in Toronto

The drywall scope alone for finishing a space above a typical Toronto two-car detached garage (roughly 400–600 square feet) runs **$4,000–$10,000**, including insulation, vapour barrier, hanging, taping, and finishing to Level 4. If you need Type X on the garage ceiling below, add another **$1,500–$3,000** for that assembly.

The building permit for this type of project in Toronto typically costs **$300–$800**. You'll also need electrical permits (ESA) for any new wiring, which adds **$100–$250**. If structural upgrades are needed to the floor system to meet live-load requirements, a **structural engineer's assessment** ($500–$1,000) and potentially **structural reinforcement** ($2,000–$8,000) will be required before any finishing work begins.

The total project cost for finishing a garage loft in Toronto — including structural, insulation, electrical, drywall, flooring, and permits — typically ranges from **$15,000 to $40,000** depending on the scope, condition of the existing structure, and finish level.

The one scenario where you might not need a permit is if you're installing drywall purely as a wall and ceiling finish in an already code-compliant space — for example, if the previous owner finished the space with proper structure, insulation, and electrical but left the drywall incomplete. In that case, the drywall installation itself (like-for-like finishing) may not require a new permit, but it's worth calling 311 (Toronto's municipal information line) to confirm based on your specific situation.

Find a drywall contractor experienced with garage loft finishing through the Toronto Construction Network directory to get an accurate estimate for your project.

Q16

What Ontario Building Code rules apply to drywall installation around electrical panels and service entrances?

The Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC) require specific clearances around electrical panels and service entrances that directly affect how drywall is installed in the surrounding area. While the drywall itself doesn't have special material requirements around panels (standard 1/2-inch drywall is acceptable), the **working clearance space** in front of and around the panel must be maintained, and the panel must remain fully accessible after drywall is installed.

The OESC requires a minimum **working clearance of 1 metre (39 inches) in front of the electrical panel**, measured from the face of the panel to any obstruction including the opposite wall. This space must be clear from floor to a height of at least **2 metres** (or to the ceiling if lower). The width of the clear space must be at least **750mm (30 inches)** or the width of the panel, whichever is greater. These clearances exist so that electricians can safely work on the panel and so that someone can stand in front of it to shut off breakers in an emergency.

When a drywall contractor is boarding the room containing the electrical panel — most commonly a basement utility room, mechanical room, or a dedicated electrical closet — they need to **frame and drywall around the panel** in a way that doesn't reduce these required clearances. The panel must not be recessed behind the drywall surface in a way that makes breakers difficult to access. In most residential installations, the panel is surface-mounted on the wall, and the drywall is installed up to the edges of the panel box, leaving the panel face fully exposed and accessible.

Practical Drywall Detailing Around Panels

The most common approach is to **run the drywall to within 1/2 inch of the panel box on all four sides**, leaving a clean gap that's covered by the panel's trim ring or cover plate. The panel cover must be removable without disturbing the drywall — this means drywall cannot overlap the panel edges. If the panel is recessed into a stud cavity, the drywall should be cut to the exact opening size so the panel's trim plate sits flush against the drywall surface.

For **new installations during a basement finish**, the framing layout needs to account for the panel location before any drywall work begins. If the panel is on an exterior wall that's being framed with 2x4 studs and insulation, the framing must be designed so the panel extends through the wall assembly and remains accessible from the finished side. Some drywall contractors install a **plywood backer** (3/4-inch plywood, minimum 4 feet wide and extending from floor to at least 6 inches above the panel) behind and around the electrical panel to provide solid mounting for the panel and a clean surface for the drywall to terminate against. This plywood backer also provides

a solid surface for future electrical work without risk of damaging the drywall.

Fire Rating Considerations

If the electrical panel is located in a **furnace room or mechanical room** that requires fire separation from the rest of the house, the drywall around and near the panel must be **5/8-inch Type X** to maintain the fire-rated assembly. The fire separation around the furnace room must be continuous — the panel location doesn't create an exemption from fire rating requirements. Any penetrations through the fire-rated drywall for electrical conduit or cables entering the panel must be sealed with **fire-rated caulking or approved fire stop materials**.

In **condo and multi-unit buildings** in Toronto, the electrical room or panel closet may be subject to both fire separation requirements and specific building management rules about access and finishes. The fire-rated assembly around condo electrical rooms typically requires **5/8-inch Type X drywall** on all walls and the ceiling, with a fire-rated door.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Never drywall over an electrical panel or junction box. This seems obvious, but in renovation projects, especially in older Toronto homes where previous owners have done unpermitted work, it's not uncommon to find drywall installed over junction boxes, abandoned panels, or live wiring. The OESC requires that all junction boxes and panels remain accessible without removing any permanent part of the building structure. If you discover buried electrical boxes during drywall removal, stop work and have a licensed electrician assess the situation before proceeding.

Never install drywall that blocks the panel's dead front cover from being fully removed. The dead front (the inner cover with the breaker openings) must swing open or be completely removable for maintenance and inspection. Drywall returns, bulkheads, or shelving that prevent full cover removal violate the electrical code.

The drywall cost for properly framing and finishing around an electrical panel in a GTA basement finishing project is typically **$300–$800**, depending on the complexity of the framing required and whether fire-rated materials are needed. This is a small portion of the overall basement drywall budget of **$5,000–$12,000**, but getting it right is essential for code compliance and safety.

For basement finishing projects that involve drywall work around electrical panels, coordination between your drywall contractor and a licensed electrician is essential. Find experienced drywall professionals through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=insulation.

Q17

How does the Ontario Building Code regulate drywall in areas with high moisture like GTA home laundry rooms?

The Ontario Building Code requires moisture-resistant materials in high-humidity areas like laundry rooms, but the specific drywall requirements depend on whether the space is a new build, a renovation requiring a permit, or a cosmetic upgrade. For laundry rooms in GTA homes, the key concern is protecting the wall cavity from moisture that can lead to mould growth and structural damage behind the drywall.

The Ontario Building Code (OBC) does not explicitly mandate a specific drywall type for laundry rooms the way it does for fire-rated assemblies in garages or party walls. However, several code provisions directly affect what goes on your laundry room walls. First, the **vapour barrier requirement** applies to any insulated exterior wall in Ontario's Climate Zone 6 — a 6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier must be installed on the warm side of the wall, between the insulation and the drywall. This prevents warm, moist air from your laundry room (which can be extremely humid when the dryer is running or clothes are air-drying) from condensing inside the wall cavity. Second, the OBC requires **adequate ventilation** in rooms that generate moisture. Laundry rooms should have either mechanical ventilation (an exhaust fan vented to the exterior) or a window that opens. Your dryer must be vented directly to the exterior through rigid or semi-rigid metal ductwork — never into the wall cavity or attic.

For the drywall itself, best practice in GTA laundry rooms is to use **moisture-resistant (green board) drywall** at minimum, which runs $20–$28 per 4x8 sheet in the GTA market. Green board has a moisture-resistant paper facing and core treatment that resists humidity better than standard drywall. For even better protection, especially in laundry rooms that also house a utility sink or are located in basements where ambient humidity is already higher, **mould-resistant (purple board) drywall** at $24–$32 per sheet is the superior choice. Purple board uses fibreglass facing instead of paper, eliminating the organic food source that mould feeds on. This is particularly important in older GTA homes — post-war bungalows across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke often have basement laundry rooms with chronic humidity issues, and standard drywall in these spaces frequently develops hidden mould behind the wall surface.

Behind the drywall matters as much as the board itself. If your laundry room shares an exterior wall, ensure the insulation meets the minimum R-20 for below-grade walls (or R-24 for above-grade walls in renovations) and that the vapour barrier is continuous with all seams sealed using acoustic sealant or Tuck Tape. Any penetrations — dryer vent, water supply lines, drain pipes — must be sealed around the vapour barrier to maintain its integrity. In basement laundry rooms, verify there is no active water infiltration before installing any drywall. Water seeping through foundation walls will saturate drywall from behind, and you will not see it until mould has spread extensively through the wall cavity.

For laundry rooms behind the washer and dryer, consider installing a **waterproof membrane or cement board** on the lower portion of the wall (the first 4 feet) as extra insurance against washing machine leaks and splashes. This

is not code-required but is a smart precaution that GTA contractors increasingly recommend, especially after seeing the damage that a single washing machine hose failure can cause — which typically means tearing out all the drywall, remediating mould, and starting over at triple the cost.

The cost to properly drywall a typical GTA laundry room (roughly 80–120 square feet of wall area) with moisture-resistant board, proper vapour barrier, taping, and finishing runs approximately $1,200–$2,500 depending on the scope and condition of the existing walls. If you are finishing a basement laundry room as part of a larger basement renovation, the drywall work will require a building permit, and the inspector will check for proper insulation, vapour barrier installation, and ventilation before you can close up the walls.

A capable homeowner can handle replacing damaged drywall in an existing laundry room with moisture-resistant board as a like-for-like repair without a permit. However, if you are creating a new laundry room or finishing an unfinished basement space, hire a professional drywall contractor to ensure the moisture management system — insulation, vapour barrier, ventilation, and board selection — works together as a complete assembly. Get matched with a drywall contractor for a free estimate through Toronto Drywall Installers.

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Q18

What building permit inspections are required during a drywall project in Brampton before closing up walls?

Before you can close up walls with drywall in Brampton, you must pass a framing and insulation inspection — often called the "pre-drywall" or "rough-in" inspection — which is the single most important inspection in any drywall project. The City of Brampton follows the Ontario Building Code, and their building inspection

process requires that all work concealed behind drywall be inspected and approved before the walls are covered.

The specific inspections required depend on the scope of your project, but for a typical basement finish or renovation in Brampton that involves new walls and drywall, you can expect the following inspection sequence before you are cleared to hang drywall.

Pre-Drywall Inspections

The framing inspection verifies that all new wall framing meets Ontario Building Code requirements — correct stud spacing (typically 16 inches on centre for load-bearing walls, 16 or 24 inches for non-load-bearing), proper header sizes above door and window openings, adequate blocking for future fixtures, and correct fire-stopping at the top and bottom plates where walls meet floor and ceiling assemblies. For basement finishing projects, the inspector will also check that the framing is properly fastened to the concrete foundation and that any required clearances from the foundation wall are maintained.

The rough-in electrical inspection must be completed by a licensed electrician and inspected by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) before drywall goes up. This covers all wiring, outlet boxes, switch boxes, panel connections, and smoke/carbon monoxide detector locations. In Brampton, ESA inspection is separate from the municipal building inspection — your electrician typically arranges this. The ESA inspector will verify that all electrical boxes are flush with the anticipated drywall surface (boxes must not be recessed more than 6mm behind the finished wall surface).

The rough-in plumbing inspection applies if your project involves any new plumbing — adding a basement bathroom, relocating a kitchen sink, or adding laundry connections. The plumbing must be pressure-tested and inspected before walls are closed.

The insulation and vapour barrier inspection is critical in Ontario's Climate Zone 6. The inspector will verify that insulation meets minimum R-values (R-20 for below-grade basement walls, R-24 for above-grade exterior walls in renovations), that the 6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier is installed on the warm side of all insulated walls with properly sealed seams and penetrations, and that there are no gaps or compression in the insulation that would reduce its effectiveness. This inspection is frequently combined with the framing inspection in Brampton.

The HVAC rough-in inspection applies if you are adding or modifying heating, ventilation, or air conditioning ductwork as part of your renovation. New duct runs, return air pathways, and any modifications to the existing HVAC system must be inspected before being concealed.

Fire separation inspection is required for specific assemblies — the wall between an attached garage and the living space must achieve a minimum 45-minute fire resistance rating using 5/8-inch Type X drywall on the garage side, and the inspector will verify the correct board type is being used and that the assembly matches the approved

plans. For secondary suites, fire separation requirements between the units are also inspected at this stage.

Once all required rough-in inspections are passed, you will receive clearance to proceed with drywall installation. **Do not hang drywall before receiving this clearance.** If you cover walls before inspection, the inspector can require you to remove the drywall at your expense to verify the work behind it — a costly and frustrating setback that GTA contractors see more often than you would think.

After drywall is installed, taped, and finished, a **final inspection** covers the completed work, verifying that fire-rated assemblies have been properly finished (all joints taped and mudded on Type X installations), that smoke detectors are installed and functional, and that the overall work conforms to the approved permit drawings.

The permit and inspection fees in Brampton vary based on project scope but typically run $200–$800 for a residential renovation permit. Processing time for permit approval is usually 10–20 business days. You can apply through the City of Brampton's building permit office, and many GTA contractors will handle the permit application as part of their service.

The practical takeaway: schedule your inspections in advance, as wait times in Brampton can run 5–10 business days during busy seasons. Have your contractor coordinate with the electrician, plumber, and HVAC installer so all rough-in work is complete before calling for the pre-drywall inspection. A professional drywall contractor experienced in Brampton projects will know this sequence and plan accordingly. Browse drywall professionals in your area through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=insulation.

Q19

Are there specific Toronto bylaws about soundproofing drywall requirements for basement apartments near neighbours?

Yes — if you are creating a basement apartment (secondary suite) in Toronto, the Ontario Building Code imposes strict sound transmission requirements that directly dictate how the drywall assemblies between units must be constructed. These are not optional guidelines — they are enforceable code requirements that building inspectors will verify during the permit inspection process.

The Ontario Building Code requires a minimum **STC 50 (Sound Transmission Class 50)** rating for wall and floor/ceiling assemblies separating dwelling units, including basement apartments. This means the floor/ceiling assembly between your main-floor living space and the basement apartment below must achieve at least STC 50, and any shared walls between units must meet the same standard. STC 50 means that loud speech from the adjacent unit is barely audible — normal conversation should not be heard through the assembly.

To achieve STC 50 in a floor/ceiling assembly separating a main floor from a basement apartment, a typical code-compliant drywall assembly in the GTA includes **5/8-inch Type X drywall on the basement ceiling mounted on resilient channel** (hat channel spaced 16 or 24 inches on centre, perpendicular to the joists), with **batt insulation (R-20 minimum) filling the joist cavities**. The resilient channel is critical — it decouples the drywall from the floor joists, breaking the direct path for sound vibration. This assembly typically achieves STC 50–55 when properly installed. Adding a second layer of 5/8-inch drywall with staggered joints, or using Green Glue compound between double layers, can push the rating to STC 55–60.

The City of Toronto has been actively encouraging secondary suites since the adoption of the Municipal Code Chapter 150 provisions for second suites, and the city's zoning bylaws now permit secondary suites in most residential zones. However, every secondary suite requires a building permit, and the sound separation requirements are a key part of what inspectors check. The permit process includes review of your proposed wall and ceiling assemblies to verify they will meet or exceed STC 50.

For **shared walls** between the basement apartment and adjacent living spaces within the same building, the same STC 50 requirement applies. A standard assembly that meets this requirement is a **staggered-stud or double-stud wall** with insulation in the cavity and 5/8-inch drywall on each side. A single-stud wall with resilient channel on one side and insulated cavity can also achieve STC 50, but staggered or double-stud walls provide better real-world performance because they eliminate the rigid connection between the two drywall surfaces entirely.

Fire separation is equally important — the Ontario Building Code requires a minimum 45-minute to 1-hour fire resistance rating between dwelling units. This means 5/8-inch Type X drywall is required on the ceiling and shared

walls of the basement apartment, with all joints properly taped and finished. The fire-rating and sound-rating requirements work together — the assemblies that achieve good fire separation (double Type X drywall, insulated cavities) also contribute to better sound performance.

The cost to properly soundproof a basement apartment ceiling in the GTA runs **$5.00–$10.00 per square foot** for the drywall, resilient channel, insulation, and finishing. For a typical 700-square-foot basement apartment, that translates to roughly **$3,500–$7,000 for the ceiling assembly alone**. The shared walls add another $2,000–$5,000 depending on the wall area and assembly type. These costs are significantly higher than standard drywall installation because of the resilient channel, double layers, and the precision required — a single screw driven through the resilient channel directly into a joist (called a "short circuit") defeats the entire sound isolation system.

Common mistakes that fail inspection include using standard 1/2-inch drywall instead of 5/8-inch Type X (fails both fire and sound requirements), omitting resilient channel, leaving gaps in the insulation that create sound flanking paths, and running rigid ductwork or plumbing through the assembly without proper acoustic isolation. GTA building inspectors are experienced with secondary suite conversions and know exactly what to look for.

This is absolutely a hire-a-professional project. The drywall assemblies must be designed to meet code, installed with precision, and inspected before and after drywall installation. A professional drywall contractor experienced in Toronto secondary suite conversions will know the required assemblies and can coordinate with the other trades to ensure the sound and fire separations are maintained throughout the build. Find local drywall professionals through the Toronto Construction Network who have experience with basement apartment projects.

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