

OTTAWA WINDOW PROS

Entry Doors

Front door, side door, and back door installation,
steel, fiberglass, and wood options

10 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

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Q1

What's the best weatherstripping for an entry door in Ottawa?

EPDM rubber weatherstripping is the best choice for Ottawa entry doors, offering superior durability against our harsh freeze-thaw cycles and temperature extremes from -30°C to +35°C.

For Ottawa's climate, you want weatherstripping that maintains flexibility in extreme cold while resisting UV damage during hot summers. **EPDM rubber weatherstripping** excels in both conditions and typically lasts 10-15 years with proper installation. It creates an excellent seal against air infiltration, which is crucial for energy efficiency during our long heating season.

Door sweep weatherstripping should be adjustable aluminum with a rubber or vinyl insert that can handle snow buildup and ice formation. The sweep needs to seal tightly against your threshold while allowing the door to open freely even when ice accumulates. Avoid basic foam strips or cheap vinyl options - they'll crack and fail within 1-2 Ottawa winters.

For **door jamb weatherstripping**, look for compression-style EPDM that's specifically rated for exterior use. The weatherstripping should compress about 25% when the door closes to create a proper seal without making the door difficult to operate. Quality weatherstripping will have a durometer rating between 50-70 Shore A for the right balance of flexibility and durability.

Installation timing matters in Ottawa - avoid installing weatherstripping during extreme cold (below -10°C) as the adhesive won't cure properly and rubber materials become brittle. Spring and fall are ideal installation seasons.

For a professional assessment of your door's weatherstripping needs and proper installation, Ottawa Window Pros can ensure your entry door performs efficiently through Ottawa's demanding climate conditions.

Q2

Should I get a sidelight with my new front door?

Sidelights can dramatically enhance your front door's appearance and functionality, but the decision depends on your home's architecture, available space, and personal preferences.

Sidelights offer several compelling advantages. They flood your entryway with natural light, making your foyer feel more spacious and welcoming. This is particularly valuable in Ottawa homes where winter months can feel dark and confined. Sidelights also provide better visibility of visitors before opening the door, enhancing security. From a design perspective, they create a more impressive, balanced entrance that can significantly boost your

home's curb appeal and potentially increase property value.

Consider your home's proportions and existing architecture when making this decision. Sidelights work best with wider front entrances and complement traditional, colonial, or craftsman-style homes beautifully. If your entrance is narrow or your home has a more modern aesthetic, a single door might be more appropriate. The additional width requirement (typically 4-6 feet total) means you'll need adequate wall space on either side of the door opening.

In Ottawa's climate, energy efficiency becomes crucial with sidelights since you're adding more glass area. Look for sidelights with triple-pane glass, Low-E coatings, and proper weatherstripping to maintain energy performance. Quality sidelights should meet ENERGY STAR requirements just like your main door. The installation must include proper insulation around the frames to prevent thermal bridging.

Budget-wise, adding sidelights typically increases your project cost by \$1,000 to \$3,000 depending on the glass type, frame material, and decorative features. While this represents a significant investment, the enhanced curb appeal and natural light often justify the expense for many Ottawa homeowners.

For a professional assessment of whether sidelights suit your specific entrance and to explore design options, request a free consultation from Ottawa Window Pros to discuss your front door replacement project.

Q3

What door material needs the least maintenance?

Fiberglass entry doors require the least maintenance of all door materials, making them the top choice for busy Ottawa homeowners who want durability without constant upkeep.

Fiberglass doors are virtually maintenance-free because they don't warp, crack, or split like wood doors, and they won't dent or rust like steel doors. The color and finish are typically molded through the entire door surface or applied as a durable coating that won't chip or peel. You'll only need to wash them occasionally with soap and water, and perhaps touch up the weatherstripping every few years.

Steel doors come in second for low maintenance, especially if you choose pre-finished models with quality paint systems. However, they can dent from impact and may eventually show rust spots around the edges or hardware areas, particularly in Ottawa's winter climate with road salt exposure. Minor touch-ups with matching paint may be needed every 5-7 years.

Wood doors require the most maintenance despite their beautiful appearance. In Ottawa's climate with temperature swings from -30°C to +30°C, wood doors need regular staining or painting every 2-3 years, periodic sanding, and careful attention to prevent warping or splitting. The investment in maintenance time and materials adds up significantly over the door's lifespan.

For Ottawa homeowners, fiberglass doors offer the best value when you factor in both upfront cost and long-term maintenance savings. Quality fiberglass doors can last 30+ years with minimal care, while providing excellent insulation performance for our cold winters. Many models convincingly replicate wood grain textures if you want the wood look without the maintenance headaches.

For a free estimate on low-maintenance entry door options for your home, request a quote from Ottawa Window Pros.

Q4

Are wood doors practical for Ottawa's weather?

Wood doors can be practical for Ottawa's climate, but they require more maintenance than fiberglass or steel options and work best when properly protected from direct weather exposure.

Ottawa's harsh winters, with temperatures dropping to -30°C and significant freeze-thaw cycles, create challenging conditions for exterior wood doors. **Solid wood doors expand and contract significantly** with temperature and humidity changes, which can lead to warping, cracking, or gaps that compromise energy efficiency. The constant moisture from snow, ice, and spring melts can also cause rot or decay if the wood isn't properly sealed and maintained.

However, **high-quality wood doors can perform well in Ottawa when properly maintained**. Look for doors made from naturally weather-resistant woods like mahogany, cedar, or teak, or engineered wood products with moisture-resistant cores. These doors need annual maintenance including sanding, staining, and applying protective finishes to maintain their weather seal. **Protected installations work best** - wood doors perform much better under covered porches or entryways that shield them from direct rain and snow.

For Ottawa homeowners, fiberglass doors offer the wood appearance with better weather resistance.

Modern fiberglass entry doors can mimic wood grain perfectly while providing superior insulation (R-values of 5-8 compared to solid wood's R-2 to R-3) and requiring minimal maintenance. Steel doors with wood grain finishes are another durable alternative that handles Ottawa's climate extremes well.

If you love the authentic look of wood and don't mind annual maintenance, choose a high-quality wood door with proper weatherstripping and storm door protection. **For a free consultation on the best door options for your specific exposure and maintenance preferences, Ottawa Window Pros can help you weigh the pros and cons of each material for Ottawa's unique climate conditions.**

Q5

What is the most secure type of entry door?

Steel entry doors offer the highest security for residential homes, combining strength, durability, and advanced locking systems that make them extremely difficult to breach.

Steel doors provide superior resistance to forced entry compared to wood or fiberglass alternatives. The steel construction won't crack, warp, or split under pressure, and quality steel doors feature reinforced frames and

multiple locking points. When properly installed with a solid door frame and quality deadbolt system, steel entry doors create a formidable barrier against break-in attempts.

Modern security features significantly enhance door protection beyond just the material. Look for doors with reinforced strike plates, anti-kick door frame reinforcement, and multi-point locking systems that secure the door at several points along the frame. Smart locks and keyless entry systems add convenience while maintaining security, and many can be integrated with home security systems for additional monitoring.

In Ottawa's climate, steel doors also provide excellent insulation when properly constructed with thermal breaks and quality weatherstripping. Premium steel doors feature polyurethane foam cores that provide both security and energy efficiency - important for our Zone 6 climate conditions. The combination of security and energy performance makes steel doors an excellent investment for Ottawa homeowners.

Professional installation is crucial for maximum security benefits. Even the strongest door won't provide proper security if the frame isn't properly reinforced or if there are gaps around the installation. Licensed installers ensure proper fit, adequate frame support, and correct hardware installation that maximizes your door's security potential.

For a security assessment of your current entry door or to explore steel door options, Ottawa Window Pros can provide expert guidance on the most secure solutions for your specific situation.

Q6

Do I need a storm door if I have a new insulated entry door?

A storm door isn't necessary with a quality insulated entry door, but it can still provide valuable benefits depending on your specific situation and preferences.

Modern insulated entry doors are designed to provide excellent thermal performance on their own. A quality fiberglass or steel entry door with proper weatherstripping and a solid core can achieve impressive energy efficiency ratings without additional protection. These doors are engineered to handle Ottawa's harsh winters and temperature swings effectively.

However, **a storm door can extend the life of your main entry door** by protecting it from direct exposure to rain, snow, UV rays, and temperature extremes. This is particularly valuable if you've invested in a premium wood entry door or a door with decorative glass elements. The storm door acts as a buffer, reducing wear and fading on your main door's finish and hardware.

Storm doors also offer practical advantages beyond protection. They provide additional ventilation options during Ottawa's pleasant spring and fall weather - you can open your main door for fresh air while maintaining security and keeping insects out. Many homeowners appreciate having a second barrier for security, especially when accepting deliveries or talking to visitors.

Consider your door's exposure and your priorities. If your entry faces harsh weather conditions or gets significant sun exposure, a storm door makes more sense. If your door is well-protected by an overhang or porch, and you prioritize the clean look of just your main door, you can skip the storm door without compromising energy efficiency.

For a professional assessment of whether a storm door would benefit your specific entry door installation, Ottawa Window Pros can evaluate your situation during a free consultation and help you make the best choice for your home's needs and your budget.

Q7

Do screen doors affect the look of a new entry door?

Screen doors can significantly impact the appearance of your new entry door, but with thoughtful selection, they can actually enhance rather than detract from your home's curb appeal.

The key is choosing a screen door that complements your entry door's style and proportions. A well-matched screen door can add visual depth and create a layered, sophisticated look, while a poorly chosen one can hide your beautiful new entry door and make your entrance appear cluttered or cheap.

Modern screen door options have come a long way from the basic aluminum models of the past. Today's premium screen doors feature sleek profiles, decorative glass panels, and finishes that coordinate with popular entry door materials. Full-view storm doors with minimal frames showcase your entry door while providing protection, while decorative storm doors with matching panel configurations can create a cohesive, intentional design.

In Ottawa's climate, a quality storm door serves practical purposes beyond aesthetics - protecting your entry door from harsh winters, extending its lifespan, and providing additional insulation. The energy savings and door protection often justify any minor visual trade-offs, especially with premium entry doors that represent a significant investment.

Consider your home's architectural style when making this decision. Traditional homes often benefit from storm doors with divided light patterns that echo window designs, while contemporary homes look best with clean-lined, full-view models. The storm door's color should either match your entry door for a seamless look or coordinate with your trim color for contrast.

For the best results with your new entry door installation, discuss storm door options during your consultation. Professional installers can recommend models that enhance rather than compete with your entry door's design.

Q8

What's better for a front door - steel or fiberglass?

Fiberglass is generally the better choice for Ottawa's climate, offering superior insulation, durability, and appearance options, though steel doors remain a solid budget-friendly option.

Fiberglass doors excel in energy efficiency and weather resistance. They provide better insulation than steel (R-values of 5-7 vs 2-4 for steel), which is crucial during Ottawa's harsh winters where temperatures can drop to -

30°C. Fiberglass won't dent, rust, or warp like steel can, and it handles Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles without cracking or expanding. The material also accepts stain beautifully, allowing you to achieve a realistic wood grain appearance that's virtually maintenance-free.

Steel doors offer excellent security and value at a lower upfront cost. They're extremely strong and provide good security, making them popular for side and back entrances. However, steel doors can dent from impacts, may develop rust spots over time (especially with road salt exposure), and can feel cold to the touch in winter. They also conduct heat and cold more readily than fiberglass, potentially creating condensation issues.

For Ottawa homeowners, fiberglass typically provides better long-term value. While the initial cost is higher (\$2,000-\$4,000 installed vs \$1,500-\$2,500 for steel), fiberglass doors last longer with minimal maintenance and provide better energy savings. The improved insulation helps reduce heating costs during our long winters, and the weather resistance means fewer repairs or replacements over time.

Consider your priorities: Choose fiberglass for maximum energy efficiency, curb appeal, and low maintenance. Choose steel if budget is the primary concern and you don't mind occasional touch-up maintenance. Both materials work well with Ottawa's climate when properly installed with quality weatherstripping and a thermal break.

For a free estimate on your front door replacement, request a quote from Ottawa Window Pros to discuss which option best fits your home and budget.

Q9

How wide should a front door be for moving furniture?

A standard 36-inch wide front door is usually sufficient for most furniture, but many homeowners find that upgrading to a 42-inch door provides much better clearance for large items like sofas, mattresses, and appliances.

The **minimum door width** for residential entry doors in Ontario is 32 inches, but this can be quite tight for furniture moving. Most standard entry doors are 36 inches wide, which works for many pieces but can be challenging for oversized furniture or appliances. When you factor in the door frame and any weather stripping, your actual clear opening is typically 2-3 inches narrower than the door width itself.

For maximum furniture-moving convenience, consider a 42-inch wide entry door if you're replacing your front door. This extra 6 inches makes a significant difference when maneuvering large items. Some homeowners even opt for double entry doors (typically two 30-inch or 32-inch doors) which can provide up to 60+ inches of clear opening when both doors are open.

In Ottawa's housing market, **wider entry doors are increasingly popular** not just for practical reasons but also for improved curb appeal and accessibility. A wider door also allows for better natural light and creates a more welcoming entrance. If you're planning a door replacement, measure your current rough opening - many older Ottawa homes can accommodate a wider door without structural modifications.

Before making changes, measure your largest furniture pieces and consider your long-term needs. Remember that structural changes to door openings require building permits in Ottawa, while replacing a door in the same size opening typically doesn't.

For a free consultation on entry door options that work best for your Ottawa home, Ottawa Window Pros can help you explore door widths and styles that meet both your practical and aesthetic needs.

What is the most popular front door style in Ottawa right now?

Steel entry doors with decorative glass panels are currently the most popular front door style in Ottawa, combining durability, security, and aesthetic appeal that works well with both traditional and modern home designs.

The trend heavily favors **steel doors with partial glass inserts** - typically featuring frosted, textured, or decorative glass in the upper third of the door. These provide natural light while maintaining privacy and security. Popular glass patterns include geometric designs, prairie-style grids, and subtle textured glass that complements Ottawa's mix of heritage and contemporary architecture.

Color preferences have shifted toward darker tones, with charcoal, deep blue, forest green, and classic black leading the market. These colors offer striking curb appeal while hiding wear better than lighter colors - important given Ottawa's harsh winters with road salt and weather exposure. White and cream doors remain popular for traditional homes, but even these often feature contrasting hardware in black or bronze finishes.

Fiberglass doors are gaining significant market share as homeowners learn about their superior insulation properties and wood-like appearance without maintenance concerns. However, steel doors still dominate due to their lower cost and proven performance in Ottawa's climate. Most popular doors feature **multi-point locking systems** and **ENERGY STAR certification** to handle our Climate Zone 6 requirements.

The typical investment for a quality steel entry door with decorative glass ranges **\$1,500 to \$2,500 installed**, while fiberglass options with similar features run **\$2,000 to \$4,000**. Adding sidelights or transom windows increases costs by \$1,000 to \$3,000 but creates dramatic curb appeal that's very popular in Ottawa's established neighborhoods.

For a free estimate on your front door replacement, request a quote from Ottawa Window Pros to see current styles and pricing specific to your home.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Window Pros. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any construction or renovation project. Information is current as of March 15, 2026 and may change. Visit ottawawindowinstall.ca for the latest answers.