

OTTAWA WINDOW PROS



Patio Doors

Sliding patio doors, French doors, garden doors,
and bi-fold systems

3 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

ottawawindowinstall.ca/construction-brain

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Q1

Can I add a screen to my new French patio doors?

Yes, you can definitely add screens to French patio doors. Most French patio door installations include screen options, and there are several effective screening solutions designed specifically for this door style.

Retractable screens are the most popular choice for French patio doors because they provide unobstructed views when not in use. These screens roll up into a housing mounted above or to the side of the door opening, and you simply pull them down or across when needed. They're particularly well-suited for French doors because they don't interfere with the door swing and maintain the elegant appearance of your doors.

Traditional hinged screen doors are another option, where separate screen doors are mounted on the exterior of your French doors. These swing outward and provide full coverage, though they do add another set of doors to open and close. Some homeowners prefer this option for its durability and traditional appearance.

For Ottawa's climate, screens are especially valuable during our warm summers when you want to enjoy fresh air without letting in mosquitoes and other insects. Quality screens also help reduce UV exposure while maintaining airflow, which can help keep your home cooler and reduce air conditioning costs.

The key is planning for screens during your door installation. Screen systems work best when they're integrated into the initial installation rather than added later. Your installer can ensure proper measurements, mounting points, and clearances for whichever screen type you choose.

For a free consultation on French patio doors with screening options, request a quote from Ottawa Window Pros. We can show you different screen solutions and help you choose the best option for your specific door configuration and usage needs.

Q2

Are multi-panel sliding doors practical for Ottawa winters?

Multi-panel sliding doors can be practical for Ottawa winters, but they require careful selection and proper installation to handle our harsh climate conditions. The key is choosing quality systems designed for Canadian winters and ensuring professional installation with proper weatherproofing.

Performance in Ottawa's Climate Ottawa's extreme temperature swings (from -30°C to +35°C) put significant stress on multi-panel sliding systems. Quality units with thermally broken frames, triple-pane glass, and robust weatherstripping perform well, but cheaper systems often develop air leaks and condensation issues. The multiple

panels create more potential seal points than traditional patio doors, so weatherproofing becomes critical. Look for systems with compression seals rather than brush seals, as they maintain better contact in cold weather.

Energy Efficiency Considerations For Ottawa's Climate Zone 6 requirements, multi-panel doors need exceptional insulation values. Choose units with U-factors of 1.22 or lower to meet ENERGY STAR certification and potential Canada Greener Homes Grant eligibility. Triple-pane glass with Low-E coatings and argon fill is essential - double-pane simply won't provide adequate insulation for our winters. The frame material matters too; fiberglass or thermally broken aluminum outperform standard aluminum in cold weather.

Practical Winter Operation Multi-panel doors can be more challenging to operate in winter than traditional sliding doors. Snow and ice buildup in the track system can prevent smooth operation, and the multiple locking points may freeze. Quality systems include drainage features and track covers to minimize these issues. Regular maintenance of tracks and weatherstripping becomes more important with multiple panels.

Installation and Cost Factors Professional installation is crucial for multi-panel systems - improper installation leads to air leaks and operational problems. Expect costs of \$5,000 to \$15,000+ depending on size and quality, significantly more than standard patio doors. The structural opening may need reinforcement for larger spans, which could require building permits.

For a free consultation on multi-panel sliding door options suitable for Ottawa winters, Ottawa Window Pros can assess your specific situation and recommend systems that will perform reliably in our climate.

Q3

What is the difference between a garden door and a French door?

Garden doors and French doors are both hinged patio door styles, but they differ primarily in their opening configuration and aesthetic design.

A **garden door** typically refers to a single hinged door that opens outward from your home, often featuring a full glass panel or multiple glass panels within the door frame. Garden doors are designed to provide easy access to outdoor spaces like patios, decks, or gardens while maximizing natural light. They usually swing out to avoid taking up interior floor space and often feature a more contemporary, streamlined appearance.

French doors, on the other hand, traditionally come as a pair of doors that open from the center, with each door swinging either inward or outward. Classic French doors feature multiple glass panels (called lites) separated by decorative grilles or muntins, creating a more traditional, elegant appearance. However, modern French doors can

also feature large, uninterrupted glass panels for a cleaner look.

In Ottawa's climate, both door types benefit from **triple-pane glass** and proper weatherstripping to handle our harsh winters. French doors typically require more precise installation due to the dual-door system and center meeting point, while garden doors offer simpler installation and operation. **Energy efficiency** is excellent with both styles when properly installed with Low-E coatings and argon gas fills.

For Ottawa homeowners, garden doors work well for smaller openings and contemporary homes, while French doors suit larger openings and traditional architectural styles. Installation costs for garden doors typically range **\$2,000-\$4,000**, while French doors usually cost **\$3,000-\$6,000** depending on size and materials.

For a free consultation on which patio door style works best for your Ottawa home, Ottawa Window Pros can help you explore both options with proper sizing and energy efficiency considerations.

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