TORONTO DUCTWORK

Ductwork Costs & Pricing

GTA ductwork pricing guidance for installations, repairs, cleaning, sealing, and system upgrades with realistic 2025-2026 cost ranges

118 Expert Answers from Duct IQ

torontoductwork.com/construction-brain

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Q1

What is the price to install a kitchen exhaust duct with a roof cap in a Toronto townhouse?

Installing a kitchen exhaust duct with a roof cap in a Toronto townhouse typically costs $800–$2,500, with most projects landing in the $1,200–$1,800 range depending on run length, duct routing, and whether the hood is already in place.

The wide price range comes down to a few key variables. The most important is the distance from your range hood to the exterior termination point — a short 6-foot run through an exterior wall costs far less than a 15-foot run up through a second-floor ceiling and out the roof. Townhouses in Toronto add their own complexity: party walls on both sides often eliminate the option of a simple side-wall exit, and many GTA townhouses have finished ceilings on every floor, meaning the duct has to be concealed inside a bulkhead or chased through a wall cavity rather than run exposed through an unfinished basement. That extra framing and drywall work adds $300–$600 to the ductwork cost alone, before you factor in any finishing trades.

The roof cap itself is a meaningful cost item. A quality stainless steel or galvanized roof cap with a backdraft damper runs $80–$200 in material, and the labour to safely work on a townhouse roof — setting up proper fall protection, cutting the penetration, flashing and sealing the cap against the GTA's freeze-thaw cycles — typically adds $300–$500 in labour. A roof cap that isn't properly flashed will leak within a few winters. This is not a place to cut corners, especially given Toronto's ice storm and heavy snow load conditions.

Duct Material Matters

For kitchen exhaust, **rigid aluminum or galvanized steel duct is the only acceptable choice** — grease-laden air from cooking requires smooth, cleanable interior surfaces and fire-resistant materials. Flex duct is never appropriate for kitchen exhaust. The Ontario Building Code and NFPA 96 both require smooth-wall rigid duct for range hood exhaust. The duct should be as straight as possible with minimal elbows — each 90-degree elbow is equivalent to adding 10–15 feet of duct length in terms of airflow resistance, and a hood that can't move air efficiently defeats the purpose entirely.

The Make-Up Air Question

This is where many Toronto townhouse projects get more expensive than homeowners expect. **If your range hood moves more than approximately 400 CFM (roughly 190 litres per second), Ontario Building Code Part 6 requires a make-up air system** to replace the air being exhausted. In a tightly built modern townhouse, running a 600 or 900 CFM hood without make-up air creates negative pressure that can backdraft gas appliances — a carbon monoxide risk. A make-up air system adds $2,000–$5,000 to the project and must be interlocked with the hood so it

activates automatically. If your hood is 400 CFM or under, you are generally below the threshold, but confirm with your contractor.

Permits and Trades to Coordinate

A new kitchen exhaust duct installation in Toronto may require a building permit from the City of Toronto Building Division, particularly if the project involves structural penetrations or triggers the make-up air requirement. Budget $200–$400 for permit fees if applicable. If the hood requires new electrical wiring or a dedicated circuit, that work must be done by an **ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor** — it cannot be bundled into the ductwork quote legally.

Hire a professional for this project. Roof penetrations, grease duct installation, make-up air assessment, and any associated electrical work all require qualified tradespeople. A poorly installed kitchen exhaust duct is a fire hazard, a moisture intrusion point, and a code violation that will surface during a home inspection when you go to sell.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with a local ductwork contractor experienced in GTA townhouse exhaust projects — get matched for a free estimate through the Toronto Construction Network at **torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac**.

Q2

How much does Aeroseal duct sealing cost for a typical three-bedroom Toronto home?

Aeroseal duct sealing for a typical three-bedroom Toronto home runs $1,500–$3,500, with most GTA homeowners landing in the $2,000–$2,800 range depending on home size, duct system complexity, and the extent of leakage.

The price reflects both the proprietary Aeroseal equipment and process, and the labour involved in setting up, pressurizing, and testing the system. Unlike traditional mastic sealing, Aeroseal works from the inside — a technician seals off all your registers and return grilles, then injects a fine aerosol mist of vinyl acetate polymer particles into the pressurized duct system. Those particles travel with the airstream and accumulate at leak points, sealing gaps up to 5/8 of an inch without any dismantling of your ductwork. The process typically takes 4–6 hours for a standard three-bedroom home.

What makes Aeroseal particularly valuable in the GTA is that most of the leakage in older homes occurs in places you simply cannot reach — inside wall cavities, above finished ceilings, in enclosed chases between floors. A post-war Scarborough or North York home with a 50-year-old duct system can easily lose 25–40% of conditioned air to

leakage before it ever reaches a living space. Traditional mastic sealing only addresses joints you can physically access in the basement or utility room. Aeroseal reaches everything.

What Affects the Price

The main cost variables are home size and baseline leakage. A 1,200 sq ft bungalow with a simple duct layout costs less than a 2,500 sq ft two-storey with ducts running through multiple floors and an attic. Severely leaky systems with large gaps may require a second pass or supplemental mastic work on accessible joints before Aeroseal can effectively pressurize the system — this adds $300–$600 to the job. Some contractors also charge extra for pre- and post-test reporting, though reputable Aeroseal installers include this as standard — the computerized before-and-after leakage report is one of the technology's biggest selling points, giving you documented proof of the improvement.

Is It Worth It for a Toronto Home?

For homes with inaccessible ductwork, Aeroseal is almost always worth the investment. The Department of Energy estimates that typical duct systems leak 20–30% of conditioned air — in Toronto's climate, where you're running a furnace hard from November through March and air conditioning from June through August, that leakage translates directly to wasted energy dollars. A well-sealed duct system can reduce heating and cooling costs by 15–25% annually. At current Toronto gas and electricity rates, a $2,500 Aeroseal job often pays back in 4–7 years purely on energy savings, before accounting for improved comfort and reduced equipment wear.

Aeroseal is especially worth considering before adding a new furnace or heat pump — sealing the duct system first means your new equipment is sized correctly for the actual delivered airflow, not the leaky baseline. Many GTA HVAC contractors now recommend Aeroseal as a prerequisite to equipment replacement in older homes.

Practical tip: Get quotes from two or three Aeroseal-certified installers. Ask each one for a pre-test leakage estimate and a sample post-job report so you understand exactly what you're getting. The before-and-after CFM leakage numbers should be clearly documented. Be cautious of any contractor quoting significantly below $1,500 — the Aeroseal equipment and licensing have real costs that legitimate installers can't avoid.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with local ductwork professionals experienced with Aeroseal sealing in the GTA — get matched for free through the Toronto Construction Network.

Q3

What is the average cost to install a return air filter grille in every room of a GTA home?

Installing return air filter grilles in every room of a GTA home typically costs $300–$800 per room all-in, covering the branch return duct, filter grille, and labour — though most homes don't need or benefit from a return in every single room.

Let's unpack what's actually involved, because this is a project where the design question matters as much as the cost question.

What a return air filter grille installation actually includes

A return air filter grille is not just a grille — it's a grille with a built-in filter slot (usually 1-inch filters) mounted at the end of a return air duct branch. Installing one in a room that doesn't currently have a return means cutting into the existing return duct system or trunk, running a new branch duct (typically 10–14 inch round or equivalent rectangular), cutting a wall or ceiling opening, and installing the boot and grille. In an unfinished basement, this is relatively straightforward. In a finished room on an upper floor, it involves working through finished drywall, running duct through wall cavities or ceiling spaces, and patching — which adds both labour time and drywall finishing costs.

The grille itself runs $40–$150 depending on size and quality. The branch duct materials add another $50–$200. Labour in the GTA for a straightforward installation in an accessible location runs $200–$500 per room. Add drywall patching and painting in finished spaces and you're looking at $600–$1,200 per room in some cases.

The design reality: most homes don't need returns in every room

A properly designed return air system doesn't require a dedicated return in every room — it requires adequate return air pathways from every room back to the air handler. The standard approach is **centrally located returns** (hallways, landings, main living areas) combined with **door undercuts of at least 3/4 inch** or **transfer grilles** between rooms to allow air to flow back to those central returns. Bedrooms with closed doors are the most common problem area — when the door is closed, supply air pressurizes the room and return air can't get back to the system, causing pressure imbalances, comfort complaints, and increased duct leakage.

For most GTA homes, the better solution is adding **one or two strategically placed returns per floor** rather than a return in every room. A hallway return on the second floor, for example, serves all the bedrooms if the doors have adequate undercuts. This approach costs $600–$2,500 total versus $3,000–$8,000+ for individual room returns throughout the house.

GTA-specific considerations

Post-war homes in Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke are notorious for single-return systems — one large return grille on the main floor, nothing upstairs or in the basement. These homes almost always have comfort complaints: bedrooms that are too hot in summer and too cold in winter. Adding return capacity to upper floors is

one of the highest-value ductwork upgrades for these homes. Older homes may also have **panned joist returns** — floor joist cavities used as return plenums — which are extremely leaky and pull unconditioned air from wall cavities. Replacing these with proper return ductwork is strongly recommended.

Practical guidance

Before spending money on room-by-room returns, have a ductwork contractor assess your existing return air system and measure static pressure. High static pressure on the return side (above 0.1 inches of water column) confirms inadequate return capacity. The contractor should identify the most cost-effective return air strategy for your specific home layout — which may be transfer grilles, door undercuts, or strategically placed branch returns rather than individual room returns.

For a typical 1,500–2,500 sq ft GTA home needing return air improvements, budget **$1,500–$5,000** for a properly designed solution. Get at least three quotes and ask each contractor to explain their return air strategy — not just their price.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor for a return air assessment? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network — browse the directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac.

Q4

What does it cost to install a return air drop from the second floor to the basement furnace in the GTA?

A return air drop from the second floor to the basement furnace in the GTA typically costs $800–$2,500, depending on the route, materials, and how much finished wall or ceiling needs to be opened up.

This is one of the most impactful ductwork upgrades you can make in a GTA home, and it's also one of the trickier installations to price without seeing the house — because the route the duct takes through your home's framing determines almost everything about the cost and complexity.

What Drives the Cost

The biggest variable is accessibility. A return air drop that runs through an unfinished utility chase, a closet stack, or an open wall cavity is relatively straightforward — a sheet metal contractor can fabricate and install a rectangular return duct from the second floor down through the main floor and into the basement plenum in a day. That's the lower end of the range, $800–$1,400, including the return grille, duct, and connection to the furnace return plenum.

The cost climbs quickly when walls need to be opened. In most post-war GTA homes — the kind built across Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and the inner suburbs between 1945 and 1975 — the interior walls are fully drywalled with no convenient chase for a return duct. Getting a duct from the second floor to the basement means cutting into drywall on both floors, potentially notching around fire blocking in the wall cavity, and then patching and painting afterward. Drywall repair and painting can add $300–$800 to the project on top of the ductwork itself. At the higher end of complexity, with multiple floors, difficult routing, and significant drywall work, you're looking at $1,800–$2,500 or more.

Why This Upgrade Matters So Much in GTA Homes

Older Toronto-area homes were designed with a single return air grille, usually on the main floor hallway. When forced-air cooling was added to these originally heating-only systems, nobody rerouted the return air — so the second floor has supply registers pushing conditioned air in, but no dedicated return path to pull that air back to the furnace. The result is that second floors are chronically hot in summer and stuffy year-round. Bedroom doors have to stay open for any airflow to work, and even then the system is fighting against itself.

Adding a dedicated second-floor return drop solves this directly. It balances the pressure between floors, dramatically improves second-floor cooling performance, and reduces the load on your air conditioner because it's no longer trying to push air against a high-pressure second floor. Many GTA homeowners report that this single upgrade makes a bigger difference to second-floor comfort than any other change they've made.

Practical Tips Before You Call a Contractor

Identify a closet on the second floor that stacks above a closet on the main floor, or above a wall that runs straight to the basement. This is your ideal chase location — minimal drywall disruption, clean routing, and the contractor can often use the closet wall cavity without any visible patching. Mention this to contractors when getting quotes, as it can significantly reduce the price.

Also ask whether a **transfer grille** between the second floor hallway and a bedroom, combined with a jump duct over the bedroom door, might partially solve your problem at lower cost ($200–$500 per room) before committing to a full return drop. In some homes, this is enough. In others, a full return drop is the right answer.

Permits are generally not required for adding a single return run to an existing system in Toronto, but confirm with your local building department if any associated electrical or gas work is involved.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with a local sheet metal contractor who can assess your home's layout and give you an accurate quote. Get matched for free through the Toronto Construction Network at **torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac**.

Q5

How much does it cost to install underground ductwork for a Toronto home geothermal system?

Underground ductwork for geothermal systems isn't really a thing — geothermal systems use buried ground loops for heat exchange, but the air distribution ductwork inside your home is entirely conventional and installed the same way as any forced-air system.

This is a common point of confusion. A geothermal (ground-source heat pump) system has two distinct parts: the ground loop buried outside (which circulates water or refrigerant through the earth to exchange heat) and the air handler inside the home (which conditions the air and distributes it through a standard duct system). The buried portion is hydronic piping — not ductwork — and is handled by a geothermal drilling and piping contractor, not a sheet metal or ductwork contractor.

The indoor duct system connected to a geothermal air handler is designed and installed exactly like any other forced-air HVAC duct system. It uses the same galvanized steel trunk lines, flex duct branch runs, supply and return plenums, register boots, and balancing dampers you'd find on any gas furnace or heat pump installation. The duct design must still be based on Manual J load calculations and Manual D duct sizing — the heat source doesn't change the fundamental airflow requirements of the home.

What a Geothermal Duct System Actually Costs in the GTA

For a typical GTA home of 1,500–2,500 square feet, a complete new duct system connected to a geothermal air handler runs **$3,000–$15,000** depending on home layout, number of storeys, accessibility, and material choices. A simple single-storey bungalow with an open basement and short duct runs sits at the lower end. A two-storey semi-detached in the Annex or a multi-level home in Markham with ducts running through finished spaces will push toward the higher end or beyond.

One consideration specific to geothermal systems: **geothermal air handlers typically deliver air at lower supply temperatures than gas furnaces** — around 32–38°C versus 50–55°C for gas. This means the system runs longer cycles at lower temperatures to achieve the same heating effect. Longer run times at lower air temperatures can make comfort problems from undersized ducts or poor balancing more noticeable, because there's less "burst" of heat to compensate for poor distribution. Duct design for geothermal systems benefits from careful Manual D sizing and thorough balancing.

GTA-Specific Considerations

Geothermal installations in Toronto and the GTA often involve older housing stock — Victorian semis in Leslieville, post-war bungalows in Etobicoke, or 1980s two-storeys in Mississauga — where the existing ductwork was designed for a gas furnace and may need modification or full replacement to work efficiently with a geothermal air handler. Return air is frequently undersized in these homes, which becomes even more critical with geothermal's longer, lower-temperature cycles. Adding dedicated return air runs to bedrooms and upper floors is often one of the highest-value duct upgrades in these projects.

If your home is being converted from a non-ducted system (radiators, baseboards) to geothermal with forced air, budget for a complete duct system installation — $6,000–$15,000 is a realistic range for a full new system in a GTA home, with complexity and accessibility driving the final number.

Always get a permit for a new duct system installation. The City of Toronto and GTA municipalities require mechanical permits for new duct systems, and the geothermal equipment itself will have its own permit requirements. A qualified contractor will pull the appropriate permits as part of the project.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced local ductwork contractors who have worked on geothermal and heat pump installations across the GTA. For the geothermal ground loop and equipment side, you can find additional contractors through the Toronto Construction Network at **torontoconstructionnetwork.com**.

Q6

How much does it cost to reroute ductwork to accommodate a new staircase in a GTA home?

Rerouting ductwork for a new staircase in the GTA typically costs $1,500–$6,000, with most projects landing in the $2,000–$4,000 range — but the final number depends heavily on how many duct runs cross the staircase path, what those ducts are made of, and how much of the surrounding ceiling or wall needs to be opened up to access them.

What Drives the Cost

The staircase itself doesn't care about your ductwork, but your ductwork almost certainly runs through exactly where the staircase needs to go. In most GTA homes built between 1945 and 1990, the main trunk line runs down the centre of the basement ceiling, and branch runs fan out perpendicular to it — which puts them directly in the path of any new staircase opening. Rerouting means disconnecting those runs, fabricating new sections that clear the staircase framing, reconnecting to the trunk, and resealing every joint with mastic and UL 181 foil tape.

Labour is the dominant cost in this type of work. A sheet metal worker in the GTA charges $80–$120 per hour, and a staircase reroute typically takes 8–20 hours depending on complexity. If you're moving a single small branch run, you're on the low end. If the main trunk line needs to be raised, offset, or split around the staircase opening, you're looking at a full day or more of custom fabrication and installation. Add drywall patching, painting, and finishing if the ducts run through finished spaces, and costs climb further — though that work is typically quoted separately by a general contractor.

Material costs for a typical reroute run $300–$800. Galvanized steel rectangular duct costs $12–$30 per linear foot installed, and you'll need custom-fabricated offsets and transitions to route around the new framing. If the existing ductwork is older galvanized steel in good condition, a skilled sheet metal worker can often reuse sections and fabricate only the transition pieces. If the existing ductwork is deteriorated, crushed flex duct, or asbestos-wrapped (common in pre-1960s Toronto homes), replacement costs increase significantly — and asbestos abatement adds $2,000–$5,000 before any ductwork work can begin.

GTA-Specific Considerations

Homes in established Toronto neighbourhoods — Leslieville, Riverdale, East York, Leaside, Roncesvalles, and similar areas — often have older duct systems that were designed for gravity-fed heating and later adapted for forced air. These systems frequently have large, low-hanging trunk ducts that are difficult to raise without significant rerouting. If your home is pre-1960 and you haven't had the ductwork assessed recently, budget for surprises.

A building permit is likely required for this project. The staircase itself requires a permit, and any significant duct modification associated with a permitted renovation is typically included in the mechanical scope. The City of

Toronto mechanical permit fee is usually $200–$500 for this type of work. Your contractor should be pulling permits — if they suggest skipping it, that's a red flag.

Airflow impact is the other critical consideration. Rerouting ductwork isn't just a physical relocation — it changes the length of runs, the number of bends, and the static pressure throughout the system. Every 90-degree elbow in a duct run is equivalent to adding 10–15 feet of straight duct in terms of pressure drop. A sheet metal contractor doing this work properly will account for that, either by upsizing the rerouted section or minimizing bends. A contractor who just moves the duct without considering airflow may leave you with a room that barely heats or cools after the renovation.

Practical Tips

Get at least three quotes and ask each contractor specifically how they plan to maintain airflow to the affected registers after the reroute. Ask whether the new routing will require any duct upsizing. Confirm that all joints will be sealed with mastic — not grey cloth duct tape. If your home is pre-1960, ask about asbestos testing before any work begins.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced local sheet metal contractors for a free estimate on your staircase reroute. Find ductwork professionals in your area through the Toronto Construction Network at **torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac**.

Q7

How much does it cost to run ductwork through a Toronto home soffit for a second-floor reno?

Running ductwork through a soffit for a second-floor renovation in Toronto typically costs $800–$3,500 per run, depending on the length of the run, the number of fittings required, material choice, and how accessible the soffit chase is from the basement or main floor mechanical room.

This is one of the most common ductwork challenges in GTA second-floor renovations, and it is worth understanding what drives the cost before you get quotes.

What the Work Actually Involves

A soffit duct run for a second floor means building a concealed chase — usually framed with drywall over a rectangular steel duct — that travels vertically from the main trunk line in the basement or main floor up through the wall or closet cavity, then horizontally along the ceiling of the main floor (inside the soffit) to reach a point below the second-floor register. From there, a short branch run connects to the floor register above. Each 90-degree turn, transition fitting, and offset adds both material cost and labour time.

The duct itself is almost always rectangular galvanized steel for the main soffit run — typically 8×4 or 10×4 inch profile — to keep the soffit as slim as possible while still delivering adequate airflow. Branch connections to individual registers use 6-inch round flex duct, kept short and pulled taut. Material costs for the steel duct and fittings alone run $150–$500 per run depending on length. Labour in the GTA for a sheet metal worker runs $85–$130 per hour, and a single soffit run with two or three offsets typically takes 4–8 hours.

GTA-Specific Considerations

Toronto's housing stock matters here. In a **post-war Scarborough or North York bungalow** being converted to a two-storey addition, the existing trunk duct is often undersized for the added second-floor load — meaning the soffit run may need to connect to an upgraded trunk, not just tap into the existing one. In an **older Toronto semi or detached** in areas like Leslieville, Roncesvalles, or the Annex, wall cavities are often narrower than modern framing, making vertical runs trickier and requiring custom-fabricated fittings.

Condensation is also a real concern in GTA homes. If any portion of the soffit run passes through an exterior wall or an uninsulated section of the soffit adjacent to an exterior, the duct must be wrapped with **R-8 duct insulation** to prevent sweating in summer when cold supply air meets warm humid conditions. Skipping this step leads to water stains on the drywall soffit within one or two cooling seasons.

Permits are worth flagging. If this soffit run is part of a larger second-floor renovation that includes new construction or a significant duct system modification, a **City of Toronto mechanical permit** is likely required. Permit fees typically run $200–$500 for mechanical work of this scope.

Practical Tips

Get quotes that specify the duct size, number of fittings, sealing method (mastic is the standard — not duct tape), and whether the drywall soffit framing and finishing is included or separate. Many ductwork contractors do the sheet metal only and hand off the framing and drywall to a carpenter — make sure you know who is responsible for what. Also confirm the contractor will size the new branch run based on the actual heating and cooling load of the second-floor room, not just whatever fits conveniently. An undersized duct in a soffit that is already closed in is very expensive to fix later.

Hire a professional for this work. Soffit duct runs involve custom sheet metal fabrication, proper sizing for second-floor loads, sealing all joints with mastic, and coordinating with drywall finishing. This is not a DIY project, and getting it wrong means tearing open finished ceilings to fix it.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with a local ductwork contractor experienced in second-floor renovation work — get in touch for a free match, or browse HVAC and ductwork professionals through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac.

Q8

What does it cost to retrofit ductwork into a Toronto Victorian row house with plaster walls?

Retrofitting ductwork into a Toronto Victorian row house is one of the most challenging and expensive ductwork projects in the GTA, typically ranging from $8,000 to $25,000+ depending on the number of storeys, layout complexity, and how much finished surface you're willing to sacrifice.

Victorian row houses — concentrated in neighbourhoods like Cabbagetown, Leslieville, Roncesvalles, Parkdale, Trinity-Bellwoods, and the Annex — present a unique set of obstacles that simply don't exist in a post-war bungalow. Narrow floor plans (typically 14 to 18 feet wide), plaster-on-lath walls that are extremely difficult to patch, deep floor joist cavities that run front-to-back rather than side-to-side, and three storeys of living space all conspire to make duct routing a serious engineering puzzle. Add in the fact that many of these homes have already been renovated multiple times, with surprises hiding behind every wall, and you understand why experienced sheet metal contractors price these jobs carefully.

The Core Challenge: Getting Air to the Upper Floors

The fundamental problem in a Victorian row house is vertical distribution. Your furnace sits in the basement, and you need conditioned air to reach the second and third floors without destroying the character of the home. There are three main approaches, each with different cost and disruption profiles.

Concealed duct runs through closets and interior walls is the preferred method when it works. Contractors look for a stacked alignment of closets on each floor — a basement utility room, a main floor closet, a second floor closet, and a third floor closet all roughly above each other. A vertical duct chase can be built inside this alignment, carrying a main trunk up through the building with branch takeoffs at each level. When the geometry cooperates, this approach preserves plaster walls almost entirely. When it doesn't, the cost and complexity climb sharply. Budget $10,000–$18,000 for a well-executed concealed system in a three-storey Victorian.

Exposed ductwork in the basement with concealed upper-floor distribution is a practical compromise. The basement trunk runs are left exposed (often finished with spiral round duct for an industrial-chic aesthetic that suits renovated Victorian basements), while branch runs to upper floors are carefully threaded through wall cavities or built into new interior soffits. This approach reduces labour significantly on the basement level and is increasingly popular in Leslieville and Roncesvalles renovations. Budget $8,000–$15,000 for this hybrid approach.

Mini-split ductless systems are worth considering as an alternative or supplement. For upper floors where duct routing would require destroying significant plaster, wall-mounted or ceiling-cassette mini-splits provide heating and cooling without any ductwork. Many Victorian homeowners use a ducted system for the basement and main floor, and mini-splits for the upper floors. This hybrid approach can be cost-competitive at $12,000–$20,000 total, and mini-splits offer superior zoning and efficiency.

Plaster Walls: The Cost Multiplier

Plaster-on-lath is not drywall. Cutting into it for duct penetrations creates cracks that radiate outward, and patching plaster to match original texture requires a skilled plasterer — not a drywall finisher. Every wall penetration in a Victorian adds $200–$600 in plaster repair costs on top of the ductwork itself. A project requiring 15–20 wall penetrations can add $4,000–$8,000 in finishing costs alone. Experienced contractors working in Victorian homes plan duct routes specifically to minimize wall cuts, even if it means slightly longer duct runs.

Asbestos: A Non-Negotiable First Step

Before any ductwork contractor touches a pre-1980 Toronto Victorian, the home needs an asbestos assessment. Many of these homes have asbestos pipe insulation, floor tiles, and critically — asbestos-containing duct tape or insulation wrap on any existing heating pipes or early duct systems. Professional asbestos abatement runs $2,000–$6,000 and is legally required before disturbing any suspect materials. Budget for this upfront —

discovering asbestos mid-project is far more expensive than testing beforehand.

Permits and Seasonal Timing

A new duct system in a Toronto Victorian requires a building permit from the City of Toronto Building Division — budget $300–$600 in permit fees. The permit process also means a mechanical inspection, which protects you by confirming the installation meets Ontario Building Code Part 6 requirements for duct sizing, return air, and combustion air supply.

Timing matters. Spring and early fall are the best windows for this work — the home is liveable without heating or cooling for the days the system is offline, and contractors are more available than in the peak summer and winter rush.

Get at least three quotes from contractors with documented experience in Victorian-era Toronto homes specifically — this is not a job for a contractor whose portfolio is all new-build subdivisions. Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced local ductwork professionals through the Toronto Construction Network. Browse contractors at **torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac** or get matched for free through Toronto Ductwork.

Q9

What is the price to install a duct-mounted humidifier with bypass in a GTA home HVAC system?

A bypass humidifier installed on an existing GTA forced-air system typically costs $600–$1,200 fully installed, including the unit, bypass duct, saddle connections to the supply and return plenums, drain line, and wiring to the humidistat.

The wide range reflects differences in furnace accessibility, the complexity of routing the bypass duct, and whether the humidistat is a basic manual unit or a smart/automatic model that reads outdoor temperature and adjusts humidity setpoints accordingly. Most GTA installs land in the $700–$950 range for a mid-grade unit like an Aprilaire 400 or Honeywell HE360 on a straightforward basement furnace.

What the Installation Involves

A bypass humidifier works by tapping into both the supply plenum (hot air side) and the return plenum (cold air side) of your furnace. A bypass duct — typically 6-inch round galvanized — connects the two plenums. When the furnace runs, a portion of supply air is diverted through the bypass, passes over a water-saturated evaporator pad, picks up moisture, and re-enters the return side to be distributed through the home. The contractor cuts saddle

holes in both plenums, fabricates and installs the bypass duct with a manual damper, mounts the humidifier unit on the supply plenum, runs a low-voltage drain line to a floor drain, and wires the humidistat to the furnace control board.

The bypass damper is important — it should be closed in summer when you are running air conditioning. Leaving it open in cooling season allows unconditioned humid air to bypass the evaporator coil, reducing dehumidification efficiency and potentially causing condensation problems in the duct system.

Labour typically runs $250–$450 of the total cost. The humidifier unit itself ranges from $150–$400 depending on the brand and capacity. Aprilaire, Honeywell (Resideo), and GeneralAire are the most common brands used by GTA contractors. For a typical 1,500–2,500 sq ft GTA home, a unit rated for 2,000–3,000 sq ft is appropriate — oversizing a humidifier leads to excessive moisture, condensation on windows, and mould risk.

GTA-Specific Considerations

Toronto winters are dry — indoor relative humidity in an unsealed GTA home can drop to 15–25% during cold snaps, causing static electricity, dry skin, cracking wood floors and trim, and increased susceptibility to respiratory illness. A properly sized and controlled bypass humidifier maintains 30–45% RH through the heating season, which is the target range recommended for both comfort and building material protection.

Condensation on windows is the critical warning sign that your humidifier is set too high. In a GTA winter at -15°C outdoor temperature, indoor humidity above 30% will cause condensation on standard double-pane windows. At -20°C, even 25% RH can cause window sweating. A good humidistat — ideally an outdoor temperature-sensing automatic model — adjusts the setpoint based on outdoor conditions to prevent window condensation and moisture accumulation in wall cavities. This is not optional in the GTA climate; it is the difference between a humidifier that improves comfort and one that causes mould in your walls.

Older GTA homes (pre-1980 in Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke) often have original galvanized plenums that are corroded or poorly sealed. Before a humidifier is installed, the contractor should inspect and seal the plenum connections — adding moisture to a leaky plenum accelerates rust and can drip water onto the furnace heat exchanger.

The drain line must connect to a proper floor drain — not a condensate pump unless specifically rated for humidifier use. Humidifiers produce significantly more drain water than a high-efficiency furnace condensate line, and an undersized condensate pump will fail.

Practical Tips

Annual maintenance is essential — the evaporator pad should be replaced every heating season ($15–$40 for the pad). Mineral buildup from Toronto's moderately hard water will clog the pad and reduce output significantly if left

unchanged. The water panel on a bypass humidifier is not a set-and-forget component.

This work involves low-voltage wiring to the furnace control board, which is within the scope of a qualified HVAC contractor. However, if any 120V electrical work is required (dedicated outlet for the humidifier solenoid valve), an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor must perform that portion.

Need help finding a ductwork or HVAC contractor for a humidifier installation? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network — browse the directory at **torontoconstructionnetwork.com**.

Q10

How much does it cost to install a commercial-grade grease duct for a Toronto restaurant kitchen?

Commercial grease duct installation in Toronto typically runs $8,000–$25,000+ depending on the length of the run, the number of access panels, fire suppression integration, and whether the shaft needs to be built through multiple floors. This is highly specialized work that sits at the intersection of sheet metal fabrication, fire code compliance, and commercial kitchen design — and it's a different animal from residential ductwork.

That said, commercial kitchen exhaust is outside the scope of what Toronto Ductwork and our residential contractor network covers. We match GTA homeowners with ductwork and ventilation professionals for **residential projects** — things like home kitchen range hood exhaust, bathroom ventilation, HRV/ERV systems, dryer vents, and complete residential duct systems.

For Your Commercial Project, Here's Where to Turn

Commercial grease duct work in Toronto falls under the **Ontario Fire Code (O. Reg. 213/07)**, **NFPA 96 (Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations)**, and the **City of Toronto Building Code requirements for commercial occupancies**. You'll need a contractor who specifically works in commercial kitchen exhaust — they'll handle:

- **UL 1978-listed grease duct fabrication** (all-welded stainless steel or carbon steel with liquid-tight continuous external welds)
- **Clearance-to-combustibles requirements** (typically 18 inches, or zero-clearance with listed enclosures)
- **Access panel placement** every 12 feet and at every change of direction
- **Integration with Ansul or equivalent fire suppression systems**
- **City of Toronto mechanical and fire permits**

Finding the Right Contractor

For commercial kitchen exhaust, you want a **sheet metal contractor with specific NFPA 96 experience and commercial kitchen references**. Ask to see past restaurant projects, verify WSIB coverage, and confirm they pull the required City of Toronto mechanical permits. The Toronto Construction Network connects contractors across multiple commercial trades — you can explore the broader directory at **torontoconstructionnetwork.com** to find sheet metal and mechanical contractors working in the commercial space.

For any **residential ductwork needs** — including a home kitchen range hood exhaust that requires make-up air, or any other ventilation project at a residence — Toronto Ductwork is happy to help match you with the right local

professional.

Q11

How much does it cost to build a custom bulkhead to conceal ductwork in a Toronto basement finish?

Bulkhead construction for concealing ductwork in a Toronto basement typically costs $400–$1,200 per bulkhead run, with most finished basements requiring $1,500–$4,000 in total bulkhead framing and drywalling work — though this depends heavily on the length, height drop, number of corners, and whether the ductwork needs to be relocated or modified before it gets boxed in.

The bulkhead cost itself is a carpentry and drywall expense, not a ductwork expense. A framer and drywaller will build the box around your existing ducts using 2x3 or 2x4 lumber, drywall, tape, mud, and primer. In the GTA market, framing labour runs $50–$90 per hour and drywall finishing $60–$100 per hour. A straightforward 10-foot bulkhead with two corners typically takes 4–8 hours of combined labour plus materials, landing in the $500–$900 range. Longer runs spanning 20–30 feet across a basement ceiling, especially with multiple direction changes, can push $1,500–$2,500 for that single bulkhead alone.

Before any drywall goes up, the ductwork inside the bulkhead must be in final, inspected condition. This is the most common and costly mistake in Toronto basement finishes — homeowners build the bulkhead, finish the drywall, and then discover a duct joint is leaking, a flex duct connection is loose, or the system needs rebalancing. Opening a finished bulkhead costs $300–$800 in drywall repairs alone, on top of the duct repair. Have a ductwork contractor inspect and seal all joints with duct mastic and UL 181-rated foil tape before framing begins. This is also the time to add any new supply or return registers to serve the finished basement space — adding a register after the bulkhead is drywalled is a much more expensive proposition.

GTA-specific consideration: insulation inside the bulkhead matters. If your ductwork runs through an exterior wall bulkhead or near an uninsulated rim joist area, the duct should be wrapped with R-8 duct wrap insulation before boxing in. Toronto's winters create significant temperature differentials between the conditioned basement air and the cold exterior wall cavities. A cold supply duct running near a rim joist in January will sweat condensation inside the bulkhead — moisture that has nowhere to go and will eventually cause mould growth on the drywall interior. Your ductwork contractor should insulate any ducts in thermally vulnerable locations before the framer arrives.

Practical tips for planning your bulkhead:

Consider the finished ceiling height carefully. Toronto basement slabs are often only 7–8 feet from the floor joists above, and a bulkhead dropping 12–16 inches for a large rectangular trunk duct can leave you with a finished ceiling height under 7 feet in parts of the space — below the Ontario Building Code minimum of 1,950 mm (approximately 6 feet 5 inches) for finished basement habitable rooms. If your main trunk duct is a large rectangular box running down the centre of the basement, it may be worth getting a ductwork contractor to quote converting it to round spiral duct, which takes up less vertical space and can often be tucked higher into the joist cavity. Round duct conversion typically costs $800–$2,500 depending on the trunk length, but it can recover 4–6 inches of ceiling height across the entire basement — a worthwhile trade-off in many Toronto homes.

Access panels are worth every dollar. Any bulkhead concealing a cleanout, damper, flex duct connection, or junction should have a framed access panel (typically $80–$200 installed). Skipping access panels is a false economy that forces drywall demolition for any future maintenance.

For the ductwork portion of your basement finish, Toronto Ductwork can match you with a local sheet metal contractor to inspect, seal, and modify your duct system before framing begins — getting that work done right the first time saves significantly on the overall project. Find ductwork and HVAC contractors through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac.

Q12

What is the price to install ductwork in a Toronto home with knob-and-tube wiring still present?

Installing ductwork in a Toronto home with knob-and-tube wiring typically costs $5,000-$18,000 for a complete system, but the electrical upgrade required will add $8,000-$25,000 to your total project cost. The knob-and-tube wiring itself doesn't directly affect ductwork installation, but it creates significant complications that impact your overall renovation budget and timeline.

Why Knob-and-Tube Complicates Ductwork Installation

Homes with knob-and-tube wiring in Toronto are typically pre-1950s construction, which means they often have gravity-fed octopus furnace ductwork or no central ductwork at all. These older homes present unique challenges: the existing "ductwork" may be oversized round ducts designed for natural convection heating that won't work with modern forced-air systems. The electrical system will need upgrading before any modern HVAC equipment can be safely connected, and running new ducts often requires working around the knob-and-tube wiring in walls and ceilings.

Most insurance companies in Ontario either refuse coverage or charge significantly higher premiums for homes with knob-and-tube wiring. Many mortgage lenders also require electrical upgrades before financing. This means you'll likely need to budget for both electrical and ductwork upgrades simultaneously. The electrical upgrade must be completed by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor and will require permits and inspections.

Ductwork Installation Costs for Older Toronto Homes

For a typical 1,200-1,800 square foot pre-war Toronto home, expect to pay $8,000-$15,000 for a complete new duct system if the existing layout allows for basement or first-floor installation. If ductwork needs to be routed through walls or requires significant structural modifications to accommodate modern duct sizing, costs can reach $15,000-$18,000. These older homes often have solid masonry walls, plaster and lath construction, and limited space for ductwork routing, making installation more complex than in modern homes.

The electrical upgrade will cost $8,000-$25,000 depending on the size of the home, accessibility of wiring routes, and whether the electrical panel needs relocation. A 100-amp service upgrade with new panel, grounding, and basic circuits typically runs $8,000-$15,000, while a 200-amp service with extensive rewiring can reach $20,000-$25,000.

Coordination and Timing Considerations

The electrical work must be completed before the HVAC equipment installation, but ductwork installation can often proceed in parallel. Plan for a 2-4 week timeline for the electrical upgrade and 3-7 days for ductwork installation. You'll need building permits for both the electrical work (ESA permit) and potentially for the ductwork if it's a new system installation. The City of Toronto requires permits for new duct systems, and any gas connections require a TSSA-registered contractor.

Consider having both contractors coordinate their work schedules to minimize disruption. The electrical contractor will need access to the same areas where ductwork will be installed, so proper sequencing prevents conflicts and reduces the risk of damage to newly installed systems.

Additional Considerations for Heritage Homes

Many knob-and-tube homes in Toronto's established neighbourhoods may have heritage designations or be in Heritage Conservation Districts, which can affect renovation approvals. Asbestos testing is also recommended before any major renovation work in pre-1950s homes, as asbestos may be present in duct tape, pipe insulation, or other building materials.

Need help finding both electrical and ductwork contractors who can coordinate this type of complex renovation? Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced HVAC professionals, and you can find ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractors through the Toronto Construction Network directory.

Q13

How much does it cost to install ductwork for a Toronto home server room or IT closet cooling?

Installing ductwork for a Toronto home server room or IT closet typically costs $800-$3,500, depending on whether you're adding a simple branch run from existing HVAC or installing a dedicated mini-split system with ductwork. Most home server rooms need 1-3 tons of cooling capacity and require year-round temperature control that's independent of the main house HVAC system.

Dedicated cooling is essential for server rooms because IT equipment generates heat 24/7 and requires consistent temperatures between 18-24°C (64-75°F) with humidity control. Unlike living spaces that can tolerate temperature swings, servers throttle performance or shut down when overheated, and condensation from temperature fluctuations can damage sensitive electronics. A standard home HVAC system that cycles on and off based on house temperature won't provide the constant cooling that server equipment demands.

For basic home server setups (1-3 servers, networking equipment), you can often extend your existing ductwork with a dedicated supply and return run to the server room. This involves installing 6-8 inch supply ductwork from your main trunk line, adding a return air path, and installing a zone damper or dedicated thermostat control. Material costs run $200-$600 for galvanized steel ductwork, plus $600-$1,500 for professional installation. However, this approach only works if your main HVAC system has excess capacity and the server room is close to existing ductwork.

For serious home server rooms or IT closets, a dedicated mini-split system with short ductwork runs is usually the better solution. A 9,000-12,000 BTU mini-split head unit connected to an outdoor condenser provides precise temperature control, runs continuously at low power, and operates independently of your house HVAC. The indoor unit connects to the outdoor condenser with refrigerant lines (requiring TSSA registration for installation), and you can add short supply ducts to distribute cool air evenly throughout the room. Total installed cost ranges $2,500-$4,500 including minimal ductwork.

GTA climate considerations are critical for server room cooling. Summer temperatures exceeding 35°C mean server rooms in basements, garages, or upper floors without dedicated cooling can easily reach 40-45°C, causing equipment failures. Winter heating is equally important — server rooms in unheated basements or garages can drop below safe operating temperatures during power outages or equipment shutdowns. Many GTA homeowners install server equipment in basement rooms thinking they'll stay naturally cool, but basement temperatures fluctuate significantly with outdoor conditions and house heating patterns.

Key design requirements include redundant cooling (backup system or oversized capacity), proper return air circulation to prevent hot spots, and humidity control to prevent condensation on cold surfaces when the cooling

system cycles. Server racks generate intense heat in small areas, so supply air must be directed at equipment intake areas, and return air must capture hot exhaust air before it mixes with room air. A simple ceiling-mounted supply register won't provide adequate air circulation for rack-mounted equipment.

Professional installation is strongly recommended because server room cooling involves load calculations specific to IT equipment (measured in watts per square foot rather than standard residential heating/cooling loads), precise airflow patterns, and often integration with UPS systems or emergency power. TSSA registration is required for any refrigerant work, and ESA licensing is required for dedicated electrical circuits that most server rooms need.

Need help finding an HVAC contractor experienced with IT cooling? Toronto Ductwork can match you with professionals who understand both ductwork design and server room requirements through the Toronto Construction Network.

Q14

What does it cost to install vibration isolators on ductwork connections in a Toronto home?

Vibration isolators for ductwork connections typically cost $150-$800 for a Toronto home, depending on the number of connections, isolator type, and accessibility. Most residential installations focus on the main trunk connections at the furnace plenum where vibration transfer is most significant.

Vibration isolators are flexible connectors installed between rigid ductwork and HVAC equipment to prevent mechanical vibrations from the furnace blower or air handler from transmitting through the metal ductwork into the home's structure. Without these isolators, vibrations travel through galvanized steel or aluminum ducts, causing rattling, humming, and low-frequency noise that can be heard throughout the house, especially in quiet bedrooms at night.

In Toronto's housing stock, vibration issues are particularly common in **older homes with galvanized steel duct systems** where the original installation connected ducts directly to the furnace plenum with rigid connections. When these homes get new high-efficiency furnaces with variable-speed blowers, the different vibration patterns often reveal noise issues that weren't apparent with the old equipment. **Homes with ductwork running through floor joists** or attached to basement ceiling joists are especially prone to structure-borne vibration transmission.

Canvas vibration isolators are the most common residential option, costing $25-$60 each for standard 6-8 inch round connections. These flexible canvas sleeves with wire reinforcement absorb vibrations while maintaining airflow. **Neoprene isolators** ($40-$100 each) offer superior vibration dampening and longer life but cost more. For

supply and return trunk connections at the furnace, expect to install 2-4 isolators depending on your system configuration.

Professional installation runs $75-$150 per isolator including labour, as the work requires disconnecting ductwork, measuring and cutting the canvas or neoprene sleeve to fit, and reconnecting with proper sealing. The job typically takes 2-4 hours for a complete furnace installation. **DIY installation** is possible for accessible connections in unfinished basements - the isolators cost $25-$60 each, and you'll need UL 181 foil tape ($10-$15) and duct mastic ($20-$30) for proper sealing.

Timing matters in the GTA - vibration problems are most noticeable during heating season when furnaces run frequently, and during summer air conditioning when homes are closed up and ambient noise is lower. Many homeowners first notice ductwork vibration after furnace replacement, as new equipment often has different vibration characteristics than the old system.

Hire a professional for installations involving main trunk connections, work in tight spaces, or when multiple isolators need precise sizing and balancing. A qualified HVAC contractor can also identify whether vibration issues stem from ductwork connections, loose mounting hardware, or equipment problems requiring different solutions.

Q15

What is the price to replace corroded ductwork under a Toronto home with a low crawl space?

Replacing corroded ductwork in a Toronto crawlspace typically costs $4,000-$12,000 for a complete system, with low crawlspace access adding 30-50% to standard pricing due to the challenging working conditions.

Crawlspace ductwork replacement is one of the more expensive ductwork projects because of the confined workspace, limited access, and additional complications that come with working in Toronto's clay soil conditions. Most GTA crawlspaces are only 3-4 feet high, forcing workers to crawl throughout the entire installation process, which dramatically slows progress and increases labour costs.

Corroded ductwork in Toronto crawlspaces is extremely common in homes built between 1945-1980, particularly in areas like Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke. The original galvanized steel ducts are now 45-80 years old and have been exposed to decades of moisture from Toronto's clay soil, seasonal groundwater, and condensation from temperature swings. Clay soil retains moisture and creates humid conditions that accelerate rust, especially where ducts contact the ground or concrete footings.

The replacement process involves several cost factors specific to crawlspace work. First, complete removal of the old corroded ductwork, which may require cutting it into sections to fit through the crawlspace access. If asbestos tape or insulation is present (common in pre-1980 homes), professional asbestos abatement adds $2,000-$5,000 to the project. The new duct system must be properly supported with hangers every 4-6 feet to prevent sagging, and all ducts must be insulated with R-8 duct wrap minimum to prevent condensation in the humid crawlspace environment.

Material costs for crawlspace replacement run $2,000-$4,000 for a typical 1,500-2,000 square foot home, including galvanized steel trunk lines, branch ducts, insulation, mastic sealing, and proper support hardware. Labour costs are significantly higher than basement installations due to the confined workspace - expect $100-$150 per hour for qualified sheet metal workers, with the project taking 2-4 days depending on system complexity.

Critical crawlspace considerations include moisture control and proper sealing. Many Toronto crawlspaces have moisture issues that must be addressed before installing new ductwork. This might include improving drainage, sealing foundation cracks, or installing a vapour barrier on the crawlspace floor. Without addressing moisture, new ductwork will corrode just like the old system. All duct joints must be sealed with mastic and UL 181 foil tape - the humid crawlspace environment will quickly degrade any connections sealed only with standard duct tape.

Access modifications may add to the cost. Many older Toronto homes have crawlspace access through a small basement window or exterior hatch that's inadequate for removing old ductwork and bringing in new materials. Creating proper access can add $500-$1,500 to the project but is essential for quality installation.

When to hire a professional: Crawlspace ductwork replacement requires professional installation due to the confined workspace, proper load calculations for duct sizing, moisture management expertise, and code compliance requirements. This is not a DIY project - working in cramped crawlspaces with sheet metal is dangerous, and improperly installed ductwork will create comfort and efficiency problems for decades.

Get at least three quotes from contractors experienced with crawlspace work, and ensure they inspect for moisture issues and asbestos before providing estimates. The investment in proper crawlspace ductwork replacement pays dividends in comfort, energy efficiency, and eliminating the ongoing maintenance headaches of corroded ducts.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor experienced with crawlspace installations? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals for free estimates.

Q16

What is the price to install ductwork for a Toronto home nail salon or hair studio ventilation?

Commercial nail salon and hair studio ventilation requires specialized exhaust systems that cost significantly more than residential ductwork — typically $8,000-$25,000 for a complete installation depending on salon size, number of stations, and chemical ventilation requirements.

Nail salons and hair studios have unique ventilation challenges that go far beyond standard ductwork. These businesses use chemicals that produce volatile organic compounds (VOCs), formaldehyde, acetone vapors, and other airborne contaminants that require specialized capture and exhaust systems. The Ontario Building Code requires commercial ventilation systems to meet specific air change rates and exhaust requirements for businesses handling chemicals. Hair salons typically need 6-8 air changes per hour, while nail salons may require 8-12 air changes per hour due to the stronger chemical emissions from nail products.

The ventilation system must include source capture at each workstation — individual exhaust vents at nail tables and hair washing stations to capture contaminants before they spread throughout the space. This requires a network of small-diameter exhaust ducts connected to a central exhaust fan, typically mounted on the roof. Each nail station needs approximately 50-75 CFM of exhaust capacity, while hair washing stations need 75-100 CFM. A 6-station nail salon would require 300-450 CFM of total exhaust capacity, plus general room ventilation.

Make-up air is mandatory for commercial salon ventilation under the Ontario Building Code. When you're exhausting 400+ CFM of air, you must provide an equal amount of tempered make-up air to replace what's being exhausted. This prevents negative pressure that would pull unconditioned air through cracks and doors, creating comfort problems and potentially backdrafting gas appliances. The make-up air system typically costs $3,000-$8,000 and must be interlocked with the exhaust system.

Commercial permits and inspections are required for all salon ventilation work. The City of Toronto Building Division requires mechanical permits for commercial exhaust systems, and the installation must be done by licensed contractors. Any electrical work for exhaust fans and controls requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor. If the building has gas appliances, TSSA regulations apply to ensure the exhaust system doesn't create combustion safety issues.

GTA-specific considerations include winter operation challenges — exhausting large volumes of heated indoor air in Toronto's cold climate creates significant heating costs. The make-up air system must temper incoming air from -20°C to room temperature, requiring substantial heating capacity. Many salons benefit from heat recovery ventilators (HRV) that capture heat from the exhaust air to pre-warm incoming make-up air, though this adds $2,000-$5,000 to the system cost.

Typical cost breakdown for a small salon (4-6 stations):

- Exhaust ductwork and roof-mounted fan: $3,000-$8,000
- Make-up air system with tempering: $3,000-$8,000
- Source capture at workstations: $2,000-$5,000
- Controls and electrical: $1,000-$3,000
- Permits and inspections: $500-$1,500

This is specialized commercial HVAC work that requires contractors experienced with commercial ventilation, chemical exhaust systems, and Ontario commercial building codes. Residential ductwork contractors typically don't have the expertise or licensing for commercial salon ventilation. You'll need to find commercial HVAC contractors who understand the specific requirements for beauty industry ventilation.

Toronto Ductwork focuses on residential ductwork projects. For commercial salon ventilation, you'll need contractors specializing in commercial HVAC and exhaust systems. The Toronto Construction Network can help you find commercial HVAC contractors experienced with salon and spa ventilation requirements.

Q17

What is the price to add ductwork for a portable AC alternative in a Toronto home without central air?

Adding ductwork for a central air system to replace portable AC units in a Toronto home typically costs $8,000-$25,000, depending on your home's age, layout, and existing heating system. This includes installing a complete duct system, outdoor condenser unit, and indoor air handler or furnace coil.

Most Toronto homes without central air fall into two categories that affect ductwork costs significantly. **Older homes with radiator or baseboard heating** need a complete duct system from scratch, including supply ducts to every room, return air pathways, and proper sizing for both heating and cooling loads. This is the more expensive scenario at $15,000-$25,000 because you're essentially building the entire air distribution infrastructure.

Homes with forced-air heating but no cooling already have ductwork, but it's often inadequate for air conditioning. Heating systems operate at 300 CFM per ton while cooling requires 400 CFM per ton, so existing ducts may be undersized. Additionally, many older GTA homes have only one central return air grille, which creates poor air circulation for cooling. Adding return air ducts to bedrooms and upper floors dramatically improves comfort and typically costs $2,000-$6,000.

GTA-specific considerations make ductwork planning critical. Toronto's extreme temperature swings mean ducts running through unconditioned attics or crawlspaces must be heavily insulated (minimum R-8 duct wrap) to prevent condensation in summer and heat loss in winter. Many Toronto homes have limited basement ceiling height, requiring careful duct routing to maintain headroom. Homes in older neighborhoods like Riverdale, High Park, or the Beaches often have challenging layouts with multiple floor levels and limited access for duct installation.

Material and installation costs reflect GTA market rates. Galvanized steel trunk ducts run $12-$30 per linear foot installed, while flex duct branches cost $8-$18 per linear foot. A typical 1,500 square foot home needs 200-400 linear feet of ductwork depending on layout complexity. Return air ducts are often the most expensive component because they require larger sizes and longer runs back to the furnace location.

Timing affects both cost and comfort. Installing ductwork during shoulder seasons (spring/fall) often provides better contractor availability and pricing. Summer installations mean working in extreme attic heat, while winter installations in unheated spaces can be challenging. Many homeowners combine ductwork installation with other renovations to minimize disruption and potentially reduce costs through coordinated trades.

Consider a ductless mini-split system as an alternative if ductwork installation is prohibitively expensive or disruptive. Multi-zone mini-splits cost $8,000-$18,000 installed and provide excellent efficiency without requiring ductwork. However, they don't provide the whole-home air circulation and filtration benefits of a ducted system.

When hiring contractors, verify they perform Manual J load calculations and Manual D duct design rather than using rules of thumb. Undersized ductwork creates noise, poor comfort, and equipment strain. Also confirm they're registered with TSSA for any gas connections and ESA-licensed for electrical work.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor? Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced professionals who specialize in adding central air systems to existing Toronto homes.

Q18

How much does it cost to upgrade ductwork for a two-stage furnace in a GTA home?

Upgrading ductwork for a two-stage furnace in the GTA typically costs $2,000-$8,000 depending on your existing system's condition and the modifications needed. Most homes require return air upgrades, damper installation, and improved sealing rather than complete duct replacement.

Two-stage furnaces operate at low capacity (typically 60-70%) most of the time, ramping up to full capacity only during extreme weather. This creates unique ductwork requirements that many older GTA homes don't meet. The furnace runs longer cycles at lower airflow, which exposes any air leakage, undersized returns, or poor balancing that wasn't obvious with the old single-stage system.

Return air is the most critical upgrade. Two-stage furnaces are extremely sensitive to restricted return airflow. Many GTA homes built before 1990 have a single return grille on the main floor — adequate for old furnaces but insufficient for two-stage operation. The low-stage operation requires unrestricted airflow to maintain proper heat exchanger temperatures and efficiency. Adding return air ducts to bedrooms and the basement typically costs $1,500-$4,000 and dramatically improves comfort and efficiency.

Duct sealing becomes essential with two-stage operation. The longer run times mean air leaks waste significantly more energy than with short-cycling single-stage furnaces. Professional mastic sealing of all accessible joints costs $1,500-$3,000 and typically reduces energy waste by 15-25%. In GTA homes with ductwork in unconditioned attics or crawlspaces, proper R-8 duct insulation is critical — the longer cycles mean more opportunity for heat loss and condensation.

Balancing dampers may be needed if your home has hot and cold spots. Two-stage furnaces can reveal airflow imbalances that weren't apparent before. Manual balancing dampers cost $30-$80 each installed, while motorized zone dampers for true zoning run $150-$400 each. Many contractors recommend starting with manual dampers and upgrading to motorized zoning later if needed.

Existing ductwork condition determines total cost. Homes with well-designed duct systems may only need return air upgrades and sealing ($2,000-$4,000). Homes with undersized trunk lines, crushed flex duct, or panned joist returns may need extensive modifications ($5,000-$8,000). Post-war GTA homes often have galvanized steel ductwork that's structurally sound but needs return air upgrades and better sealing.

Timing matters in the GTA market. Schedule ductwork upgrades during spring or fall when HVAC contractors are less busy with emergency calls. Winter and summer peak seasons can add 20-30% to project costs due to high demand. Most two-stage furnace installations happen during shoulder seasons anyway, making it ideal timing for coordinated ductwork upgrades.

Ontario Building Code compliance is required for major modifications. Adding new return air runs or significantly modifying the system typically requires a mechanical permit ($200-$400 in Toronto). Your contractor should handle permit applications, but factor this into project timelines — permits can add 2-3 weeks to project start dates.

The investment pays dividends in comfort and efficiency. Properly upgraded ductwork allows two-stage furnaces to deliver their promised 15-20% energy savings while eliminating hot and cold spots throughout your home. Many GTA homeowners report dramatically improved comfort after upgrading both their furnace and ductwork together.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor experienced with two-stage furnace installations? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals who understand the specific airflow requirements of modern high-efficiency equipment.

Q19

How much does it cost to install ductwork for a Toronto home darkroom or photo studio ventilation?

Installing ductwork for a darkroom or photo studio in Toronto typically costs $1,500-$4,500, depending on the size of the space, ventilation requirements, and whether you need specialized chemical exhaust systems or just general air circulation.

Darkroom and photo studio ventilation has unique requirements that differ from standard residential ductwork. **Chemical processing darkrooms need dedicated exhaust systems** to remove fumes from developers, fixers, and stop baths, while digital photo studios primarily need temperature and humidity control to protect equipment and maintain consistent shooting conditions.

For **traditional chemical darkrooms**, you'll need a dedicated exhaust system that captures fumes at the source — typically 150-300 CFM of exhaust depending on room size and chemical usage. This requires a direct-drive exhaust fan vented to the exterior (never into an attic or soffit), with make-up air to replace exhausted air. The exhaust ductwork should be corrosion-resistant aluminum or stainless steel rather than galvanized steel, which can corrode from chemical vapors. Installation costs range from $2,000-$4,500 including the exhaust fan, ductwork, exterior wall cap, and electrical connections.

Digital photo studios have different needs — consistent temperature control (typically 68-72°F), low humidity (45-55% RH) to prevent condensation on camera equipment, and minimal air movement during shoots to avoid disturbing lighting setups. This usually involves extending your existing HVAC system with 1-2 supply registers and a return air path, plus potentially adding a dedicated zone with motorized dampers for precise control. Costs typically range from $1,500-$3,000 for ductwork modifications and zoning controls.

GTA-specific considerations include Toronto's extreme temperature swings affecting basement studios — many darkrooms are located in basements where summer condensation on cold duct surfaces can damage photo equipment and create humidity problems. All ductwork in basement photo spaces should be insulated with R-8 duct wrap minimum. Winter heating is equally important since chemical processing requires stable temperatures, and basement spaces can be difficult to heat evenly.

Practical planning considerations: Chemical darkrooms require a building permit in Toronto for the exhaust system installation, and any electrical work (exhaust fans, lighting controls) must be done by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor. The exhaust system should be interlocked with the darkroom lighting so it runs whenever you're processing. For studios in condos or attached homes, vibration isolation for exhaust fans prevents noise transmission to neighboring units.

When to hire a professional: This is definitely professional work — calculating proper exhaust rates for chemical safety, routing ductwork through existing structure, installing corrosion-resistant materials, and integrating with existing HVAC systems requires expertise. A qualified HVAC contractor experienced with commercial ventilation or laboratory exhaust systems will ensure your darkroom meets safety requirements and building codes.

Find HVAC contractors experienced with specialized ventilation through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac — look for contractors with commercial or industrial experience rather than just residential HVAC.

Q20

What is the price to install a dedicated exhaust duct for a Toronto home workshop dust collector?

Installing a dedicated exhaust duct for a workshop dust collector in a Toronto home typically costs $800-$2,500, depending on the duct run length, material choice, wall or roof penetration requirements, and whether you need make-up air considerations.

Workshop dust collection exhaust systems require careful planning beyond typical residential ductwork. Unlike bathroom or kitchen exhaust that moves small volumes of air, dust collectors often move 400-1,200 CFM or more, creating significant negative pressure in the workshop space. The ductwork must be sized to handle this airflow without excessive static pressure that reduces collector performance.

Material and sizing considerations are critical for dust collection systems. Most workshop dust collectors require 6-inch or 8-inch round duct, significantly larger than typical 4-inch bathroom exhaust ducts. Galvanized steel spiral duct ($12-$20 per linear foot installed) is preferred over flex duct because sawdust and metal shavings can puncture flex duct, and the smooth interior reduces friction losses. The duct run should be as straight as possible — every 90-degree elbow reduces airflow equivalent to adding 10-15 feet of straight duct.

GTA-specific installation challenges include penetrating the building envelope in our extreme climate. Workshop exhaust ducts need proper wall caps or roof jacks with dampers to prevent cold air infiltration when the system isn't running. In Toronto's -20°C winters, an open 6-inch hole in your workshop wall creates massive heat loss. Spring-loaded or motorized dampers ($80-$200) automatically close when the dust collector shuts off. Roof penetrations require flashing and weatherproofing that can handle our freeze-thaw cycles and ice dam conditions.

Make-up air requirements under Ontario Building Code become important for larger dust collection systems. If your workshop dust collector moves more than 300 CFM and the workshop is attached to the house, you may need

to provide make-up air to prevent the system from pulling conditioned air from the house or creating backdrafting of gas appliances. A simple solution is installing a motorized make-up air damper ($150-$400) that opens automatically when the dust collector runs.

Installation cost breakdown for a typical Toronto workshop setup: 20 feet of 6-inch galvanized spiral duct ($240-$400), wall penetration and cap ($150-$300), duct supports and hangers ($50-$100), damper ($80-$200), labour for a sheet metal contractor ($400-$800). Complex installations requiring roof penetrations, long runs through finished spaces, or make-up air systems can reach $2,000-$2,500.

Timing considerations matter in the GTA market. Many homeowners tackle workshop projects during winter months when outdoor construction slows down, but this is actually when ductwork contractors are most available and pricing is most competitive. Summer installations may face scheduling delays as contractors prioritize air conditioning ductwork.

DIY versus professional installation depends on the complexity. Homeowners comfortable with power tools can often install straight duct runs in unfinished basement workshops, but wall or roof penetrations require proper flashing and weatherproofing techniques. Any electrical work for motorized dampers requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor experienced with workshop dust collection systems? Toronto Ductwork can match you with professionals who understand both residential building envelope requirements and workshop ventilation needs.

Q21

How much does it cost to install ductwork under a Toronto home raised floor system?

Installing ductwork under a raised floor system in Toronto typically costs $4,000-$12,000 for a complete system, depending on the home's size, accessibility, and whether you're working with a crawlspace or full basement height under the raised floors.

Raised floor systems in Toronto homes create unique opportunities and challenges for ductwork installation. Many older Toronto homes, particularly those built in the early 1900s through the 1940s in neighbourhoods like Riverdale, Leslieville, and parts of the Beaches, feature raised main floors with accessible space underneath. This configuration actually provides excellent access for modern ductwork installation compared to homes built on concrete slabs or with very low crawlspaces.

The accessibility factor significantly affects pricing. If you have 4-6 feet of clearance under the raised floors, installation becomes much more straightforward, keeping costs toward the lower end of the range. However, many Toronto raised floor systems have only 2-3 feet of crawlspace, requiring contractors to work on their hands and knees or bellies, which increases labour time and costs substantially. The condition of the existing foundation also matters — many older Toronto homes have fieldstone or rubble foundations that may need pointing or waterproofing before ductwork installation.

Material and design considerations for under-floor installation include using galvanized steel or spiral round duct for trunk lines ($12-$25 per linear foot installed) with proper hangers and supports every 6-8 feet. The ductwork must be insulated with R-8 duct wrap minimum since crawlspaces are unconditioned and subject to Toronto's extreme temperature swings. Supply ducts carrying 55-degree air in winter or 12-degree air conditioning in summer will condensate heavily against cold crawlspace air without proper insulation. Return air ductwork is equally important — many older Toronto homes rely on a single central return, but modern comfort requires returns in bedrooms and main living areas.

GTA-specific challenges include dealing with Toronto's clay soil conditions that can cause foundation settling and affect duct support systems. The high water table in many Toronto neighbourhoods means crawlspaces can experience moisture issues, making proper duct insulation and vapour barriers critical. Winter temperatures dropping to -20°C mean any air leaks in the ductwork waste enormous amounts of energy, so professional sealing with mastic and UL 181 foil tape is essential.

Project scope affects pricing significantly. A basic heating-only system for a 1,200 square foot bungalow might cost $4,000-$6,000, while a complete heating and cooling system for a 2,000 square foot home with multiple zones could reach $10,000-$12,000. Adding a new furnace connection, upgrading electrical for zone controls, or installing an ERV/HRV system increases costs further. If the existing crawlspace needs moisture remediation, improved ventilation, or structural work, add $2,000-$5,000 to the project.

Permit requirements apply for new duct system installations in Toronto. Building permits typically cost $300-$600 and require approved drawings showing duct layout, sizing calculations, and compliance with Ontario Building Code Part 6. Any gas connections require a TSSA-registered contractor, and electrical work for controls requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor.

Timing considerations matter in Toronto's climate. Fall and winter installations allow contractors to work in more comfortable crawlspace temperatures, while summer installations can be extremely hot and humid in confined under-floor spaces. Spring installation allows you to test both heating and cooling performance before peak seasons.

This type of installation requires professional expertise for proper design, sizing, and sealing. Undersized ducts create noise and poor comfort, while oversized ducts waste money. The confined workspace and need for proper insulation and support make this a clear hire-a-professional project.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor experienced with Toronto's raised floor systems? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals who understand the unique challenges of under-floor installations in older Toronto homes.

Q22

What is the cost to install smart dampers with thermostat integration in a Toronto home?

Smart damper systems with thermostat integration typically cost $3,000-$8,000 installed in a Toronto home, depending on the number of zones, existing ductwork compatibility, and control system sophistication.

Smart dampers create zoned HVAC control by automatically opening and closing to direct conditioned air only where needed. Each zone gets its own thermostat, and motorized dampers in the ductwork respond to temperature calls from individual rooms or areas. This provides precise temperature control and significant energy savings by avoiding heating or cooling unoccupied spaces.

System components and GTA pricing breakdown:

- **Motorized zone dampers**: $150-$400 each installed, depending on duct size and damper quality. Round dampers for 6-8 inch ducts cost less than rectangular dampers for large trunk lines
- **Zone control panel**: $800-$1,500 for the central control unit that coordinates damper operation with your furnace and air conditioning
- **Zone thermostats**: $150-$400 each for basic programmable models, $300-$600 each for smart WiFi-enabled thermostats with app control
- **Bypass damper or zone relief**: $300-$800 to prevent system damage when multiple zones close simultaneously
- **Professional installation and setup**: $1,500-$3,000 including electrical connections, system programming, and airflow balancing

GTA housing considerations significantly affect installation complexity and cost. Older Toronto homes often have galvanized steel ductwork with limited access points, making damper installation more challenging. Homes with ductwork running through finished ceilings may require drywall patching. Modern homes with accessible basement or attic ductwork are much easier to retrofit. The extreme temperature swings in Toronto make zoning particularly valuable — you can avoid heating unused bedrooms during -20°C nights or cooling the basement during 35°C summer days.

Electrical requirements add cost and complexity. Each motorized damper needs 24V power, typically run from the zone control panel. This electrical work must be performed by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor in Ontario, adding $500-$1,200 to the project depending on wire run lengths and panel locations.

Smart integration features vary widely in price and capability. Basic systems provide programmable scheduling and remote thermostat control. Advanced systems integrate with Nest, Ecobee, or Honeywell smart home

ecosystems, offering features like occupancy sensing, outdoor temperature compensation, and energy usage tracking. Premium systems can cost $1,000-$2,000 more but provide superior comfort control and energy monitoring.

Professional installation is essential for smart damper systems. Improper damper sizing creates noise and airflow problems. Incorrect bypass damper setup can damage your furnace blower motor. The system requires careful balancing to ensure adequate airflow to each zone while maintaining proper static pressure. Most manufacturers require professional installation to maintain warranty coverage.

Energy savings potential in the GTA climate makes smart dampers particularly attractive. Toronto's extreme seasonal temperature swings mean you're running heating or cooling systems heavily for 8-9 months per year. Zoning can reduce energy consumption by 20-30% in typical homes by avoiding conditioning unused spaces. The payback period is typically 5-8 years through reduced utility bills.

When to hire a professional: Smart damper installation requires HVAC system knowledge, electrical work, and precise airflow calculations. This is not a DIY project. Find qualified contractors through the Toronto Construction Network who can assess your existing ductwork, design the zone layout, handle the electrical connections, and properly balance the system for optimal performance.

Q23

How much does it cost to replace cast-iron ductwork registers with modern ones in a GTA heritage home?

Replacing cast-iron registers in a GTA heritage home typically costs $75-$300 per register, depending on the size, style, and whether you choose reproduction heritage designs or modern alternatives. The total project cost for a typical heritage home ranges from $800-$3,500 for 8-15 registers.

Cast-iron registers in Toronto's heritage homes (pre-1930s) were built to last and often feature beautiful Victorian or Edwardian designs with intricate scrollwork. However, after 80-100 years, many have paint buildup, rust damage, or broken damper mechanisms. The good news is that these registers typically use standard duct boot connections, making replacement straightforward without modifying the actual ductwork.

Register pricing breaks down by category: Basic modern steel registers cost $25-$75 each, while reproduction cast-iron or brass heritage-style registers range from $150-$400 each. High-end custom reproductions for historically designated properties can reach $500+ per register. Installation is typically $50-$100 per register if you're hiring a contractor, though this is often a DIY-friendly project for homeowners comfortable with basic tools.

GTA heritage homes present unique considerations. Many pre-war homes in Cabbagetown, The Annex, Riverdale, and High Park have gravity-fed heating systems with oversized registers designed for natural convection. When these homes were converted to forced-air systems, the original large registers may create air velocity issues with modern HVAC equipment. A ductwork contractor can assess whether your register sizes are appropriate for your current system's airflow requirements.

The register boot connections underneath may need attention. Heritage homes often have galvanized steel or even original cast-iron duct boots that are 80+ years old. If you're removing old registers and discover rusty, damaged, or improperly sized boots, budget an additional $75-$150 per location for boot replacement. This requires cutting into flooring or accessing from below, so it's typically professional work.

For historically designated properties, check with the City of Toronto Heritage Preservation Services before making changes to visible architectural elements. Some heritage districts require maintaining the original register style and finish. Reproduction registers that match the original design are available from specialty suppliers, though they cost significantly more than modern alternatives.

Practical installation tips: Most heritage registers are held in place by wood screws into the surrounding hardwood flooring. Remove carefully to avoid damaging original wood floors. Clean the duct boot opening thoroughly before installing new registers. If switching from cast-iron to lighter modern registers, you may need different screws or mounting hardware.

When to hire a professional: While register replacement is often DIY-friendly, hire a contractor if you discover damaged duct boots, need to modify boot sizes, or if the registers are in difficult locations like high walls or ornate plaster surrounds. HVAC contractors can also assess whether your heritage home's duct system would benefit from airflow balancing after register replacement.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor experienced with heritage homes? Toronto Ductwork can match you with professionals familiar with the unique requirements of GTA's historic housing stock.

Q24

How much does it cost to relocate supply vents from the floor to the ceiling in a GTA home?

Relocating supply vents from floor to ceiling typically costs $800-$2,500 per vent in the GTA, depending on the distance between old and new locations, accessibility of the duct run, and whether you're moving within the same room or to a different area entirely.

The cost breakdown includes removing the existing floor register and patching the floor ($100-$200), running new ductwork from the trunk line to the ceiling location ($400-$1,500 per run), installing a ceiling register boot and grille ($150-$300), and patching/finishing the drywall around the new ceiling penetration ($150-$500). If the new ceiling location requires running ductwork through finished walls or multiple floor levels, costs can reach $3,000+ per vent due to the additional framing, drywall repair, and painting required.

Why homeowners make this change varies significantly across GTA housing types. In older Toronto homes with radiator heating that was later converted to forced air, floor vents were often added as an afterthought in awkward locations. Moving them to the ceiling provides better furniture placement and improved aesthetics. In modern homes, ceiling vents offer superior air distribution for cooling — cold air naturally falls and mixes better when delivered from above. This is particularly important in GTA summers when air conditioning is essential for comfort.

GTA housing considerations affect both cost and complexity. Pre-war Toronto homes often have thick plaster walls and solid wood floors that are expensive to patch properly. Post-war suburban homes typically have easier access through basement ceilings, but may require longer duct runs if moving vents to opposite sides of rooms. Newer homes with engineered floor systems and drywall are generally easier to modify, but any changes to the original duct design should maintain proper airflow calculations.

Practical planning tips can significantly impact your project cost. Moving vents within the same room is much cheaper than relocating to different rooms, which may require entirely new branch ducts. Consider the trunk line location — ceiling vents work best when the main ductwork runs through the basement ceiling rather than a crawlspace. If you're renovating multiple rooms, coordinate all vent relocations at once to minimize drywall repair costs. Always verify that ceiling locations won't interfere with electrical, plumbing, or structural elements before starting work.

When to hire a professional is essential for this type of modification. Ductwork relocation requires understanding airflow principles, proper duct sizing, and building structure. A qualified sheet metal contractor will ensure the new ceiling runs maintain adequate airflow velocity and don't create excessive static pressure. They'll also coordinate with other trades if electrical or structural modifications are needed. In Toronto, any significant ductwork modifications may require a building permit, and the contractor will handle permit applications and inspections.

The investment often pays off in improved comfort and room functionality, especially when combined with other HVAC upgrades during renovation projects. Get quotes from multiple contractors and ensure they include all finishing work — incomplete drywall repair can add unexpected costs to your project.

Q25

What is the average cost to install phenolic duct board in a Toronto office building?

Phenolic duct board installation in Toronto commercial buildings typically ranges from $25-$45 per linear foot installed, though this varies significantly based on system complexity, building height, and fire rating requirements.

I specialize in residential ductwork guidance for GTA homeowners through Toronto Ductwork, so I don't have detailed commercial phenolic duct board pricing or specifications. Commercial ductwork involves different materials, fire ratings, building codes, and installation requirements than residential projects.

Phenolic duct board is primarily used in commercial HVAC applications where fire resistance, thermal performance, and space constraints are critical factors. It's an engineered composite material with excellent insulation properties and fire-resistant characteristics, making it popular in high-rise buildings, hospitals, and institutional facilities.

For commercial ductwork projects in Toronto office buildings, you'll need contractors who specialize in commercial sheet metal and mechanical systems. These projects typically require:

- **Commercial building permits** through the City of Toronto
- **TSSA registration** for any gas-related connections
- **ESA licensing** for electrical integration
- **Fire rating compliance** with Ontario Building Code Part 3 (Large Buildings)
- **Professional engineering** for system design and load calculations
- **Union sheet metal workers** for most commercial installations

Commercial ductwork pricing factors include building height (crane and hoist requirements), fire rating specifications, seismic bracing requirements, coordination with other trades, and accessibility during occupied building hours.

For your Toronto office building project, I'd recommend connecting with commercial mechanical contractors who specialize in phenolic duct systems. Find commercial contractors through the Toronto Construction Network at torontoconstructionnetwork.com - they can provide accurate pricing based on your specific building requirements, square footage, and system complexity.

If you have residential ductwork questions for your home in the GTA, I'm here to help with detailed guidance on materials, costs, and finding the right contractor for your project.

Q26

What is the price to install an energy recovery ventilator with dedicated ductwork in a GTA condo?

ERV installation in a GTA condo typically costs $3,500-$7,000 including dedicated ductwork, though condo-specific challenges often push costs toward the higher end of this range.

Condo ERV installations are significantly more complex than detached homes because of structural limitations, condo board approvals, and restricted routing options. Unlike houses where ductwork can run through basements or attics, condos require creative solutions to route fresh air intake and stale air exhaust ducts through concrete floors, demising walls, or exterior walls without violating building envelope integrity or fire separations.

The dedicated ductwork represents 40-60% of the total project cost in condos. ERV systems require four separate duct connections: fresh air intake from outside, stale air exhaust to outside, supply air to living spaces, and return air from bathrooms/kitchen. In a typical condo, this means running ducts through concrete slabs, around structural beams, and potentially through multiple rooms to reach exterior walls. Routing options are severely limited compared to detached homes, often requiring longer duct runs with more bends, increasing both material costs and installation complexity.

Condo board approval adds time and potential complications to ERV projects. Most condo corporations require architectural drawings showing ductwork routing, structural engineer approval for any penetrations, and compliance with building fire safety systems. The ERV exterior intake and exhaust terminations must be approved by the property management company, as they affect the building envelope. Some condos have restrictions on exterior modifications or require specific equipment locations that may not be optimal for your unit layout.

Unit-specific factors significantly affect pricing in GTA condos. Corner units with multiple exterior walls offer more routing flexibility and typically cost less ($3,500-$5,500). Interior units or those on higher floors may require extensive ductwork routing and specialized equipment, pushing costs to $5,500-$7,000 or more. Older concrete condos often require core drilling through structural elements, adding $500-$1,500 to the project. Newer condos may have designated mechanical spaces or pre-planned ventilation routes that reduce installation complexity.

ERV equipment sizing for condos differs from houses because of the smaller space and different air exchange requirements. Most condo ERVs are 100-200 CFM units compared to 200-400 CFM for detached homes. However, the per-square-foot cost is often higher because the fixed costs (permits, approvals, exterior terminations) are spread over a smaller space.

Timing considerations are critical for condo ERV installations. Many condo buildings restrict construction work to specific hours (typically 9 AM to 5 PM weekdays) and may require advance booking of freight elevators. Core

drilling through concrete often requires specialized equipment and may need to be scheduled during low-occupancy periods. These restrictions can extend project timelines and increase labour costs compared to detached home installations.

The investment pays significant dividends in condo living where natural ventilation is limited and cooking odours, humidity, and indoor air pollutants concentrate quickly. ERVs provide continuous fresh air exchange while recovering 70-85% of the energy from exhausted air, maintaining comfort while dramatically improving indoor air quality.

Professional installation is essential for condo ERVs due to the structural complexity, fire code requirements, and condo board compliance issues. The contractor should have specific experience with condo installations and be familiar with Toronto condo approval processes.

Need help finding an ERV contractor experienced with GTA condo installations? Toronto Ductwork can match you with professionals who understand the unique challenges of condo mechanical systems and building approval processes.

Q27

How much does it cost to install motorized zone dampers in existing Toronto home ductwork?

Motorized zone dampers typically cost $150-$400 each, with installation adding $200-$500 per damper, bringing the total to $350-$900 per zone in the GTA. For a typical Toronto home with 3-4 zones, expect to budget $2,500-$6,000 including the zone control panel, thermostats, and professional installation.

Zone damper installation costs vary significantly based on your home's existing ductwork accessibility and the sophistication of the control system. The dampers themselves range from basic spring-return models ($150-$250) to modulating dampers with position feedback ($300-$400). Installation labor depends heavily on where your trunk ducts are located — basement installations with accessible ductwork cost less than attic or wall-cavity installations that require drywall cutting and patching.

The zone control panel is a major cost component, ranging from $800-$2,500 depending on the number of zones and features. Basic panels handle 2-4 zones with simple on/off control, while advanced systems offer modulating control, outdoor temperature reset, and integration with smart home systems. Each zone also requires its own thermostat ($100-$300 each), and the control wiring between the panel, dampers, and thermostats adds $300-$800 in materials and labor.

GTA homes present unique challenges for zone damper retrofits due to the region's housing stock and climate. Many Toronto-area homes built before 1980 have galvanized steel trunk ducts that may require modification to accommodate damper installation. The extreme temperature swings in the GTA (from -20°C to +35°C) mean damper motors must be rated for these conditions, especially if installed in unconditioned attics. Homes with flex duct branch runs may need those sections replaced with rigid duct to properly mount dampers.

Professional installation is essential because zone dampers must be sized and positioned correctly to avoid system damage. Improperly installed dampers can create excessive static pressure that damages the furnace blower motor or causes air leaks at duct joints. The control system also requires integration with your existing furnace or air handler, and most installations need ESA-licensed electrical work for the low-voltage control wiring and thermostat connections.

Consider the return air strategy carefully — this is often overlooked in zone damper installations. Many GTA homes have a single return air grille, which works fine for single-zone systems but can create pressure imbalances with zoning. You may need return air dampers ($200-$400 each) or dedicated return ducts for each zone, adding $500-$1,500 per zone to the project cost.

The best candidates for zone damper retrofits are homes with accessible trunk ductwork, multiple floors with different heating and cooling needs, or large open-concept areas that need separate temperature control. Two-storey homes in Mississauga, Markham, or Vaughan often benefit significantly from zoning because the upper floor runs warmer in summer and cooler in winter. Homes with finished basements also see comfort improvements with separate zone control.

Timing matters for GTA installations — spring and fall are ideal because you can test both heating and cooling operation before the extreme summer and winter seasons. Many contractors offer better pricing during shoulder seasons when demand is lower.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor experienced with zone damper installations? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local HVAC professionals who specialize in zoning retrofits for GTA homes.

Q28

What does it cost to install ductwork for a Toronto home marijuana grow room ventilation?

I can't provide guidance on marijuana grow room ventilation systems. Toronto Ductwork focuses on standard residential ductwork applications like heating, cooling, kitchen exhaust, bathroom ventilation, and whole-home air quality systems.

For standard residential ventilation projects, we help GTA homeowners with:

Basement ventilation and dehumidification is a common need in Toronto's clay soil conditions. Many GTA basements struggle with humidity and stale air, especially finished basements used as recreation rooms or home offices. A properly designed basement ventilation system typically costs $1,500-$4,000 and includes supply air from the main HVAC system, dedicated return air ducting, and often an HRV or ERV for fresh air exchange.

Whole-home air quality improvements are increasingly popular as GTA homeowners focus on indoor air quality. This might include upgrading to a high-efficiency filtration system ($800-$2,500), installing an ERV for balanced ventilation ($3,000-$6,000), or adding UV air purification ($1,200-$3,000). These systems work with your existing ductwork to improve air circulation and quality throughout the home.

Exhaust ventilation for hobby rooms like workshops, craft rooms, or home gyms typically requires dedicated exhaust fans (200-400 CFM) with ducted connections to the exterior. Installation costs $500-$1,500 depending on the run length and whether make-up air is needed.

Kitchen and bathroom exhaust upgrades are common projects where homeowners want better ventilation. A high-CFM range hood installation costs $500-$2,500 for the ductwork, and may require a make-up air system if the exhaust exceeds 400 CFM under Ontario Building Code requirements.

For specialized ventilation applications outside standard residential HVAC, you might want to consult with a mechanical engineer who can design systems for specific requirements while ensuring code compliance.

Need help finding a contractor for standard residential ductwork and ventilation? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

Q29

What is the average cost to install smoke and fire dampers in ductwork for a Toronto triplex?

Installing smoke and fire dampers in a Toronto triplex typically costs $3,000-$8,000 depending on the number of dampers required, accessibility of ductwork, and complexity of the fire separation assemblies. Fire dampers are mandatory under the Ontario Building Code where ductwork penetrates fire-rated walls or floor assemblies between dwelling units, making this both a safety requirement and a code compliance issue.

Fire dampers are required wherever ductwork crosses fire separations — the walls and floors that separate individual dwelling units in your triplex. In a typical three-unit building, this means dampers at every point where supply or return ducts pass through the fire-rated assemblies between Unit 1, Unit 2, and Unit 3. Most triplexes need 6-12 fire dampers depending on the HVAC layout, with each damper costing $200-$500 for the unit itself plus $300-$800 for installation labor.

The **Ontario Building Code Part 3 (Fire Protection)** mandates fire dampers in multi-unit residential buildings to prevent fire and smoke from spreading through the ductwork between units. These dampers contain fusible links that automatically close the damper when exposed to heat (typically 165°F), sealing the duct opening and maintaining the fire rating of the wall or floor assembly. **Smoke dampers**, which close upon smoke detection rather than heat, may also be required depending on your building's fire protection system and whether it has a central fire alarm system.

Installation complexity varies significantly based on your triplex's age and ductwork accessibility. In older Toronto triplexes with galvanized steel ductwork, dampers often require cutting into existing ducts and modifying the framing, especially if the original system wasn't designed with fire dampers. Modern installations in accessible locations (unfinished basements, mechanical rooms) cost less than retrofits requiring drywall removal and patching. Each damper installation typically takes 2-4 hours including cutting the duct, installing the damper frame, connecting the ductwork, and sealing around the penetration.

Permit requirements are strict for fire damper installations in multi-unit buildings. You'll need a mechanical permit from the City of Toronto Building Division, and the work must be inspected to ensure compliance with fire separation requirements. The installation must be performed by qualified sheet metal contractors familiar with fire-rated assemblies — improper installation can compromise the fire rating of the entire wall or floor system.

Additional costs may include upgrading ductwork that doesn't meet current fire separation standards, installing access panels for future damper inspection and maintenance (required every 6 years), and coordinating with other trades if electrical work is needed for smoke dampers. Some insurance companies offer premium reductions for buildings with properly installed and maintained fire dampers, as they significantly reduce fire spread risk between units.

When planning your project, factor in that fire damper work often reveals other code compliance issues in older buildings — undersized ductwork, improper fire stopping, or ductwork that bypasses fire separations entirely.

Budget an additional 20-30% contingency for addressing these discovered issues, as bringing the entire system up to current code standards is typically required once you begin fire damper installation.

Need help finding a qualified sheet metal contractor experienced with fire damper installations? Toronto Ductwork can match you with professionals familiar with multi-unit building requirements and City of Toronto permit processes.

Q30

What does it cost to install a duct silencer for a noisy HVAC system in a Toronto home?

Duct silencer installation in Toronto typically costs $300-$1,200 per silencer depending on size, type, and installation complexity, with most residential applications falling in the $400-$800 range.

Understanding Duct Silencers and Noise Sources

Duct silencers (also called sound attenuators) are specialized components designed to reduce noise transmission through HVAC ductwork. However, before installing silencers, it's crucial to identify the actual noise source. Many homeowners assume they need silencers when the real problem is undersized ducts, excessive air velocity, loose ductwork connections, or an improperly balanced system. A 6-inch flex duct trying to carry 200 CFM will whistle and rush regardless of silencers — the solution is properly sized ductwork, not noise suppression.

True candidates for duct silencers include homes where properly sized, well-sealed ductwork still transmits furnace blower noise, air handler vibration, or outdoor unit compressor noise through the duct system. This is common in open-concept homes where return air grilles are located near quiet spaces like bedrooms, or in homes with high-velocity mini-duct systems that inherently operate at higher air speeds.

Types and Pricing for GTA Installations

Rectangular silencers for trunk lines and main supply ducts range from $200-$600 for the unit plus $200-$400 installation, depending on accessibility. These are typically 2-4 feet long and contain sound-absorbing baffles that reduce noise while maintaining airflow. Installation involves cutting the existing duct, inserting the silencer, and sealing all connections with mastic.

Round silencers for branch ducts cost $150-$400 per unit plus $150-$300 installation. These are more common in residential applications and easier to install in existing systems. A typical 8-inch round silencer provides 10-15 decibels of noise reduction across most frequencies.

Flexible duct silencers are the most economical option at $100-$250 per unit plus $100-$200 installation. These work well for bedroom branch runs where return air noise is the primary concern. However, they're less effective than rigid silencers and can restrict airflow if not properly sized.

GTA-Specific Installation Considerations

Toronto's housing stock creates unique challenges for silencer installation. In older homes with galvanized steel ductwork, accessing trunk lines often requires cutting through finished basement ceilings or working in cramped crawlspaces, increasing labour costs. Post-war homes in Scarborough and North York frequently have ductwork running through floor joists, making silencer installation more complex and expensive.

Winter installation timing matters in the GTA — working in unheated attics during January cold snaps is dangerous and expensive, with contractors charging premium rates for extreme weather work. Spring and fall are optimal for attic ductwork modifications, while basement installations can proceed year-round.

Professional Installation Requirements

Duct silencer installation requires precise sizing to maintain proper airflow and static pressure. An incorrectly sized silencer can restrict airflow more than the original noise problem warranted. Professional installation ensures the silencer matches the duct size, maintains required CFM delivery, and doesn't create additional pressure drop that strains the blower motor.

The work typically doesn't require permits unless it's part of a larger duct system modification, but proper sealing with UL 181-rated mastic is essential to prevent air leaks that would negate the noise reduction benefits.

Alternative Solutions to Consider

Before investing in silencers, have a qualified HVAC contractor evaluate your system for common noise sources: undersized return ducts (very common in GTA homes built before 1980), loose duct connections, missing duct insulation, or improperly supported ductwork. Addressing these root causes often eliminates noise problems at lower cost than adding silencers. Aeroseal duct sealing ($1,500-$3,500) can simultaneously reduce noise and improve efficiency by sealing air leaks throughout the system.

Need help finding an HVAC contractor to evaluate your noisy ductwork? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals who specialize in noise diagnosis and duct system optimization.

Q31

What is the price to install ductwork for an indoor swimming pool dehumidification system in Toronto?

Installing ductwork for an indoor pool dehumidification system in the GTA typically costs $8,000-$25,000, depending on the pool size, dehumidifier capacity, ductwork complexity, and whether the system includes heating recovery. This is specialized commercial-grade HVAC work that requires careful design to handle the extreme moisture loads and corrosive environment of indoor pools.

Indoor pool dehumidification systems are fundamentally different from residential HVAC ductwork because they must handle massive moisture removal (typically 50-150 pints per day), resist corrosion from chlorinated air, and often integrate heat recovery to warm the pool water with waste heat from the dehumidification process. The ductwork must be sized to move large volumes of air — typically 4-6 air changes per hour for the entire pool room — while maintaining proper air distribution to prevent condensation on windows, walls, and ceilings.

Ductwork materials for pool environments require special consideration. Standard galvanized steel ductwork will corrode rapidly in chlorinated environments. Most pool dehumidification systems use aluminum ductwork, PVC-coated steel, or specialized corrosion-resistant materials. The ductwork must also be insulated with closed-cell foam insulation rather than standard fibreglass, as fibreglass absorbs moisture and becomes a breeding ground for mould in high-humidity environments. Supply ducts typically need R-10 to R-12 insulation to prevent condensation, significantly higher than the R-8 minimum for standard residential applications.

System sizing and design complexity drive costs significantly. A small residential pool (400-600 square feet) might need a 70-90 pint dehumidifier with relatively simple ductwork — supply ducts directing dry air across the pool surface and return ducts pulling humid air from the room. Larger pools or those in finished basement spaces require more sophisticated systems with multiple supply and return points, heat recovery units, and integration with existing HVAC systems. The ductwork must be designed using specialized pool dehumidification calculations, not standard Manual D residential methods.

GTA climate considerations add complexity and cost. Toronto's extreme temperature swings mean the system must handle winter conditions where outdoor air at -20°C is introduced for fresh air exchange, requiring pre-heating to prevent shocking the pool environment. Summer conditions with high outdoor humidity mean the system works harder and may need larger capacity. Pool rooms with large windows facing south or west experience significant solar heat gain, requiring additional cooling capacity and more complex ductwork distribution.

Installation challenges in existing homes increase costs substantially. Most indoor pools in the GTA are basement installations or pool house additions. Running large-diameter ductwork (often 10-16 inch round ducts) through existing homes requires careful planning around structural elements, utilities, and finished spaces.

Accessing the pool room for ductwork installation often requires removing drywall, working around low ceiling heights, and coordinating with pool equipment, electrical, and plumbing systems.

Typical cost breakdown for GTA pool dehumidification ductwork:

- **Basic system (small pool, simple layout)**: $8,000-$12,000 including aluminum ductwork, insulation, registers, and installation
- **Standard system (medium pool with heat recovery)**: $12,000-$18,000 including more complex distribution, multiple zones, and corrosion-resistant materials
- **Complex system (large pool, existing home retrofit)**: $18,000-$25,000+ including extensive ductwork modifications, structural considerations, and integration challenges

This work requires specialized contractors experienced with pool dehumidification systems, not general ductwork contractors. The system must comply with Ontario Building Code requirements for mechanical ventilation, electrical work requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor, and any gas connections for heating components need a TSSA-registered contractor. Most installations also require building permits due to the mechanical system complexity and electrical loads.

Key factors affecting your project cost include pool room size and ceiling height, distance from the dehumidifier to the pool area, number of supply and return points needed, whether heat recovery is included, accessibility for ductwork installation, and integration with existing HVAC systems. Always get multiple quotes from contractors experienced with indoor pool environments — this is not typical residential ductwork.

Need help finding a contractor experienced with pool dehumidification systems? Toronto Ductwork can match you with specialists through the Toronto Construction Network who understand the unique requirements of indoor pool environments.

Q32

What is the price to install a plenum-rated cable tray alongside ductwork in a Toronto commercial space?

Toronto Ductwork specializes in residential ductwork and ventilation projects in the Greater Toronto Area, not commercial electrical cable management systems. Cable tray installation is an electrical trade specialty that requires coordination with both electrical contractors and mechanical contractors for proper spacing and fire code compliance.

For commercial cable tray installation alongside ductwork in Toronto, you'll need to work with **ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractors** who specialize in commercial electrical infrastructure. The electrical contractor will coordinate with the mechanical contractor handling the ductwork to ensure proper clearances, support systems, and compliance with Ontario Building Code requirements for plenum-rated installations.

Commercial electrical and mechanical coordination involves complex considerations including fire stopping, cable tray support systems, electrical load calculations, and integration with HVAC equipment that are outside the scope of residential ductwork services.

For your commercial project, I'd recommend connecting with commercial electrical contractors through the Toronto Construction Network. You can find qualified commercial electrical contractors at torontoconstructionnetwork.com who can provide accurate pricing for plenum-rated cable tray systems and coordinate the installation with your mechanical contractor.

The Toronto Construction Network includes contractors experienced with commercial electrical infrastructure, fire code compliance, and the coordination required between electrical and mechanical trades in commercial spaces throughout the GTA.

If you have questions about **residential ductwork, ventilation, or HVAC distribution systems** for your home, I'm here to help with expert guidance on those topics.

Q33

What is the cost to install ductwork in a Toronto semi-detached home with a shared wall?

Installing ductwork in a Toronto semi-detached home typically costs $4,000-$12,000 for a complete system, with the shared wall actually providing some cost advantages by reducing the number of exterior walls that need duct runs.

Semi-detached homes in Toronto present unique ductwork opportunities and challenges. The shared wall eliminates one exterior boundary, which means fewer perimeter rooms requiring long duct runs and less heat loss through exterior walls. However, the narrow lot width (typically 16-20 feet) and multi-storey layout create their own design considerations.

Layout and Design Factors affect costs significantly. Most Toronto semis are 2-3 storeys with the furnace in the basement. The narrow width means ductwork often runs along the shared wall or through the centre of the home, with branch ducts extending to rooms on the front and back. This central trunk approach is generally more efficient

than trying to run ducts along multiple exterior walls. However, getting ductwork to upper floors requires careful planning around the existing staircase and plumbing chases.

GTA Housing Stock Considerations play a major role in pricing. Pre-war semis (common in Leslieville, Riverdale, and The Beaches) often have 9-foot ceilings and may lack existing ductwork entirely, requiring a complete system installation. Post-war semis built in the 1940s-1960s across Scarborough and North York typically have existing gravity-fed octopus ductwork that needs complete replacement when upgrading to forced air. Modern semis in areas like Markham or newer Toronto developments usually have existing ductwork that may need modification or expansion.

Specific Cost Breakdown for Toronto semis:

- **Basic system (1,200-1,500 sq ft, 2-storey)**: $4,000-$7,000 with trunk ducts in basement ceiling, supply runs to main floor and second floor, minimal return air ductwork
- **Complete system (1,500-2,000 sq ft, 3-storey)**: $6,000-$12,000 including proper return air to bedrooms, balanced airflow design, and ductwork to finished basement
- **Premium installation**: $8,000-$15,000 with zone dampers, upgraded materials, extensive sealing, and integration with ERV/HRV system

Shared Wall Advantages include reduced exterior wall penetrations (no ductwork needed along that wall), shared structural support for trunk ducts running parallel to the party wall, and often better access for installation since one side of the basement is typically against the shared foundation. The party wall also provides thermal mass that reduces heating and cooling loads.

Toronto Climate Considerations are critical for semi-detached homes. The narrow lot means less thermal mass and more surface area exposed to weather per square foot than detached homes. Ductwork running through unconditioned spaces (attics, crawlspaces) must be insulated to R-8 minimum to prevent condensation in summer and heat loss in winter. Many Toronto semis have finished basements, which means ductwork often runs in bulkheads or soffits rather than exposed basement ceilings, increasing installation complexity and cost.

Permit and Code Requirements apply to new ductwork installations. City of Toronto building permits are required for complete duct systems ($200-$400 permit fee). If the work involves gas connections for a new furnace, a TSSA-registered contractor is mandatory. Make-up air systems are required when kitchen exhaust exceeds 75 L/s (about 159 CFM), which is common with modern range hoods.

When to Hire a Professional is essential for semi-detached homes due to the complex three-dimensional layout, shared wall considerations, and need for proper load calculations. Manual J heating and cooling load calculations account for the shared wall's thermal benefits, while Manual D duct design ensures adequate airflow to all rooms despite the narrow floor plan. DIY ductwork installation in a multi-storey semi is not recommended due to the

complexity of routing ducts between floors and around existing plumbing and electrical systems.

Get multiple quotes from experienced ductwork contractors who understand Toronto's housing stock and can provide proper load calculations for your specific semi-detached layout. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals who specialize in semi-detached home ductwork installations.

Q34

What is the average cost to install adjustable register dampers throughout a Toronto home?

Installing adjustable register dampers throughout an average Toronto home typically costs $800-$2,400, depending on the number of registers and damper type. Most GTA homes have 12-20 supply registers, with manual dampers running $30-80 each installed and motorized zone dampers costing $150-400 each.

Manual register dampers are the most common and cost-effective option. These are built into the register boot or installed inline just before the register, allowing you to manually adjust airflow to each room with a lever or dial. A sheet metal contractor can install these during regular service calls, making it an affordable upgrade. The dampers themselves cost $15-40 each, with installation adding $15-40 per damper depending on accessibility. For a typical 15-register home, expect $450-1,200 total.

Motorized zone dampers are significantly more expensive but offer automated control through your thermostat or a separate zoning panel. These are installed in the main trunk ducts rather than at each register, controlling airflow to entire zones (upstairs, downstairs, individual rooms). A basic two-zone system with motorized dampers, zone control panel, and additional thermostats runs $2,500-5,000 installed. This is a major upgrade that requires both sheet metal and electrical work by licensed contractors.

GTA housing considerations affect damper installation costs. Older Toronto homes often have galvanized steel ductwork where adding inline dampers requires cutting and reassembling sections, increasing labour time. Newer homes with accessible flex duct connections make damper installation more straightforward. Homes with finished basements where ductwork is enclosed in bulkheads require drywall cutting and patching, adding $100-200 per location.

Practical installation timing matters in Toronto's climate. Spring and fall are ideal for ductwork modifications since you can test the damper adjustments during both heating and cooling seasons. Many homeowners install manual dampers first to understand their airflow patterns, then upgrade to motorized zones later if needed.

Why dampers improve comfort in GTA homes: Toronto's extreme temperature swings mean rooms that are comfortable in winter may be too hot in summer, or vice versa. South-facing rooms get intense afternoon sun, while north-facing bedrooms stay cooler. Manual dampers let you reduce airflow to overheated rooms and increase it to under-conditioned spaces. This is especially valuable in multi-storey homes where heat naturally rises, making upper floors warmer.

Professional installation is recommended because dampers must be properly sized for each duct and positioned correctly to avoid turbulence and noise. Incorrectly installed dampers can create whistling sounds or

actually reduce system efficiency. A qualified sheet metal contractor will also check that your return air system can handle the airflow adjustments without creating static pressure problems.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor for damper installation? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals who specialize in airflow balancing and zoning systems.

Q35

How much does it cost to install ductwork for a cold-climate air source heat pump in the GTA?

Installing ductwork for a cold-climate air source heat pump in the GTA typically costs $4,000-$12,000 for a complete system, with most homes falling in the $6,000-$9,000 range. Heat pump ductwork has specific design requirements that differ from traditional gas furnace systems, particularly for airflow rates and return air sizing.

Heat pump ductwork requirements are more demanding than conventional furnace systems. Cold-climate heat pumps operate at lower supply air temperatures (95-105°F versus 120-140°F from gas furnaces) and require higher airflow rates to deliver the same heating capacity. This means larger ducts, more return air capacity, and careful attention to duct sealing to prevent the lower-temperature heated air from losing energy before reaching rooms. A typical heat pump needs 400-450 CFM per ton of capacity for both heating and cooling, compared to 300-350 CFM for gas heating systems.

Return air sizing becomes critical with heat pump installations. Many older GTA homes have undersized return air systems designed for gas furnaces, which pulled air more aggressively. Heat pumps are less forgiving of restricted return airflow, which reduces efficiency and can damage the compressor. Upgrading return air often means adding return ducts to bedrooms and the basement, or installing larger return grilles and trunk ducts. This return air upgrade adds $1,500-$4,000 to the project but is essential for proper heat pump operation.

GTA climate considerations make proper duct design even more important for heat pumps. During Toronto's coldest days (-15°C to -25°C), heat pumps work harder and run longer cycles than gas furnaces. Any duct leakage or inadequate insulation becomes magnified because the system operates for extended periods. All ductwork in unconditioned spaces must be insulated to R-8 minimum, with R-12 preferred for attic installations. Supply ducts in unheated garages or crawlspaces should be avoided entirely if possible, as heat loss is severe when outdoor temperatures drop below -10°C.

Duct sealing requirements are stricter for heat pump systems. The longer operating cycles mean more opportunity for conditioned air to leak out through poorly sealed joints. Professional duct sealing with mastic and UL 181 foil tape is essential, not optional. Many contractors recommend Aeroseal duct sealing ($1,500-$3,500) for heat pump retrofits because it seals inaccessible leaks that would otherwise waste significant energy during long heating cycles.

Cost breakdown for typical GTA installations: Complete new duct system ranges from $4,000-$8,000 for simple basement layouts to $8,000-$12,000 for multi-story homes requiring attic or wall-cavity runs. Return air upgrades add $1,500-$4,000. Professional duct sealing adds $1,500-$4,000. If existing ductwork can be modified rather than replaced entirely, costs drop to $2,500-$6,000 for upgrades including larger return ducts, additional returns, and comprehensive sealing.

Zoning considerations often make sense with heat pump installations since the systems run longer and homeowners want more precise temperature control. Adding zone dampers and controls costs $2,000-$5,000 but allows different areas of the home to be heated or cooled independently, maximizing the heat pump's efficiency advantages.

When to hire a professional is non-negotiable for heat pump ductwork. Proper sizing requires Manual J load calculations and Manual D duct design specific to heat pump airflow requirements. Undersized ducts will cause the heat pump to work harder, increase electricity costs, and potentially void the equipment warranty. The electrical connections for heat pumps require an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor, and any gas line disconnection (removing an old furnace) requires a TSSA-registered contractor.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor experienced with heat pump installations? Toronto Ductwork can match you with professionals who understand the specific requirements for cold-climate heat pump ductwork design and installation.

Q36

How much does it cost to add ductwork for a second-floor home office addition in the GTA?

Adding ductwork for a second-floor home office addition in the GTA typically costs $1,500-$4,500, depending on the size of the space, distance from your existing furnace, and whether you need heating only or year-round air conditioning.

The cost breakdown includes several key factors specific to second-floor additions. **Material and labour** for the ductwork itself runs $8-$20 per linear foot for supply ducts and $10-$25 per linear foot for return ducts, with the higher costs reflecting the complexity of routing ducts vertically through walls or chases to reach the second floor. A typical home office (150-200 square feet) requires one supply register and ideally one return register, with duct runs that may total 40-80 linear feet depending on your home's layout.

Accessing the second floor significantly affects pricing. If your home has an unfinished basement where new trunk lines can be easily installed, costs stay on the lower end. However, if ductwork must be routed through finished walls, closets, or exterior walls, expect additional costs for drywall patching, painting, and potential structural modifications. Many GTA contractors charge $200-$500 extra for each wall or ceiling that needs to be opened and refinished.

HVAC capacity is a critical consideration that many homeowners overlook. Your existing furnace and air conditioning system must have sufficient capacity to handle the additional load. A home office typically requires 400-600 CFM of airflow for proper heating and cooling. If your current system is already operating at capacity, you may need equipment upgrades costing $3,000-$8,000 additional. A qualified contractor should perform Manual J load calculations to determine if your system can handle the extra square footage.

Permits and code requirements add to the project scope. Adding ductwork to a new addition requires a building permit from your municipality (typically $200-$500 in permit fees). The work must comply with Ontario Building Code requirements for proper return air pathways — you cannot simply add a supply register without adequate return air. Many contractors include permit applications in their pricing, but confirm this upfront.

Seasonal timing affects both cost and installation complexity in the GTA. Winter installations are more challenging because contractors must work quickly when opening exterior walls to prevent heat loss and frozen pipes. Summer installations allow more flexibility but may cost 10-15% more due to peak demand for HVAC contractors. Spring and fall offer the best balance of moderate weather and contractor availability.

Additional considerations that can increase costs include upgrading your home's electrical service if new zone dampers or controls are needed ($500-$1,500), installing a separate thermostat zone for the office ($300-$800), and addressing any asbestos-wrapped ductwork in older GTA homes built before 1980 (professional abatement adds $2,000-$5,000).

Get multiple quotes from contractors experienced with second-floor additions, as pricing varies significantly based on your home's specific layout and the contractor's approach to routing ductwork. The cheapest option often involves longer duct runs with more bends, which reduces airflow efficiency and creates noise. Investing in proper duct design with shorter, straighter runs pays dividends in comfort and energy efficiency.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced local contractors who specialize in additions and understand the unique challenges of extending ductwork to second floors in GTA housing stock.

Q37

What does it cost to install a duct-mounted carbon monoxide detector near a Toronto home furnace?

A duct-mounted carbon monoxide detector for a Toronto home furnace typically costs $150-$400 installed, though this requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor since it involves electrical connections to the HVAC system.

Duct-mounted CO detectors are specialized devices that monitor carbon monoxide levels in the air circulating through your home's ductwork. Unlike wall-mounted residential CO detectors, these units are installed directly in the supply or return air plenum near your furnace and can automatically shut down the HVAC system if dangerous CO levels are detected. This is particularly important in Toronto's older housing stock where furnaces, water heaters, and fireplaces share mechanical rooms and combustion air supplies.

The detector itself costs $80-$200 depending on the brand and features. Basic models simply sound an alarm, while more advanced units can interface with your furnace controls to automatically shut down the system and activate exhaust fans. Popular brands include Honeywell, System Sensor, and Macurco. **Professional installation adds $70-$200** and must be performed by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor since the device requires 120V power and integration with your HVAC system's control wiring.

Installation complexity varies significantly based on your furnace location and electrical setup. If your furnace room already has adequate electrical outlets and the duct plenum is easily accessible, installation is straightforward. However, many Toronto basement furnace rooms have limited electrical infrastructure, requiring new circuits or junction boxes. Older homes with galvanized steel ductwork may need sheet metal modifications to properly mount the detector housing.

Ontario Building Code and TSSA requirements don't specifically mandate duct-mounted CO detectors for residential installations, but they're strongly recommended if you have multiple gas appliances or a furnace room with poor ventilation. Standard residential CO detectors are required by Ontario law within 5 metres of sleeping areas, but duct-mounted units provide an additional layer of protection by monitoring the air your HVAC system distributes throughout the home.

Consider the broader context of your home's combustion safety. If you're installing a duct-mounted CO detector due to concerns about your furnace or other gas appliances, have a TSSA-registered contractor inspect your entire combustion system. Common CO sources in GTA homes include cracked heat exchangers, blocked chimney flues, backdrafting water heaters, and inadequate combustion air supply. A duct-mounted detector is excellent protection, but addressing the root cause of potential CO production is equally important.

Timing and maintenance matter for effectiveness. Install the detector during your furnace's annual service when a qualified technician can properly integrate it with your system controls. Test the unit monthly and replace the sensor every 5-7 years as recommended by the manufacturer. Remember that duct-mounted CO detectors complement but don't replace wall-mounted residential CO detectors required throughout your home.

Need help finding an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor for this installation? Toronto Ductwork can match you with qualified professionals through the Toronto Construction Network who understand both electrical requirements and HVAC system integration.

Q38

How much does it cost to install an automatic fire suppression tie-in at duct penetrations in a Toronto building?

Fire suppression tie-ins at duct penetrations are specialized commercial fire protection systems that fall outside residential ductwork scope. This involves fire dampers, smoke dampers, and integration with building fire alarm and suppression systems — work that requires licensed fire protection contractors, not ductwork contractors.

For **residential ductwork fire safety**, the Ontario Building Code requires **fire dampers** where ducts penetrate fire-rated assemblies (walls between dwelling units, fire separations). These are passive devices that automatically close when exposed to heat, preventing fire spread through ductwork. Fire dampers cost **$150-$400 each installed** and are required during new construction or major renovations where ducts cross fire-rated walls.

Commercial fire suppression integration is an entirely different system involving sprinkler tie-ins, smoke detection, and automatic shutdown of HVAC systems during fire events. This work requires:

- **Fire protection contractors** licensed for suppression system installation
- **Integration with building fire alarm systems**
- **HVAC shutdown controls** that stop air handlers during fire events
- **Smoke dampers** in addition to fire dampers for larger commercial systems

  Costs for commercial fire suppression integration typically range **$5,000-$25,000+ per building** depending on system complexity, number of penetrations, and integration requirements with existing fire protection systems.

  For residential projects, focus on proper fire damper installation where ducts penetrate between units in townhomes or condos. **For commercial fire suppression**, you'll need specialized fire protection contractors

who work with both HVAC and suppression systems.

The Toronto Construction Network can help you find fire protection contractors for commercial suppression work, while Toronto Ductwork focuses on residential and light commercial ductwork including proper fire damper installation where required by code.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- A Renovation Company Toronto Corporation
- Metro Rent-All
- LMP Scaffolding Services
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting

View all contractors ?

Q39

How much does it cost to install a gravity-fed ventilation system with ductwork in a Toronto heritage home?

Gravity-fed ventilation systems are not commonly installed in modern HVAC applications, but if you're referring to a natural ventilation system for a Toronto heritage home, costs typically range from $3,000-$12,000 depending on the complexity and whether you're integrating it with existing ductwork or creating a standalone system.

Heritage homes in Toronto's established neighbourhoods like Cabbagetown, The Annex, or Riverdale often present unique ventilation challenges due to their age, construction methods, and heritage designation restrictions. Many of these homes (built 1880s-1920s) originally relied on natural ventilation through operable windows, transoms, and stack effect through stairwells and chimneys. If you're looking to improve ventilation while maintaining the home's character, there are several approaches that work well with heritage properties.

Natural stack ventilation systems use temperature differences and building height to create airflow without mechanical fans. Warm air rises through vertical shafts or existing chimneys, drawing fresh air in through lower-level inlets. For a Toronto heritage home, this might involve installing discrete intake vents at the basement or main

floor level and exhaust vents in the upper floors or attic space. The ductwork for such a system typically uses larger-diameter galvanized steel ducts (8-12 inches) to minimize resistance, with costs running $8-$20 per linear foot installed. A complete system including intake vents, vertical ductwork, and exhaust terminations typically costs $4,000-$8,000.

Hybrid systems combining natural and mechanical ventilation are often more practical for GTA climate conditions. These might include an HRV or ERV system with larger ductwork designed to operate at very low fan speeds, allowing natural stack effect to assist the mechanical ventilation. This approach works particularly well in heritage homes because it provides consistent ventilation during Toronto's extreme weather while maintaining energy efficiency. Expect $5,000-$12,000 for a properly designed hybrid system including dedicated ventilation ductwork separate from any existing heating system.

Heritage designation considerations significantly impact installation options and costs. Many Toronto heritage homes require approval from the Heritage Preservation Services department for exterior modifications, including new vent penetrations. Working within these constraints often requires creative routing of ductwork through existing openings like unused chimney chases or discrete locations approved by heritage staff. This can add $1,500-$3,000 to project costs due to additional design time and potentially more complex installation routes.

Integration with existing octopus ductwork is a common challenge in heritage homes. Many pre-war Toronto homes have large, round galvanized steel ducts radiating from a central furnace like octopus tentacles. These gravity-fed heating systems operated on natural convection and have very different airflow characteristics than modern forced-air systems. If you're adding ventilation to a home with original octopus ductwork, the ventilation system typically needs to be completely separate to avoid interference with the heating system's natural airflow patterns.

Ontario Building Code requirements for heritage homes are the same as for any residential property - bathrooms need minimum 50 CFM exhaust to exterior, kitchens need adequate exhaust, and if total exhaust exceeds 75 litres per second, make-up air is required. However, heritage homes often qualify for alternative compliance paths that allow creative solutions while meeting the intent of the code.

When to hire a professional: Any gravity-fed or natural ventilation system requires careful design to ensure adequate airflow rates, proper stack effect calculations, and integration with the home's existing systems. A mechanical engineer experienced with heritage properties should design the system, with installation by sheet metal contractors familiar with heritage home constraints. The combination of building science, heritage requirements, and HVAC integration makes this definitively professional territory.

Find HVAC and ductwork contractors experienced with heritage properties through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac.

Q40

How much does it cost to install a dedicated return air duct for each bedroom in a GTA home?

Installing dedicated return air ducts for each bedroom in a GTA home typically costs $800-$2,500 per bedroom, depending on the home's layout, accessibility, and whether the work involves running ducts through finished walls or unfinished basement areas.

This is one of the most impactful ductwork upgrades for older GTA homes, particularly those built between 1945-1990 across Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and the inner suburbs. These homes were designed with a single central return air grille on the main floor, which creates significant comfort and efficiency problems. When bedroom doors close, rooms become pressurized with supply air but have no way to return air to the furnace, resulting in stuffy bedrooms, temperature imbalances, and the system working harder to move air.

Cost breakdown for bedroom return air installation:

- **Simple basement run to main floor bedroom**: $800-$1,500 per room. This involves running 6-inch or 8-inch round duct through the basement ceiling, up through a wall cavity, and installing a return air grille
- **Second floor bedrooms requiring wall or ceiling runs**: $1,200-$2,500 per room. More complex routing through finished walls or attic spaces increases labour time significantly
- **Homes requiring extensive wall opening and patching**: Add $300-$800 per room for drywall repair and painting
- **Complete return air system upgrade (3-4 bedrooms)**: $3,000-$8,000 total project cost, often with economies of scale for multiple rooms

  The work involves installing 6-inch to 8-inch diameter return ducts from each bedroom back to the main return air plenum near the furnace. Proper sizing is critical — undersized return ducts create noise and restrict airflow. Each bedroom typically needs 75-150 CFM of return air capacity depending on room size and the supply air being delivered.

  GTA housing considerations make this upgrade particularly valuable. Many post-war homes in established neighbourhoods have galvanized steel supply ductwork that's adequately sized for heating, but the return air system consists of a single large grille pulling air through door undercuts and hallways. Modern comfort expectations and tighter-sealed homes make this approach inadequate. Adding bedroom returns eliminates the need to keep bedroom doors open for proper air circulation.

  Installation complexity varies dramatically based on your home's construction. Homes with unfinished basements and accessible floor joists are straightforward — ducts can be run through basement ceiling spaces

and up through interior wall cavities. Homes with finished basements, concrete floors, or complex layouts require more invasive work, including opening walls and ceilings. Two-storey homes often need creative routing through closets or bulkheads to reach second-floor bedrooms.

Timing and permits: This work typically doesn't require a building permit as it's modifying an existing system rather than installing new. However, if the project involves significant structural modifications or electrical work for powered return air fans, permits may be required. Fall and spring are ideal seasons for this work in the GTA, avoiding the peak heating and cooling seasons when you need your system running continuously.

Professional installation is strongly recommended for bedroom return air upgrades. Proper duct sizing requires calculating return air requirements based on supply air delivery, and routing ducts through finished spaces requires experience to minimize damage and ensure proper connections. DIY installation often results in undersized ducts, poor connections, or damage to walls and ceilings that costs more to repair than professional installation would have cost initially.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor for bedroom return air installation? Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced local professionals who specialize in return air upgrades for older GTA homes.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- Youbility Inc.
- LMP Scaffolding Services
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- The English Carpenter

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Q41

What is the price to install ductwork for a Toronto home sauna ventilation system?

Sauna ventilation ductwork in Toronto typically costs $800-$2,500 installed, depending on the sauna size, location, and whether you need a complete exhaust and fresh air system or just basic ventilation.

Saunas require specialized ventilation to manage extreme heat and humidity while maintaining proper air circulation for safety and comfort. The ductwork system must handle temperatures up to 90°C (194°F) and rapid moisture changes as users pour water on the sauna stones. **Proper sauna ventilation prevents moisture damage to your home, eliminates stuffiness, and ensures safe oxygen levels** during use.

Basic sauna ventilation involves an exhaust fan (typically 40-60 CFM) with insulated rigid aluminum or galvanized steel ductwork running to an exterior wall or roof termination. The exhaust intake should be positioned near the ceiling opposite the heater, with a fresh air inlet near the floor by the heater. This creates proper air circulation — fresh air enters low, circulates around users, picks up heat and moisture, then exits high. For a simple wall-mounted exhaust system with 10-15 feet of ductwork, expect **$800-$1,400 installed**.

More sophisticated systems include both exhaust and dedicated fresh air supply ducts, humidity-sensing controls, and insulated ductwork throughout. The fresh air supply duct brings outdoor air directly to the sauna inlet, ensuring adequate oxygen replacement. These systems require **$1,500-$2,500 installed** and are recommended for larger saunas or basement installations where natural air infiltration is limited.

GTA climate considerations are critical for sauna ductwork. The extreme temperature differential between a 90°C sauna and -20°C Toronto winter air creates severe condensation risk in any uninsulated ductwork. All sauna exhaust ducts must be insulated with R-8 minimum duct wrap and sealed with mastic at every joint. **Condensation in sauna exhaust ducts will freeze in winter**, potentially cracking the ductwork and creating ice blockages that prevent proper ventilation.

Material specifications matter significantly for sauna applications. Standard flex duct cannot handle sauna temperatures and will degrade quickly. Use rigid galvanized steel or aluminum ductwork rated for high-temperature applications. The exhaust fan must be rated for high humidity and temperature — standard bathroom fans will fail in sauna conditions. Sauna-rated exhaust fans cost **$150-$400** compared to $50-$100 for standard bathroom fans.

Ontario Building Code requirements may apply depending on your sauna installation. If you're building a new sauna or significantly renovating, a building permit may be required. The exhaust must terminate outside the building envelope — never into an attic, soffit, or garage. **Electrical work for the exhaust fan requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor**, adding $200-$500 to the project cost.

Timing considerations in the GTA market: sauna installations peak in fall and winter when homeowners are thinking about warm, relaxing spaces. Ductwork contractors are typically less busy in late spring and early summer, potentially offering better pricing and faster scheduling.

Professional installation is strongly recommended for sauna ventilation ductwork. The high-temperature, high-humidity environment requires proper material selection, insulation techniques, and understanding of sauna air circulation patterns. Improper ventilation can create carbon dioxide buildup (dangerous), excessive moisture in your

home (mould risk), or inadequate heat removal (uncomfortable sauna experience).

Need help finding a ductwork contractor experienced with sauna ventilation? Toronto Ductwork can match you with professionals who understand the unique requirements of high-temperature, high-humidity ductwork systems in GTA homes.

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- The English Carpenter
- A Renovation Company Toronto Corporation
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- Olkron Developments

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Q42

What does it cost to install an air-to-air heat exchanger with ductwork in a Toronto home workshop?

Installing an ERV (Energy Recovery Ventilator) or HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) with dedicated ductwork in a Toronto workshop typically costs $3,500-$7,000, with ERV units preferred for workshops that may have air conditioning since they transfer both heat and moisture.

Understanding Air-to-Air Heat Exchangers for Workshops

Air-to-air heat exchangers — commonly called HRVs or ERVs — are mechanical ventilation systems that exchange stale indoor air with fresh outdoor air while recovering heat energy. In a workshop setting, this provides continuous fresh air to dilute dust, fumes, and odours while maintaining comfortable temperatures. The system uses two separate airstreams that never mix: outgoing workshop air transfers its heat to incoming fresh air through a heat exchange core, recovering 70-85% of the heat energy that would otherwise be lost.

For Toronto workshops, ERVs are generally preferred over HRVs because they transfer moisture as well as heat. This prevents excessive humidity buildup from activities like finishing, painting, or concrete work, while also preventing the workshop from becoming too dry in winter. ERVs maintain more stable humidity levels year-round,

which is better for wood storage, tool preservation, and dust control.

GTA-Specific Considerations for Workshop Ventilation

Toronto's extreme temperature swings make heat recovery essential for workshop ventilation. Without heat recovery, exhausting workshop air at 20°C and bringing in -15°C outdoor air in January wastes enormous amounts of heating energy. An ERV recovers most of that heat, making continuous ventilation affordable even during GTA winters.

Workshop ERV systems require dedicated ductwork separate from your home's HVAC system. This prevents workshop dust, fumes, and odours from entering your living spaces. The fresh air intake must be located away from the workshop exhaust to prevent short-circuiting, and both must terminate outside the building envelope — never into soffits or enclosed areas.

System Components and Installation Requirements

A complete workshop ERV system includes the heat exchanger unit (typically wall-mounted), supply ductwork bringing fresh air into the workshop, exhaust ductwork removing stale air, exterior wall caps with bird screens, and electrical connections for the unit and controls. Most workshop installations use 4-inch or 6-inch rigid aluminum ductwork for durability and easy cleaning.

The ERV unit itself costs $800-$2,500 depending on airflow capacity (measured in CFM). Workshop ERVs typically range from 100-300 CFM depending on workshop size and activities. Higher-end units include variable speed controls, humidity sensors, and defrost cycles for reliable winter operation in Toronto's climate.

Installation Costs and Complexity

Professional installation costs $2,700-$4,500 for labour, ductwork, and electrical connections. This includes cutting exterior wall penetrations, installing wall caps, running ductwork, mounting the unit, and electrical connections. The electrical work requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor, as ERV units need dedicated 120V circuits and may include timer controls or humidity sensors.

Ductwork installation is straightforward in most workshops since ducts can run exposed along walls or ceilings. However, if ductwork must pass through multiple rooms or finished spaces to reach exterior walls, costs increase to $4,000-$6,000. Workshops in detached garages or basement spaces typically have simpler, less expensive installations than workshops in finished basements or upper floors.

Permits and Code Requirements

ERV installation in workshops typically requires a building permit from your municipality. The Ontario Building Code requires mechanical ventilation for workshops where hazardous materials are used or stored. ERV systems must

be designed to provide adequate air changes per hour based on workshop activities — typically 4-8 air changes per hour for general woodworking, more for finishing or chemical use.

When to Hire Professionals

ERV installation requires professional expertise for proper sizing, ductwork design, and electrical connections. Undersized systems don't provide adequate ventilation; oversized systems waste energy and create drafts. The heat exchange core must be properly oriented, and defrost controls are essential for Toronto winters. All electrical work must be performed by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor.

Find HVAC and ventilation contractors experienced with workshop ERV installations through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac.

Q43

How much does it cost to install new HVAC ductwork in a typical Toronto home?

Installing a complete new HVAC duct system in a typical GTA home ranges from $3,000 to $15,000, with most Toronto homeowners spending between $5,000 and $10,000 for a standard 1,500 to 2,500 square foot house. The final price depends heavily on your home's layout, the number of supply and return runs needed, material choices, and how accessible your joist cavities and walls are for routing new ductwork.

The biggest factor driving cost is layout complexity. A single-storey home with an unfinished basement where all ductwork runs below the main floor is the simplest and least expensive scenario — the trunk line and branches are fully accessible, and the installer can work efficiently. Multi-storey homes cost significantly more because ducts need to be routed through interior walls, chases, or soffits to reach upper floors. Homes that require attic duct runs add another layer of expense because all attic ductwork in the GTA must be insulated to a minimum of R-8 to prevent condensation in our humid summers and massive heat loss in winter.

Material costs break down roughly as follows in the current GTA market: galvanized steel round duct runs $8 to $20 per linear foot installed, rectangular steel trunk lines run $12 to $30 per linear foot, and flex duct for short branch connections costs $8 to $18 per linear foot installed. A typical home needs 150 to 300 linear feet of total ductwork plus fittings, register boots ($15 to $40 each), plenums ($200 to $600 each), and dampers ($30 to $80 each for manual). Add in mastic sealing, UL 181 foil tape, and hangers, and materials alone account for roughly 40% of the total project cost.

Labour is the larger portion in Toronto's market. GTA ductwork costs run 25 to 50% higher than smaller Ontario cities because qualified sheet metal workers are in high demand and Toronto's older housing stock often presents access challenges. Expect a crew of two to three installers working two to four days for a complete system. City of Toronto mechanical permit fees add $200 to $800 depending on project scope, and you should absolutely pull permits — unpermitted mechanical work creates problems when selling and can void your home insurance.

For older Toronto homes — particularly pre-war houses in the Annex, Leslieville, or High Park with original octopus furnace ductwork — budget toward the higher end or beyond, because the old oversized gravity-fed ducts need to be completely removed and the new system designed from scratch using Manual D calculations. Asbestos testing is also essential in homes built before 1980, and abatement adds $2,000 to $5,000 if asbestos duct tape or insulation is found.

Get at least three detailed quotes from contractors who will inspect your home in person — no one can accurately quote ductwork from photos alone. Ask each contractor about their design process, whether they perform Manual D calculations, what materials they use for sealing, and whether permits and inspections are

included. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local ductwork professionals through the Toronto Construction Network for free estimates on your project.

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Q44

What is the average price to replace all ductwork in a 1,500 square foot GTA bungalow?

A complete duct replacement in a 1,500 square foot GTA bungalow typically costs $5,000 to $12,000, including removal and disposal of the old ductwork, installation of the new system, sealing, and basic insulation. Bungalows are generally the most straightforward duct replacement because all runs are accessible from the basement — there are no interior wall chases or upper-floor routing to complicate the job.

The wide price range reflects real variables that affect every project. A post-war bungalow in Scarborough or Etobicoke with a simple rectangular trunk line and eight to twelve supply branches will land closer to $5,000 to $7,000 if the layout is straightforward and the basement is unfinished. A larger bungalow with a finished basement, multiple returns, longer branch runs, and the need to work around existing finishes will push toward $8,000 to $12,000. If the existing ductwork contains asbestos tape or insulation — common in homes built between the 1940s and 1970s — professional abatement adds $2,000 to $5,000 on top of the replacement cost. Always have the old ductwork tested before any demolition begins.

Why replace rather than repair? Many post-war GTA bungalows have original galvanized steel ductwork that is now 50 to 70 years old. These systems were designed for heating only — when central air conditioning was added later, the existing ducts were often undersized for cooling loads. Cooling requires approximately 400 CFM per ton compared to 300 CFM per ton for heating, so a duct system that worked adequately for a furnace may deliver

inadequate airflow for air conditioning. Common symptoms include rooms that never cool properly in summer, excessive noise from high air velocity through undersized ducts, and a single undersized return grille on the main floor that starves the system of air.

A proper replacement addresses all of these issues. Your contractor should perform Manual D duct design calculations to size every trunk line, branch, and return correctly for both heating and cooling. The new system should include dedicated return air ducts from bedrooms and the basement — not just a single central return. All joints should be sealed with duct mastic and UL 181 foil tape, and any runs through unconditioned spaces need R-8 insulation minimum.

For a typical bungalow replacement, expect the work to take two to three days with a crew of two or three installers. Budget $200 to $500 for the City of Toronto mechanical permit. When getting quotes, ask specifically whether the contractor includes new register boots, supply and return grilles, dampers for balancing, and proper mastic sealing — some quotes exclude these items and add them as extras later.

Need help finding a ductwork contractor for your bungalow? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals for free estimates through the Toronto Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- A Renovation Company Toronto Corporation
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- Youbility Inc.
- Norseman Construction & Development

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Q45

How much should I budget for ductwork installation in a new Toronto custom home build?

Budget $8,000 to $20,000 or more for ductwork installation in a new Toronto custom home build, depending on the home's size, number of floors, zoning requirements, and design complexity. For a straightforward 2,000 to

2,500 square foot two-storey custom home with a single furnace and standard duct layout, expect to land in the $8,000 to $13,000 range. Larger homes over 3,000 square feet, multi-zone systems, or homes with complex architectural features push the budget to $15,000 to $20,000 and beyond.

New construction is actually the most cost-effective time to install ductwork because everything is open — walls are framed but not drywalled, ceiling joists are accessible, and the HVAC contractor can route ducts along the most efficient paths without working around existing finishes. The key is getting the HVAC contractor involved early in the design process, ideally before framing begins, so duct chases can be planned into the architectural layout. Too often in GTA custom builds, the duct system is an afterthought, leading to awkward soffits, undersized chases, and compromised duct layouts that create comfort problems for the life of the home.

Your ductwork budget should account for several components. The duct system itself — trunk lines, branch runs, plenums, register boots, dampers, and fittings — makes up roughly 50 to 60% of the cost. Professional design using Manual D calculations (based on Manual J heating and cooling load calculations) adds $500 to $1,500 but is absolutely essential for a custom home. Labour for installation typically requires four to eight days depending on complexity. All joints must be sealed with duct mastic and UL 181 foil tape, and ducts in unconditioned spaces need R-8 insulation minimum per Ontario Building Code requirements.

For multi-zone systems — increasingly popular in Toronto custom homes — add $2,000 to $5,000 per additional zone for motorized zone dampers ($150 to $400 each), a zone control panel, and bypass damper. A three-zone system for a typical two-storey home with basement adds roughly $4,000 to $8,000 over a single-zone system but delivers dramatically better comfort control.

Don't forget ancillary systems that integrate with your ductwork. A kitchen range hood over 400 CFM triggers Ontario Building Code make-up air requirements — budget $2,000 to $5,000 for a make-up air unit. An ERV (Energy Recovery Ventilator) for whole-house ventilation adds $3,000 to $6,000 installed with dedicated ductwork. Bathroom exhaust fans with ducts to the exterior run $300 to $800 per fan.

Building permits are mandatory for new construction ductwork in Toronto. The mechanical permit is included in most new construction permit packages, but confirm with your builder. All gas connections for the furnace require a TSSA-registered contractor, and any electrical work for fans, thermostats, or zone controls requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor.

Get matched with experienced ductwork contractors through Toronto Ductwork and the Toronto Construction Network — we can connect you with professionals who specialize in custom home installations across the GTA.

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- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- yourCloset.ca
- Norseman Construction & Development
- Olkron Developments

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Q46

What does it cost to extend ductwork to a finished basement in Toronto?

Extending ductwork to a finished basement in Toronto typically costs $1,500 to $6,000, depending on how many supply and return registers you need, whether a new trunk line extension is required, and how much of the basement is being finished. A simple extension with two to three supply registers and one return tapped off an existing trunk line runs $1,500 to $3,000. A full basement with four to six supply registers, dedicated returns, and a trunk line extension lands in the $3,500 to $6,000 range.

The biggest cost variable is whether your existing furnace and duct system have enough capacity to handle the additional basement square footage. A properly sized furnace for the main floor may not have enough heating and cooling output to condition an additional 800 to 1,200 square feet of basement space. Your contractor should evaluate the existing system's capacity and static pressure before designing the extension. If the furnace is adequate but the existing trunk line is at capacity, a new dedicated trunk line from the plenum may be needed, adding $500 to $1,500 to the project.

In a typical GTA basement finishing project, expect to add one supply register per 100 to 150 square feet of finished space — so a 1,000 square foot basement needs roughly six to eight supply registers. Each new supply run costs $300 to $800 including the branch duct, register boot, and grille. Return air is equally critical and often overlooked in basement renovations. You need at least one return per enclosed room, and ideally a dedicated return trunk running back to the furnace's return plenum. Skimping on returns is the single most common mistake in GTA basement ductwork — without adequate return air, the basement feels stuffy, the furnace works harder, and the upstairs gets too much airflow because the system becomes unbalanced.

For finished basements, the duct routing matters significantly. In an unfinished basement, ducts hang from the joists and are fully accessible. Once the basement is being finished, ducts need to be routed through bulkheads, soffits, and dropped ceiling areas before drywall goes up. This is why ductwork should be one of the first trades in your basement renovation sequence — it needs to happen after framing but before insulation and drywall. If your basement is already finished and you are adding ductwork after the fact, costs increase substantially because drywall needs to be opened, ducts routed, and then everything patched and refinished.

Post-war homes across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke often have original ductwork with panned joist returns — sheet metal nailed to the bottom of floor joists acting as return air pathways. These are extremely leaky and pull unconditioned air from wall cavities and crawlspaces. If your home has panned joist returns, a basement renovation is the ideal time to replace them with proper sealed return ductwork.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with local ductwork contractors experienced in basement finishing projects — get free estimates through the Toronto Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

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Q47

How much do Toronto HVAC contractors charge per linear foot for new duct runs?

Toronto HVAC contractors charge $8 to $30 per linear foot for new duct runs, with the exact price depending on duct type, size, material, and installation difficulty. Here is what the current GTA market looks like for the most common duct types, including both materials and labour.

Galvanized steel round duct — the workhorse of residential HVAC — runs $8 to $20 per linear foot installed. Smaller diameter branches (5 to 7 inch) fall on the lower end, while larger trunk sizes (10 to 14 inch) cost more due to heavier gauge metal and more labour to handle. Round duct is the most common choice for branch runs because it offers the lowest friction rate per unit of airflow — air moves most efficiently through a round profile.

Rectangular steel duct costs $12 to $30 per linear foot installed and is primarily used for trunk lines where vertical clearance is limited. Rectangular duct fits tight spaces — a 20x8 inch rectangular trunk delivers similar airflow to a 14 inch round but takes 2 fewer inches of headroom. The higher cost reflects the additional fabrication time, as rectangular fittings are typically custom-made in the contractor's shop.

Spiral round duct runs $10 to $25 per linear foot installed. Spiral duct has a continuous spiral seam that makes it stronger and less leak-prone than standard snap-lock round duct. It is also more attractive for exposed installations, which has made it increasingly popular in GTA basement renovations going for an industrial aesthetic. The modest price premium over standard round duct is worth it for the improved air-tightness and durability.

Flex duct is the least expensive at $8 to $18 per linear foot installed, but its use should be limited to short branch connections — ideally under 6 to 8 feet with no more than one gentle bend. Flex duct that sags, kinks, or runs too long creates enormous airflow restrictions. A 90-degree kink in flex duct can reduce airflow by 50% or more. Never let a contractor use flex duct for trunk lines or long runs.

Beyond the per-linear-foot cost, factor in fittings and components that add up quickly. Elbows, tees, transitions, and reducers add $15 to $60 each depending on size and type. Register boots cost $15 to $40 each. Dampers for balancing run $30 to $80 each for manual types. Mastic sealing and UL 181 foil tape for all joints adds $200 to $500 for a whole-house system. These fittings and accessories can represent 25 to 35% of the total ductwork material cost.

GTA labour rates for sheet metal work are among the highest in Ontario, reflecting Toronto's competitive market and high demand for qualified installers. When comparing quotes, make sure each contractor is quoting the same scope — some per-linear-foot quotes include fittings and sealing while others list those separately. Always ask for an all-in installed price rather than relying on per-foot estimates alone.

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- Kitchen Land
- LMP Scaffolding Services
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Q48

What is the price difference between galvanized steel and aluminum ductwork in the GTA?

Aluminum ductwork costs roughly 40 to 60% more than galvanized steel in the GTA market, with aluminum running $12 to $28 per linear foot installed compared to $8 to $20 per linear foot for standard galvanized steel round duct. For a complete residential duct system with 200 linear feet of ductwork, that premium translates to an additional $1,500 to $3,000 on the total project — a significant difference that rarely justifies itself in a typical

Toronto home.

Galvanized steel is the industry standard for residential ductwork in the GTA for good reasons. It is durable, fire-resistant, provides a smooth interior surface for low air friction, and does not support mould growth. Galvanized steel holds up well in Toronto's climate extremes — the zinc coating provides excellent corrosion resistance even through decades of condensation exposure in basements and temperature cycling through our freeze-thaw winters. The vast majority of GTA ductwork contractors stock galvanized steel fittings and work with it daily, meaning fabrication is faster and labour costs are lower.

Aluminum duct has specific advantages, but they rarely apply to typical residential installations. Aluminum is about one-third the weight of steel, making it easier to handle in tight spaces and reducing load on hangers and supports. It is naturally corrosion-resistant without a coating, making it the preferred choice in marine environments, coastal areas, or high-humidity commercial applications like swimming pool buildings. Aluminum also does not spark, which matters in certain industrial settings. However, none of these advantages are particularly relevant to a typical GTA home.

Where aluminum does see legitimate residential use in Toronto is for **dryer vent ducts and certain exhaust applications.** Rigid aluminum dryer vent duct is actually the recommended material for dryer venting — it is smooth, corrosion-resistant, and handles the heat and moisture from dryer exhaust better than other options. A rigid aluminum dryer vent installation runs $200 to $600 in the GTA, and the material choice is well justified here.

One practical consideration is contractor availability. Because aluminum ductwork is uncommon in GTA residential work, fewer contractors carry aluminum fittings in stock. Custom aluminum fabrication takes longer and costs more, and not all sheet metal shops are set up to work with aluminum (it requires different joining techniques than steel). This limited availability contributes to the price premium and can extend project timelines.

For the vast majority of Toronto homeowners, **galvanized steel is the right choice.** It delivers excellent performance at a lower cost, every GTA ductwork contractor is experienced with it, and replacement fittings are readily available for future modifications. Save your renovation budget for upgrades that deliver measurable comfort improvements — like proper duct sealing with mastic, adequate return air ducts, or R-8 insulation on any runs through unconditioned spaces.

Need help comparing quotes for your ductwork project? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local contractors through the Toronto Construction Network for free.

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- The English Carpenter
- Ideal Heating and Air Conditioning
- The Deck Store Inc
- LMP Scaffolding Services

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Q49

How much does it cost to install spiral ductwork versus rectangular ducts in Toronto?

Spiral ductwork costs $10 to $25 per linear foot installed in the GTA, while rectangular ductwork runs $12 to $30 per linear foot — but the real cost comparison is more nuanced than these per-foot numbers suggest because the two types serve different purposes and each has distinct advantages that affect overall project cost.

Spiral round duct is factory-manufactured with a continuous spiral seam that creates a stronger, more airtight product than standard snap-lock round duct. The spiral seam means fewer leak points, which translates to better energy efficiency over the life of the system. From an airflow perspective, round duct is the most efficient shape — air encounters less friction moving through a round profile than through a rectangular one of equivalent capacity. This means you can often use a slightly smaller diameter spiral duct to deliver the same airflow as a larger rectangular duct, which can reduce material costs on some projects.

Spiral duct has become increasingly popular in GTA basement renovations and loft-style living spaces where the ductwork will be left exposed. The clean, industrial aesthetic of exposed spiral duct painted to match the ceiling eliminates the need for soffits and bulkheads, which actually saves money on framing, drywall, taping, and painting. In a typical Toronto basement renovation where a rectangular trunk line would require a $1,500 to $3,000 bulkhead to conceal it, exposed spiral duct can deliver a net cost savings despite the slightly higher duct material price.

Rectangular duct costs more per linear foot primarily because of fabrication time — most rectangular fittings are custom-built in the contractor's sheet metal shop, while spiral duct and round fittings are factory-produced in standard sizes. However, rectangular duct's key advantage is its lower profile. A 20x8 inch rectangular trunk delivers similar airflow to a 14 inch round duct but takes only 8 inches of vertical space versus 14 inches. In GTA homes with low basement ceilings — common in post-war bungalows across Scarborough, Etobicoke, and North York — that 6-inch difference in headroom can determine whether a basement is comfortable to stand in or not.

For a complete duct system comparison in a typical 2,000 square foot GTA home, a system using primarily spiral round duct might cost $6,000 to $12,000, while an equivalent system using rectangular trunk lines with round branches might run $7,000 to $14,000. The rectangular system costs more in fabrication and labour but may be necessary where ceiling height is limited.

The best approach for most Toronto homes is a hybrid — rectangular trunk lines where headroom is critical, with round or spiral branch runs to individual rooms. This is what most experienced GTA ductwork contractors recommend and install. When getting quotes, ask whether the contractor uses spiral or snap-lock round duct for branches, and insist on mastic sealing at every joint regardless of duct type.

Get matched with experienced ductwork contractors through Toronto Ductwork and the Toronto Construction Network for free estimates on your project.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
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- Vista Builders Ltd
- Bhogal Metal
- Youbility Inc.

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Q50

What is the typical labour rate for ductwork installation in the Toronto area?

Ductwork installation labour in the Toronto area typically runs $60 to $100 per hour per installer, with most residential projects quoted as a flat rate rather than hourly. GTA labour rates for sheet metal work are among the highest in Ontario — 25 to 50% above smaller Ontario markets — reflecting Toronto's high cost of living, competitive demand for qualified tradespeople, and the complexity of working in the city's diverse and often challenging housing stock.

Most GTA ductwork contractors do not bill by the hour for residential projects. Instead, they provide a flat project price that bundles labour, materials, fittings, sealing, and cleanup into a single quote. This is actually better for homeowners because it eliminates the risk of a job running long and blowing past an hourly estimate. When you receive a flat-rate quote, labour typically represents 50 to 60% of the total cost, with materials and fittings making up the remainder.

What drives labour costs up on specific projects? Accessibility is the single biggest factor. Installing ductwork in an open, unfinished basement with full access to floor joists is straightforward and efficient — a crew can run a complete basement duct system in one to two days. Working in tight crawlspaces, attics with limited headroom, or through finished walls and ceilings takes dramatically longer. A duct run that takes 30 minutes in an open basement might take three hours when routing through a finished ceiling with plaster-and-lathe construction in an older Toronto home.

Older housing stock across established Toronto neighbourhoods adds complexity that increases labour time. Pre-war homes in the Annex, Roncesvalles, or Riverdale often have balloon-frame construction, irregular joist spacing, and obstacles like knob-and-tube wiring or plumbing stacks that must be worked around. Post-war homes in Scarborough and North York may have asbestos duct insulation that requires professional abatement before new ductwork can be installed — the abatement itself runs $2,000 to $5,000 and is performed by a separate specialized crew.

Crew size matters too. Most residential ductwork installations require a crew of two to three — a lead installer (journeyman sheet metal worker) and one or two helpers. A complete duct system for a 2,000 square foot home typically takes two to four days with this crew size. Simple projects like adding a few supply runs to a basement take one day. Complex multi-storey installations or full replacements in older homes can stretch to five days or more.

When comparing quotes, focus on the total installed price and scope of work rather than trying to back-calculate hourly rates. Make sure each quote includes the same deliverables: duct design, materials, all fittings, mastic sealing and UL 181 foil tape at every joint, register boots and grilles, hangers and supports, cleanup, and permit fees if applicable. A quote that looks cheaper may exclude sealing, dampers, or permit costs that will become extras later.

Toronto Ductwork can match you with local ductwork professionals for free — get multiple quotes through the Toronto Construction Network to compare pricing and scope.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- Norseman Construction & Development
- Ideal Heating and Air Conditioning
- yourCloset.ca
- SIMMCO Inc

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Q51

How much does a make-up air unit cost to install in a Toronto home with a range hood?

A make-up air unit costs $2,000 to $5,000 installed in a Toronto home, and it becomes a mandatory requirement under the Ontario Building Code whenever your total exhaust capacity exceeds 75 litres per second (approximately 159 CFM). In practical terms, if you are installing a kitchen range hood rated at 400 CFM or higher — which includes most professional-style range hoods popular in GTA kitchen renovations — you need a make-up air system.

The make-up air unit replaces the air that your range hood exhausts from the home. Without it, a powerful range hood creates significant negative pressure inside the house, which causes several serious problems. The most dangerous is backdrafting — negative pressure can reverse the flow in gas furnace, water heater, and fireplace flues, pulling carbon monoxide into your living space instead of venting it outside. This is not a theoretical risk in Toronto's tight housing stock; it is a real and potentially deadly hazard, especially in newer energy-efficient homes and older homes that have had air sealing upgrades.

The cost breakdown for a typical GTA make-up air installation includes the unit itself ($800 to $2,000 depending on capacity and whether it includes tempering), ductwork to bring outdoor air into the home ($500 to $1,500 depending on run length), electrical connections for the interlock and controls ($300 to $600, requiring an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor), and labour for installation and commissioning ($500 to $1,200). If the incoming air needs to be tempered — heated in winter before entering the home — the unit requires either an electric or hydronic heating element, which pushes toward the higher end of the price range.

Tempering is essential in Toronto's climate. Bringing in -20 degree Celsius outdoor air directly into your kitchen during a January cold snap is not acceptable. A tempered make-up air unit pre-heats incoming air to a comfortable level before distributing it into the home. Some units integrate with your existing furnace ductwork, while standalone units have their own dedicated supply point. Your contractor should recommend the appropriate approach based on your home's layout and existing HVAC system.

The make-up air system must be interlocked with the range hood so it only operates when the exhaust fan is running. This interlock is a code requirement and ensures that the make-up air system does not bring in outdoor air unnecessarily, which would waste energy. The interlock can be a simple pressure switch, a current-sensing relay on the range hood circuit, or a wired connection between the hood's control board and the make-up air unit.

Many GTA homeowners discover the make-up air requirement mid-renovation and are frustrated by the added cost. The reality is that this requirement exists for a critical safety reason, and skipping it is not an option. A building inspector will flag it, your gas technician should flag it during the next furnace service, and — most importantly — running a high-CFM range hood without make-up air in a GTA home with gas appliances creates a genuine carbon

monoxide risk.

Need help finding a contractor for your make-up air installation? Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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- Kitchen Land
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- Leveloff.LTD
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Q52

What is the average cost to install an ERV system in a Toronto house?

An ERV (Energy Recovery Ventilator) installation in a Toronto home costs $3,000 to $6,000, including the unit, dedicated ductwork, electrical connections, exterior intake and exhaust terminations, balancing, and commissioning. If your home already has existing ERV or HRV ductwork from a previous unit, a replacement drops to $1,500 to $3,500 since the ductwork is already in place.

An ERV is a mechanical ventilation system that brings fresh outdoor air into your home while exhausting stale indoor air — but unlike simply opening a window, it transfers both heat and moisture between the two airstreams. In winter, the ERV captures heat from the warm outgoing air and transfers it to the cold incoming air, dramatically reducing the energy cost of ventilation. In summer, it works in reverse — the incoming hot, humid outdoor air transfers its heat and moisture to the outgoing cooled indoor air before entering your home. This moisture transfer is what distinguishes an ERV from an HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) and makes it the preferred choice for Toronto homes with air conditioning.

Why an ERV rather than an HRV for most GTA homes? Toronto's summers are increasingly hot and humid, with humidex values regularly exceeding 40 degrees Celsius. An HRV transfers heat but not moisture, meaning it brings in outdoor humidity during summer — exactly what your air conditioning system is working to remove. An ERV transfers both heat and moisture, reducing the humidity load on your AC and improving indoor comfort. For homes that rely on air conditioning from June through September, the ERV's moisture transfer capability delivers meaningful energy savings and better indoor air quality.

The installation cost breaks down as follows. The ERV unit itself ranges from $1,200 to $3,000 depending on capacity (measured in CFM), efficiency rating, and brand. Dedicated supply and exhaust ductwork — running from the unit to various rooms in your home — costs $800 to $2,000 depending on how many pickup and delivery points are installed and the complexity of routing. Electrical connections for the unit and controls require an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor, adding $300 to $600. Two exterior wall or roof penetrations for fresh air intake and stale air exhaust, with proper weatherproof terminations and screens, add $200 to $500. Professional balancing and commissioning — adjusting airflow rates to match the home's ventilation needs — should be included in every installation.

Sizing matters significantly. An undersized ERV will not provide adequate ventilation, while an oversized unit wastes energy and may create uncomfortable drafts. Ontario Building Code and ASHRAE 62.2 provide ventilation rate guidelines based on home size and occupancy. A typical 2,000 square foot GTA home with three bedrooms needs approximately 100 to 150 CFM of continuous ventilation. Your contractor should perform a ventilation calculation rather than guessing at unit size.

For older Toronto homes without existing ventilation ductwork — common in pre-war and post-war housing across established neighbourhoods — the installation is more involved and typically lands at the higher end of the cost range. The dedicated ERV ductwork needs to be routed to bedrooms, living areas, and common spaces, with exhaust pickups in bathrooms and the kitchen.

Get matched with HVAC contractors experienced in ERV installations through Toronto Ductwork and the Toronto Construction Network directory.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- Youbility Inc.
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- A Renovation Company Toronto Corporation
- Norseman Construction & Development

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Q53

How much does an HRV unit cost installed compared to an ERV in the GTA?

An HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) typically costs $2,500 to $5,000 installed in a GTA home, while an ERV (Energy Recovery Ventilator) runs $3,000 to $6,000 installed. The price difference reflects the ERV's additional moisture-transfer capability, which uses an enthalpic core rather than a simple heat-exchange core. Both prices include the unit itself, dedicated supply and exhaust ductwork, exterior wall or roof caps, controls, balancing, and commissioning.

The key difference between the two systems comes down to humidity management. An HRV transfers heat between the outgoing stale air and incoming fresh air but lets moisture pass through unchanged. An ERV transfers both heat and moisture, which means it recovers some of the humidity you have paid to add in winter and keeps some of the outdoor humidity out in summer. For GTA homeowners who run air conditioning from June through September, an ERV is generally the better investment because it reduces the latent cooling load on your AC system. Homes that do not have central air conditioning — common in older Toronto neighbourhoods like the Danforth, Leslieville, and parts of Etobicoke — may do just fine with the less expensive HRV.

The installation cost is heavily influenced by whether your home already has dedicated ventilation ductwork. If you are replacing an existing HRV or ERV and the ductwork is already in place, expect to pay $1,500 to $3,500 for the swap. A brand-new installation in a home that has never had whole-house ventilation requires running dedicated supply and exhaust ducts to multiple rooms, cutting penetrations through the building envelope, and wiring controls — that is where the $4,000 to $6,000 range applies. Homes with complex layouts or finished ceilings that require fishing ducts through walls and soffits will land at the higher end.

Brand and capacity also affect pricing. Entry-level units from Lifebreath or Fantech start around $800 to $1,200 for the equipment alone, while premium models from Zehnder, Broan, or Venmar with ECM motors, MERV 13 filtration, and smart controls can reach $2,500 to $4,000 before installation. ECM-motor models use significantly less electricity over their lifespan, so the upfront premium often pays for itself within five to seven years.

Any electrical work associated with HRV or ERV installation must be performed by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor. If the installation involves modifications to your existing duct system or adding new ductwork, a building permit from your local municipality may be required. The unit must be properly balanced — meaning the supply and exhaust airflows are measured and adjusted to match — otherwise you create either positive or negative pressure in the home, which can cause comfort issues, moisture problems, or backdrafting of gas appliances.

Get at least three quotes from contractors experienced with ventilation system installation, and ask specifically about balancing and commissioning. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local ductwork and ventilation professionals through the Toronto Construction Network for free estimates on your project.

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- Kitchen Land
- Bhogal Metal
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Q54

What does professional duct cleaning cost for a three-bedroom Toronto home?

Professional duct cleaning for a typical three-bedroom Toronto home costs $300 to $700 from a reputable company using truck-mounted equipment and source-removal techniques. The exact price depends on the size of the system (number of supply registers, return grilles, and trunk lines), the level of contamination, and whether the home has a single system or multiple HVAC units.

A legitimate duct cleaning involves a truck-mounted vacuum creating strong negative pressure throughout the duct system while a technician uses agitation tools — rotating brushes, compressed air whips, or skipper balls — to dislodge debris from duct walls. The dislodged dust, pet hair, construction debris, and other contaminants are pulled into the truck-mounted HEPA filtration system. The process typically takes two to four hours for a three-bedroom home with one furnace and includes cleaning all supply ducts, return ducts, the supply and return plenums, the blower compartment, and the evaporator coil housing. Some companies include the furnace blower cleaning in the base price while others charge $50 to $150 extra for it — ask before booking.

Be extremely cautious of companies advertising $99 or $149 whole-house duct cleaning. These low-ball offers are almost always bait-and-switch operations. The technician arrives, performs a cursory cleaning with inadequate portable equipment, then pressures you into $500 to $2,000 in unnecessary add-on services like antimicrobial coatings, ozone treatments, or sanitizing sprays. Some even fabricate mould findings to upsell remediation services. Look for NADCA-certified companies (National Air Duct Cleaners Association), check reviews carefully, and confirm the price includes a truck-mounted system with source removal — not just a portable vacuum.

Duct cleaning frequency depends on your situation. Most GTA homes benefit from cleaning every three to five years. You should consider cleaning sooner if you have just completed a renovation (drywall dust and construction debris are the number-one reason for duct cleaning), if you have moved into a home with pets and the previous owner did not maintain the ducts, or if you notice visible dust blowing from registers when the system starts. Homes with family members who have allergies or asthma may benefit from more frequent cleaning.

One important caveat: if a duct cleaning company finds mould in your ductwork, cleaning alone will not solve the problem. Mould in ducts indicates a moisture source — typically condensation on uninsulated ducts in a basement or attic, a humidifier set too high, or a leak somewhere in the system. The moisture source must be identified and corrected, or the mould will return within months. Get matched with a ductwork contractor through Toronto Ductwork for a free assessment of your system.

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Q55

How much does it cost to seal leaky ductwork in a Toronto home?

Professional duct sealing for a Toronto home typically costs $1,500 to $4,000 for conventional mastic-and-tape sealing of accessible joints, or $1,500 to $3,500 for Aeroseal technology that seals ducts from the inside. The investment pays for itself surprisingly quickly — the average home with unsealed ductwork loses 20 to 30 percent of conditioned air through leaks at joints, connections, and failed seals before it ever reaches living spaces.

Conventional duct sealing involves a technician accessing every visible joint and seam in your duct system and applying duct mastic — a thick, water-based sealant that remains flexible and does not degrade with temperature cycling — followed by UL 181-rated foil tape over the mastic for a belt-and-suspenders approach. This method works well in homes with unfinished basements and accessible ductwork, but it cannot reach joints hidden inside walls, ceilings, or enclosed chases. A typical GTA home with an unfinished basement and accessible trunk lines falls in the $1,500 to $2,500 range for full sealing of all accessible connections.

Aeroseal is the better option when significant portions of your ductwork are inaccessible. This patented process involves sealing off all registers and then pressurizing the duct system with a polymer aerosol. The tiny particles travel through the ducts and accumulate at leak points, building up a seal from the inside that closes gaps up to 5/8 inch. The system measures leakage in real time before and after, giving you documented proof of improvement. Aeroseal typically reduces duct leakage by 90 percent or more. For homes with ductwork buried in walls and ceilings — common in two-storey GTA homes from the 1970s through 1990s where branch runs pass through wall cavities and floor systems — Aeroseal is often the only practical option short of tearing open finished spaces.

The return on investment for duct sealing is compelling. A home losing 25 percent of conditioned air through duct leaks is essentially heating and cooling air that never reaches the rooms. With GTA natural gas and electricity costs, homeowners typically see $200 to $500 in annual energy savings after sealing, meaning the project pays for itself in three to seven years. Beyond energy savings, sealed ducts deliver more consistent temperatures room to room, reduce dust circulation, and decrease the workload on your furnace and air conditioner, extending equipment life.

If you want to test before committing, ask a contractor about a duct leakage test (also called a duct blaster test), which costs $200 to $400 and quantifies exactly how leaky your system is. This tells you whether sealing is worth the investment for your specific home. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local ductwork professionals for free estimates on sealing your system.

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- Kitchen Land
- Metro Rent-All
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- A Renovation Company Toronto Corporation
- The Deck Store Inc

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Q56

What is the price to reroute ductwork during a Toronto kitchen renovation?

Rerouting ductwork during a Toronto kitchen renovation typically costs $500 to $3,000 per run, with most kitchen projects requiring one to three duct relocations for a total ductwork budget of $1,000 to $6,000. The wide range reflects the enormous variation in what rerouting actually involves — moving a single floor register a few feet is straightforward, while relocating a main trunk line to accommodate a new island or open-concept layout is a significant structural and mechanical undertaking.

Kitchen renovations are one of the most common reasons GTA homeowners need ductwork modifications. Opening up a wall between the kitchen and dining or living room typically means relocating supply ducts and returns that ran through the wall being removed. Installing a kitchen island with a downdraft vent or relocating the range to an island requires running new exhaust ductwork through the floor system. Upgrading to a large range hood — anything over 400 CFM — triggers the Ontario Building Code requirement for a make-up air system when total exhaust exceeds 75 litres per second, adding $2,000 to $5,000 to the project if one is not already in place.

The biggest cost driver is accessibility. If your kitchen is above an unfinished basement, the contractor can access and modify ductwork from below relatively easily, keeping costs toward the lower end. If the kitchen is on the second floor or above a finished basement ceiling, rerouting ducts means opening up ceilings, routing through floor cavities, and then patching and refinishing — the drywall and finishing work can cost as much as the ductwork itself. Homes built in the 1950s through 1970s across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke often have ductwork running through interior walls that are being removed for open-concept layouts, and rerouting these runs through the floor system or soffit adds complexity.

Timing is critical. Ductwork modifications should happen early in the renovation sequence — after demolition but before framing closes up. Coordinate your ductwork contractor with your general contractor so ducts are relocated before new walls, cabinets, and flooring go in. Trying to modify ductwork after the kitchen is partially finished is dramatically more expensive and disruptive.

A building permit may be required if you are significantly modifying the duct layout, adding new trunk lines, or installing a make-up air system. The City of Toronto mechanical permit fees typically run $200 to $800 depending on scope. Any electrical work for exhaust fans or range hood wiring requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor. If your renovation involves gas line relocation for a gas range, a TSSA-registered contractor must handle that work.

Get at least three quotes from ductwork contractors before your renovation begins. Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network for free estimates.

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- Kitchen Land
- Vista Builders Ltd
- Leveloff.LTD
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Q57

How much does it cost to add a cold air return in an older Toronto home?

Adding a cold air return (return air duct and grille) to an older Toronto home costs $300 to $800 per register, including the branch duct, boot, grille, and connection to the return trunk or plenum. Most older GTA homes need two to four additional returns to properly balance the system, bringing the total project cost to $800 to $3,000.

This is one of the highest-impact ductwork upgrades you can make in a post-war Toronto home. Houses built from the 1940s through the 1970s across Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and the inner suburbs were typically

designed with a single large return air grille on the main floor — often in a hallway or at the base of a staircase. This design assumed interior doors would stay open, allowing air to circulate freely back to the return. In practice, bedrooms and home offices with closed doors become pressurized by the supply air with no way for it to return to the furnace, creating hot or cold rooms, whistling under doors, and forcing conditioned air out through any available gap in the building envelope.

Adding returns to individual bedrooms and the basement solves these problems dramatically. The contractor runs new return ductwork from each room back to the return plenum or trunk, typically through floor joist cavities (for rooms directly above the basement) or by installing new vertical chases in closets or walls. Rooms directly above an unfinished basement are the easiest and least expensive to add returns to — $300 to $500 per room — because the contractor can cut a boot opening in the floor, install a grille, and connect a new duct run to the return trunk below. Upper-floor rooms with no attic access or rooms far from the return trunk cost more, typically $500 to $800 per return.

An alternative to full return ducts is installing transfer grilles or jump ducts. These create a pathway for air to pass from a closed room back to the hallway where the central return grille is located, without running new ductwork all the way to the furnace. A transfer grille through an interior wall costs $100 to $200 installed. A jump duct — a short insulated flex duct run through the ceiling cavity between the room and the hallway — costs $150 to $300 installed. These are less effective than dedicated return ducts but far better than nothing and cost significantly less.

One important note for older Toronto homes: many have panned joist returns, where sheet metal is nailed across the bottom of floor joists to create a return air channel. These are extremely leaky, pull unconditioned air from wall cavities and crawlspaces, and are impossible to clean effectively. If your home has panned returns, replacing them with proper sealed return ductwork is a worthwhile investment. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals for free estimates on improving your return air system.

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- Kitchen Land
- Norseman Construction & Development
- Bhogal Metal
- Olkron Developments
- yourCloset.ca

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Q58

What is the average cost for a ductwork permit in the City of Toronto?

City of Toronto mechanical permit fees for ductwork projects typically range from $200 to $800, depending on the scope and complexity of the work. The fee is set by Toronto Building based on the type and value of the project, and it covers the plan review and one or more inspections by a City building inspector.

You need a building permit from the City of Toronto Building Division for ductwork projects that involve installing a new duct system for new construction or an addition, significantly modifying an existing duct system with new trunk lines or major rerouting, installing a make-up air system (required when total exhaust exceeds 75 litres per second under the Ontario Building Code), or any associated gas or electrical work. Minor repairs like sealing existing joints, replacing registers, duct cleaning, or adding a single branch run to an existing system generally do not require a permit, though it is always worth confirming with Toronto Building through 311 or toronto.ca before starting work.

The permit fee itself is often the smallest cost of the permitting process. Your contractor may charge $200 to $500 for permit-related administration including preparing the application, submitting drawings, and coordinating inspections. Some contractors include this in their project quote while others list it separately — ask before signing. The permit application typically requires a description of the work, mechanical drawings showing the proposed duct layout, and specification of materials. For larger projects, a Professional Engineer's stamp on the mechanical design may be required, adding $500 to $1,500 in engineering fees.

Inspection scheduling adds time but not cost. The permit fee covers the required inspections, which typically include a rough-in inspection (after ducts are installed but before walls and ceilings are closed up) and a final inspection (after the system is complete and operational). Toronto Building inspection wait times vary by season — spring and summer are busiest — so factor in potential delays of one to three weeks between requesting an inspection and having an inspector visit.

If you are in a GTA municipality outside the City of Toronto — Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Oakville, or others — permit fees and requirements vary by municipality. Each has its own building department with its own fee schedule, though the underlying Ontario Building Code requirements are the same province-wide.

Skipping the permit is a false economy. Unpermitted mechanical work can result in fines, problems when selling the home (buyers' home inspectors and lawyers flag unpermitted work), voided homeowner's insurance if a claim relates to the unpermitted work, and most critically, safety hazards from uninspected installations. A reputable ductwork contractor will pull the necessary permits as a standard part of their service. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals who handle the full permitting process as part of your project.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- LMP Scaffolding Services
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- The English Carpenter
- SIMMCO Inc

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Q59

How much does it cost to insulate exposed ductwork in an unfinished GTA basement?

Insulating exposed ductwork in an unfinished GTA basement typically costs $1.50 to $3.00 per square foot of duct surface area for R-8 fibreglass duct wrap, with most homes running $500 to $1,500 for a complete job. If you are comfortable with a DIY project, you can purchase R-8 duct wrap insulation for $0.50 to $1.00 per square foot at building supply stores and do the work yourself, bringing the total material cost to $150 to $400 for a typical basement.

The reason to insulate basement ductwork depends on whether the ducts are supply or return lines and whether you plan to condition the basement. **Supply ducts carrying cooled air in summer are the highest priority for insulation.** In a humid GTA summer, supply ducts at 12 to 15 degrees Celsius running through a 20-degree basement with 60 to 70 percent relative humidity will sweat with condensation. This dripping condensation causes water stains on the concrete floor, promotes mould growth on the duct exterior and surrounding surfaces, and can rust galvanized steel over time. R-8 duct wrap with a properly sealed foil vapour barrier eliminates this condensation problem.

In winter, uninsulated supply ducts in an unconditioned basement lose heat as the warm air travels from the furnace to the upper floors. While this heat loss technically warms the basement, it means less heat reaches the rooms above and your furnace runs longer cycles to compensate. If you heat your basement intentionally, insulation matters less for the heating season. If the basement is unheated or you want to maximize efficiency, insulating supply ducts keeps more heat reaching the intended rooms.

Installation is straightforward for a capable DIYer. R-8 duct wrap comes in rolls, typically 48 inches wide. You wrap the insulation around the duct with the foil vapour barrier facing outward, overlap the seams by two inches, and seal all seams and joints with foil tape. The critical detail is sealing the vapour barrier completely — any gaps allow humid air to reach the cold duct surface, causing condensation behind the insulation where you cannot see it. Pay special attention to fittings, elbows, and transitions where the wrap is hardest to seal tightly. Rigid duct board can be used for rectangular trunk lines where wrap is difficult to apply neatly.

Return ducts in the basement are a lower priority for insulation since they carry room-temperature air back to the furnace and do not create condensation. However, if return ducts pass through particularly cold areas or you want maximum system efficiency, insulating them does help.

For professional installation, expect to pay $500 to $1,500 for a typical basement with 50 to 150 linear feet of ductwork. This is not a complex project, so the labour cost reflects the time involved rather than specialized skill. Toronto Ductwork can match you with a local contractor if you prefer professional installation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- yourCloset.ca
- Ideal Heating and Air Conditioning
- Leveloff.LTD
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting

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Q60

What is the price to install a high-velocity duct system like SpacePak in Toronto?

A high-velocity duct system like SpacePak or Unico costs $10,000 to $25,000 installed in a GTA home, with most projects landing between $12,000 and $20,000. This is significantly more than a conventional duct system ($3,000 to $15,000), but high-velocity systems solve a specific problem that conventional ducts cannot — delivering central heating and cooling to homes where standard-size ductwork simply will not fit.

High-velocity systems use small-diameter flexible tubing (typically 2 to 3 inches) instead of conventional 6-to-14-inch round or rectangular ducts. The air handler pushes conditioned air through these small tubes at high velocity, and the air enters each room through small, round outlets roughly the size of a drink coaster. Because the tubing is so small, it can be fished through existing wall cavities, between floor joists, and through tight spaces without major demolition — making these systems ideal for older Toronto homes where retrofitting conventional ductwork would require tearing open walls and ceilings.

The homes that benefit most from high-velocity systems in the GTA are pre-war and early post-war houses in established neighbourhoods like Rosedale, The Annex, High Park, Riverdale, and Leaside. These homes often have radiator heating with no existing ductwork, plaster walls that are expensive to repair if opened up, limited floor cavity depth, and architectural features worth preserving. A high-velocity system lets you add central air conditioning (and forced-air heating if desired) without the destructive renovation that conventional ductwork would require. The small outlets are far less visually intrusive than standard registers and can be placed in ceilings, walls, or floors.

The cost breakdown typically includes the air handler unit ($3,000 to $6,000), the tubing and outlet fittings ($2,000 to $5,000 in materials), and installation labour ($5,000 to $12,000). Labour is the largest component because routing the small-diameter tubes through an existing home's structure is meticulous work, even though the tubes themselves are easy to handle. The number of outlets needed — typically 15 to 30 for a whole home — drives the total cost. Each outlet requires its own home run back to the air handler's plenum, so a 25-outlet system means 25 individual tube runs.

High-velocity systems do have trade-offs. They can be noisier than conventional systems due to the high air velocity, though modern units with sound attenuators have reduced this significantly. They also have higher operating costs because the air handler works harder to push air through small tubes. Energy efficiency has improved substantially in recent models, but a conventional duct system will always be more efficient when it fits.

These installations require a building permit from your local municipality. Get quotes from contractors who specialize in high-velocity systems specifically — this is not a job for a general HVAC contractor who has never installed one. Toronto Ductwork can connect you with experienced professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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- Kitchen Land
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- Olkron Developments
- Bhogal Metal
- The Deck Store Inc

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Q61

How much does flex duct cost compared to rigid metal duct in the Toronto area?

Flex duct costs $3 to $8 per linear foot for materials or $8 to $18 per linear foot installed, while rigid galvanized steel duct costs $8 to $30 per linear foot installed depending on the profile. On a material-only basis, flex duct is roughly one-third to one-half the cost of rigid metal duct. However, the installed cost gap narrows because rigid duct goes up faster for straight trunk runs, and flex duct's apparent savings can be completely erased by the performance problems that cheap or improper flex duct installations create.

Rigid galvanized steel duct is the industry standard for trunk lines and main supply runs in GTA homes. Round rigid duct runs $8 to $20 per linear foot installed, rectangular (used for trunk lines where vertical clearance is limited) runs $12 to $30 per linear foot installed, and spiral round duct — a premium option with fewer air leaks and a clean aesthetic for exposed installations — runs $10 to $25 per linear foot installed. Rigid duct has a smooth interior that creates minimal friction, meaning air flows more efficiently and the system operates more quietly. It is durable, does not sag, does not support mould growth, and lasts the lifetime of the home with minimal maintenance.

Flex duct has a legitimate role in residential ductwork, but it is limited. Flex duct is appropriate for short branch runs from a rigid trunk line to individual supply registers — typically 6 to 15 feet maximum with no more than 180 degrees of total bends. It is useful in tight spaces where rigid duct cannot make the turn, and it absorbs some vibration and noise from the air handler. However, flex duct that is kinked, compressed, sagged, or run in excessive lengths dramatically reduces airflow. A single 90-degree kink in a flex duct run can reduce airflow by 50 percent or more. When flex duct sags between supports in an attic, the corrugated inner liner creates turbulence that increases friction far beyond what rigid duct produces.

The real cost comparison should factor in long-term performance. A home with an all-flex duct system (common in some builder-grade GTA new construction from the 2000s onward) will use 10 to 20 percent more energy than an equivalent home with rigid trunk lines and short flex branches. Over 15 to 20 years, that energy penalty can easily exceed the initial savings on materials. Flex duct also has a shorter functional lifespan — 15 to 25 years before the outer jacket and insulation degrade — compared to rigid galvanized steel that lasts 50 years or more.

The best approach for most GTA homes is rigid galvanized steel for all trunk lines and main supply runs, with flex duct used only for short final connections to registers. This gives you the durability and efficiency of rigid duct where it matters most, with the flexibility and vibration isolation of flex duct for the last few feet. When getting quotes, ask contractors to specify which sections will be rigid versus flex — a contractor who proposes all-flex duct for a complete system is cutting corners.

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Q62

What does it cost to repair a collapsed duct run in a Toronto home?

Repairing a collapsed duct run in a Toronto home typically costs $150 to $600 for a straightforward patch or reconnection, or $300 to $1,500 if the entire run needs replacement. The final price depends on what collapsed, why it collapsed, what material the duct is made of, and how accessible the damaged section is.

Flex duct collapses are the most common scenario in GTA homes. Flex duct running through attics, crawlspaces, and between floor joists sags over time as the support straps stretch or detach. Once flex duct sags enough, the weight of the insulation layer compresses the inner liner, restricting airflow to a trickle. The room served by that run becomes noticeably hotter in summer and colder in winter, often prompting the homeowner to investigate. Repairing a collapsed flex duct run usually means replacing the entire section rather than patching — a new flex duct run costs $8 to $18 per linear foot installed, so a typical 10-to-20-foot bedroom branch run costs $150 to $400 to replace. The contractor should install proper support strapping every 4 feet and ensure the duct is pulled taut with no sags or kinks.

Rigid metal duct collapses are less common but do happen, particularly in older GTA homes where decades of temperature cycling have weakened joints. A disconnected joint at a trunk-to-branch connection is a simple repair — reconnect, fasten with sheet metal screws, and seal with mastic and UL 181 foil tape for $150 to $300. A crushed or dented rigid duct section, often caused by someone stepping on ductwork in an attic or stacking heavy items against basement ducts, requires cutting out the damaged section and splicing in new material, costing $200 to $600 depending on the duct size and location.

The hidden cost of a collapsed duct is the energy you have been wasting. A fully collapsed branch run means your furnace and air conditioner have been producing conditioned air that never reaches the intended room.

Meanwhile, you may have been running space heaters or portable AC units to compensate, driving up energy costs. If the collapse is in an unconditioned space like an attic, the conditioned air has been dumping directly into the attic — heating or cooling the outdoors at your expense.

Accessibility is the biggest cost variable. A collapsed duct in an unfinished basement is a quick repair because the contractor can see and reach the damage. A collapsed duct inside a finished ceiling, wall cavity, or a cramped attic with blown insulation covering everything requires significantly more time and may involve cutting access holes in drywall (add $100 to $300 for drywall repair). If you suspect a collapsed duct but cannot find it, a contractor can use a duct pressure test or airflow measurement at each register to identify which run is compromised. Toronto Ductwork can match you with a local ductwork professional for a free assessment.

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Q63

How much should I expect to pay for a ductwork design and load calculation in Toronto?

A professional ductwork design with Manual J load calculation and Manual D duct sizing typically costs $500 to $1,500 in the GTA, depending on the size and complexity of your home. Some HVAC contractors include basic design work in their installation quote, but a standalone engineering-level design from an independent HVAC designer gives you an unbiased blueprint you can shop to multiple installers.

The Manual J calculation determines how much heating and cooling capacity each room in your home actually needs, factoring in window sizes, insulation levels, wall orientation, and Toronto's climate extremes — from minus 20 degrees Celsius winter lows to plus 35 degrees Celsius summer peaks. The Manual D calculation then sizes every duct run, trunk line, and branch to deliver the correct airflow in cubic feet per minute to each room. Without

these calculations, duct sizing becomes guesswork, and guesswork almost always leads to undersized ducts that whistle and restrict airflow, or oversized ducts that waste material and create sluggish air velocity.

For a typical GTA home between 1,500 and 2,500 square feet, expect to pay $500 to $800 for a basic Manual J and Manual D package. Larger or more complex homes — multi-storey layouts, homes with additions, or older Toronto housing stock with unusual floor plans — can push the cost to $1,000 to $1,500. If you are building new or doing a major renovation that requires a building permit, the City of Toronto Building Division may require engineered mechanical drawings stamped by a professional engineer, which adds $500 to $1,000 to the cost.

GTA-specific considerations make proper design especially important. Post-war homes across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke often have ductwork originally sized for heating only. When air conditioning was added later, the existing ducts were frequently undersized for cooling loads — cooling requires roughly 400 CFM per ton compared to 300 CFM per ton for heating. A proper Manual D redesign addresses this mismatch and can dramatically improve summer comfort. Homes in rapidly growing areas like Vaughan, Brampton, and Markham built after 2000 may already have engineered duct designs, but builder-grade installations sometimes deviate from the drawings, so having an independent assessment is valuable if you are experiencing comfort problems.

When hiring a designer, ask whether they use ACCA-approved Manual J and Manual D software, and whether you will receive a written report with duct sizing schedules, airflow targets for each room, and equipment specifications. This document becomes your roadmap for getting accurate installation quotes. Getting three or more installation quotes based on the same design allows you to compare apples to apples, which typically saves far more on the installation than the design itself costs. If you need help finding a ductwork professional who offers design services, Toronto Ductwork can match you with local contractors through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q64

What is the cost to install fire dampers in ductwork for a Toronto duplex conversion?

Installing fire dampers in ductwork for a Toronto duplex conversion typically costs $200 to $500 per damper, with most conversions requiring 4 to 8 dampers for a total project cost of $1,200 to $4,000 including labour, materials, and inspection. This is a non-negotiable code requirement — the Ontario Building Code mandates fire dampers wherever ductwork penetrates a fire-rated assembly, and the fire separation between dwelling units in a duplex is one of the most critical fire-rated assemblies in the building.

When you convert a single-family Toronto home into a legal duplex, the City of Toronto Building Division requires a fire separation between the two units, typically rated for one hour. Every point where a supply duct, return duct, or exhaust duct crosses that fire separation needs a fire damper. These are spring-loaded metal assemblies installed inside the duct at the wall or floor penetration. When the fusible link reaches approximately 74 degrees Celsius, the damper slams shut and prevents fire and smoke from spreading through the duct system into the other unit. The damper itself costs $80 to $200 depending on size and type, and installation runs $120 to $300 per damper because the duct must be cut, the damper fitted precisely, the connection sealed, and access panels installed so the damper can be inspected and reset after activation.

For a typical GTA duplex conversion, plan on fire dampers in these locations: every supply duct that crosses the unit separation, every return duct crossing, the bathroom exhaust duct if it serves one unit but passes through the other unit's space, and any shared trunk line that feeds both units. Most conversions need a minimum of 4 dampers, and complex layouts with multiple duct crossings can require 6 to 8. Your mechanical permit application will include a drawing showing every fire damper location, and the City of Toronto inspector will verify each one during the rough-in inspection.

Beyond the dampers themselves, duplex conversions in Toronto often trigger broader ductwork changes. If both units share a single furnace and duct system, you may not meet the OBC requirement for independent mechanical systems in each unit — many duplex conversions require separate furnaces, which means separate duct systems. This can push ductwork costs to $5,000 to $15,000 per unit. If separate systems are required, fire dampers are still needed where any duct penetrates the fire separation.

Budget $200 to $800 for the City of Toronto mechanical permit fee, and factor in the TSSA inspection if any gas connections are involved. An experienced ductwork contractor familiar with Toronto duplex conversions will know exactly which damper locations the inspector expects to see. Get matched with a local ductwork professional through the Toronto Construction Network to get accurate quotes for your specific layout.

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Q65

How much does it cost to upgrade from 6-inch to 8-inch trunk lines in a GTA home?

Upgrading trunk lines from 6-inch to 8-inch round duct in a GTA home typically costs $1,500 to $5,000 depending on the length of the trunk run, accessibility, and how many fittings and transitions are involved. This is one of the most impactful upgrades you can make to a duct system that is struggling with airflow, and the difference is dramatic — an 8-inch round duct carries roughly 78 percent more air than a 6-inch duct at the same velocity.

The reason this upgrade matters so much comes down to physics. A 6-inch round duct has a cross-sectional area of about 28 square inches, while an 8-inch duct has about 50 square inches. If your furnace or air conditioner is trying to push 400 CFM through a 6-inch trunk, the air velocity is extremely high, creating turbulence, noise, and excessive static pressure that forces the blower motor to work harder and wear out faster. Upgrading to 8-inch duct drops the velocity to a comfortable, quiet range and allows the system to deliver its rated capacity without fighting the ductwork.

Material costs for galvanized steel round duct in the GTA run $8 to $20 per linear foot for the duct itself, plus $15 to $50 per fitting for elbows, tees, reducers, and transitions. A typical trunk upgrade involves 20 to 40 linear feet of duct, 4 to 8 fittings, new register boots where branch runs connect, and potentially a new plenum transition at the furnace. Labour for a professional sheet metal contractor in the GTA runs $75 to $120 per hour, and a trunk line upgrade typically takes one to two days. For a straightforward basement installation where the trunk is exposed and accessible, budget $1,500 to $3,000. For situations where the trunk runs through finished ceilings, soffits, or between floors, the cost jumps to $3,000 to $5,000 because of the demolition and refinishing

involved.

In post-war GTA homes across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke, undersized trunk lines are extremely common because the original ductwork was designed for smaller furnaces and heating-only operation. When air conditioning was added decades later, the existing trunks were never upsized, leaving the system permanently restricted. If your home has hot and cold spots, the furnace blower runs loudly, or registers furthest from the furnace barely produce airflow, an undersized trunk line is often the bottleneck.

Before committing to this upgrade, have a contractor measure the static pressure in your system with a manometer — readings above 0.5 inches of water column indicate excessive restriction, and upsizing the trunk is often the fix. A proper Manual D duct design calculation will confirm whether 8-inch is the right size or whether you need even larger trunk duct. Browse HVAC and ductwork contractors in your area through the Toronto Construction Network directory to get quotes from professionals who can assess your specific system.

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Q66

What is the average price to install dryer vent ductwork in a Toronto condo?

Installing dryer vent ductwork in a Toronto condo typically costs $300 to $900, though costs can climb to $1,200 or more in high-rise buildings where long duct runs, shared chase access, or condo board approval complicate the project. The wide price range reflects the enormous variation in condo layouts — a stacked townhouse condo with a short run to an exterior wall is a completely different project from a 30th-floor unit where the dryer vent must connect to a shared exhaust riser.

For a straightforward installation where the dryer is located against an exterior wall, expect to pay $200 to $600. This includes rigid or semi-rigid aluminum duct (never plastic flex duct, which is a fire hazard), a wall cap with a damper to prevent backdrafts, proper connections, and sealing. **Rigid aluminum duct is the only acceptable material for dryer vents in Ontario** — the lint that passes through the lint trap is combustible, and smooth rigid duct minimizes lint accumulation. The maximum allowable dryer vent length under manufacturer specifications and building code is typically 25 feet equivalent, with every 90-degree elbow reducing the allowable length by 5 feet. In tight condo layouts, keeping the run short and straight is critical.

In Toronto high-rise condos, dryer venting becomes considerably more complex. Many buildings have shared vertical exhaust risers with individual unit connections. Installing a new dryer vent connection to a shared riser typically costs $500 to $1,200 because it involves accessing the chase, cutting into the riser, installing a proper connection with a backdraft damper, sealing, and often coordinating with the condo's property management. Some Toronto condo buildings require you to use their approved contractor for any work affecting shared building systems, which limits your ability to shop for competitive pricing.

Before starting any dryer vent work in a Toronto condo, check your condo corporation's rules. Most require a permit or modification request approved by the board or property manager before any exterior penetrations or connections to building systems. Some newer Toronto condos built after 2010 have pre-installed dryer vent connections in the laundry area — if yours does, connecting the dryer is a simple DIY task costing under $50 for a transition hose and clamps. If you need a new penetration through an exterior wall, the condo board may require an engineer's review, adding $300 to $500 to the project.

Annual dryer vent cleaning is essential and costs $100 to $200 in the GTA. Lint buildup in dryer vents is a leading cause of residential fires, and condo dryer vents with long runs or multiple elbows are especially prone to accumulation. Many Toronto condo buildings now mandate annual dryer vent cleaning as part of their fire safety program. If you need help finding a contractor for dryer vent installation in your condo, Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals for free.

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Q67

How much does it cost to add supply and return ducts for a Toronto home addition?

Adding supply and return ductwork for a home addition in the GTA typically costs $1,500 to $6,000, depending on the size of the addition, the distance from your existing furnace, and whether your current HVAC system has enough capacity to handle the extra load. This is one of the most commonly underestimated costs in home additions — many Toronto homeowners budget carefully for framing, insulation, and finishes but forget that the new space needs conditioned air to be comfortable year-round.

The first question any ductwork contractor will ask is whether your existing furnace and air conditioner have enough spare capacity to serve the addition. A Manual J load calculation for the new space determines how many BTUs of heating and tons of cooling it needs, and that number gets compared to your existing equipment's capacity minus the existing load. If your system is already maxed out — common in older Toronto homes where the original furnace was sized for a smaller footprint — you may need a furnace upgrade ($3,000 to $6,000) or a separate mini-split system for the addition ($3,500 to $7,000 installed), which eliminates the ductwork question entirely.

Assuming your existing system has capacity, the ductwork cost breaks down as follows. For a small addition like a sunroom or single bedroom (100 to 200 square feet), expect one to two supply runs and one return, costing $1,500 to $3,000 including trunk line extension, branch ducts, register boots, registers, and all connections. For a larger addition (300 to 600 square feet) such as a family room or primary suite, you will need three to five supply runs and one to two returns, costing $3,000 to $6,000. The supply duct sizing depends on the Manual D calculation — typically 5-inch or 6-inch round branches for individual rooms, fed from the existing trunk line via new takeoff fittings.

Return air is the part most commonly skipped or undersized in GTA additions, and skipping it creates serious problems. Without adequate return air, the new room becomes pressurized when the system runs, pushing conditioned air out through every crack and gap in the building envelope. The result is a room that is always too hot in summer and too cold in winter despite having supply registers. Every addition should have at least one dedicated return air duct sized to match the total supply airflow to that space.

The City of Toronto requires a building permit for home additions, and the mechanical portion of that permit covers the ductwork. Permit fees typically run $200 to $800. Your contractor will need to show duct sizing calculations and demonstrate compliance with Ontario Building Code Part 6 requirements for airflow, fire dampers at any fire-rated assembly penetrations, and make-up air if the addition includes a kitchen with a large range hood. Get matched with a ductwork contractor through the Toronto Construction Network to get quotes specific to your addition layout.

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Q68

What does a complete ductwork replacement cost in a two-storey Toronto home?

A complete ductwork replacement in a two-storey Toronto home typically costs $8,000 to $18,000, with the average GTA homeowner paying $10,000 to $14,000 for a properly designed and installed galvanized steel system. The wide range reflects differences in home size, layout complexity, accessibility, and whether asbestos abatement is needed on the existing ductwork.

The cost breaks down into several components. **Demolition and removal of the old duct system** runs $1,000 to $3,000 depending on the size and complexity. If your home was built before 1980, the existing ductwork may have asbestos tape or insulation at joints — particularly common in post-war homes across Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and the inner suburbs. Professional asbestos testing costs $200 to $400, and if asbestos is confirmed, abatement adds $2,000 to $5,000 to the project. Never attempt to remove asbestos-wrapped ductwork yourself — Ontario regulations require licensed abatement contractors.

The new duct system itself — design, materials, and installation — accounts for the bulk of the cost at $6,000 to $15,000. A proper replacement starts with Manual J load calculations and Manual D duct sizing, ensuring every room gets the right amount of conditioned air. The trunk line, typically rectangular galvanized steel at $12 to $30 per linear foot installed, runs through the basement ceiling. Branch supply ducts in round galvanized or spiral duct at $8 to $20 per linear foot run from the trunk to individual rooms. A two-storey home needs supply and return ducts reaching both floors, which usually means running ducts through interior wall cavities, floor joist bays, or dedicated chases.

The second-floor ductwork is where costs escalate in two-storey homes. Getting ducts from the basement to the second floor requires vertical chases through closets, walls, or purpose-built soffits. In older Toronto homes that were not originally designed with duct chases, creative routing is necessary, and this takes time and skill. Some contractors recommend high-velocity small-duct systems like SpacePak or Unico for second-floor retrofits — these use 2-inch flexible tubing that threads through existing wall cavities without major demolition, but the systems cost $10,000 to $20,000 installed.

Return air is critically important and often inadequate in older GTA homes. Many post-war Toronto homes have a single return grille on the main floor, which is grossly insufficient for a two-storey layout. A proper replacement adds dedicated return air ducts to every bedroom and the second-floor hallway, which dramatically improves comfort, reduces noise, and allows doors to be closed without creating pressure imbalances. Budget $300 to $800 per return register added.

City of Toronto mechanical permits for a complete duct replacement typically cost $200 to $800. The project usually takes two to four days for a professional crew. Browse HVAC and ductwork contractors in the Toronto Construction Network directory to get competitive quotes from experienced local professionals.

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Q69

How much does it cost to convert from radiant heat to forced air with ductwork in Toronto?

Converting from radiant heat (hot water baseboards or in-floor radiant) to a forced-air system with full ductwork in a Toronto home typically costs $12,000 to $30,000, making it one of the most significant mechanical upgrades a GTA homeowner can undertake. The cost reflects the fact that you are essentially

installing a complete HVAC system from scratch — there is no existing ductwork to build on.

The project involves several major components. **A new furnace costs $3,000 to $6,000 installed**, depending on efficiency rating, capacity, and brand. Most GTA homeowners choose a high-efficiency condensing furnace (96 to 98 percent AFUE) to minimize gas costs through Toronto's long heating season. If you want air conditioning — and most homeowners making this conversion do, since radiant systems cannot provide cooling — add $3,500 to $6,500 for a central air conditioner or heat pump, including the evaporator coil, refrigerant lines, and outdoor condenser unit. **The ductwork itself, including design, materials, and installation, runs $5,000 to $15,000** depending on your home's size, layout, and how the ducts are routed.

The biggest challenge with this conversion in Toronto's existing housing stock is finding space for the ductwork. **Radiant-heated homes were never designed with duct chases, soffits, or wall cavities sized for ductwork.** In a bungalow or home with an unfinished basement, trunk lines can run along the basement ceiling with branches going up through floor cavities to first-floor registers — this is the simplest and least expensive scenario at $12,000 to $18,000 total. In a two-storey home, getting ducts to the second floor requires building chases through closets, creating soffits in hallways, or using a high-velocity small-duct system ($10,000 to $20,000 for the duct system alone) that threads 2-inch tubing through existing wall cavities.

GTA-specific factors affect this conversion significantly. Many mid-century Toronto homes in neighbourhoods like the Beaches, Leaside, and Lawrence Park have hot water radiant baseboards with a boiler. If the boiler also heats your domestic hot water, you will need a new water heater ($1,500 to $3,000 installed) unless you keep the boiler running for hot water only. Homes with in-floor radiant in the basement slab can keep that system operational for basement heating while adding forced air for the upper floors — a hybrid approach that many Toronto homeowners prefer.

This project requires a City of Toronto building permit covering the mechanical work, and the gas furnace installation must be performed by a TSSA-registered contractor. Budget $200 to $800 for permit fees. The entire conversion typically takes one to two weeks. A Manual J load calculation and Manual D duct design are essential — this is not a project where a contractor should be sizing ducts by feel. Get matched with experienced ductwork professionals through the Toronto Construction Network to compare quotes and approaches for your specific home.

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Q70

What is the price to install bathroom exhaust ductwork through a Toronto home roof?

Installing bathroom exhaust ductwork through the roof of a Toronto home typically costs $500 to $1,200, including the exhaust fan, insulated duct, roof cap, and all connections. If you are replacing an existing fan and duct, the cost drops to $300 to $700 since the roof penetration already exists. This is a project that directly protects your home from moisture damage, and doing it correctly is critical in Toronto's climate.

The components of the installation include the exhaust fan itself ($80 to $300 depending on CFM rating, noise level, and features like humidity sensors or motion activation), rigid or semi-rigid duct ($3 to $8 per linear foot), R-8 insulation wrap for the duct ($1.50 to $3.00 per square foot), a weatherproof roof cap with damper ($30 to $80), and professional installation labour at $75 to $120 per hour. The entire installation typically takes three to five hours for a professional, longer if attic access is difficult or the bathroom is on a lower floor of a multi-storey home.

The Ontario Building Code requires bathroom exhaust fans to deliver a minimum of 50 CFM and terminate outside the building envelope. **Venting into the attic or soffit is a code violation and one of the most damaging mistakes found in GTA homes.** Warm, humid bathroom air vented into a cold attic during a Toronto winter creates massive condensation on the underside of the roof sheathing, leading to mould growth, wood rot, and eventually structural damage. Every year, Toronto home inspectors flag this issue in hundreds of homes — if your bathroom fan currently vents into the attic, getting it properly ducted to the roof or an exterior wall should be a priority.

Insulating the exhaust duct in the attic is non-negotiable in the GTA. Warm, moist exhaust air travelling through an uninsulated duct in a minus 20 degree Celsius attic condenses immediately, and that water runs back down the duct into the fan housing, dripping onto the bathroom ceiling and creating water stains and mould. R-8 insulation wrap with a sealed vapour barrier prevents this condensation. The duct should slope slightly upward toward the roof cap so any residual condensation drains outward rather than back into the home.

Rigid metal duct is preferred over flex duct for roof-terminated bathroom exhaust. Flex duct sags between supports in the attic, creating low spots where condensation pools, and its corrugated interior collects lint and dust that reduces airflow over time. If flex duct is used, it must be pulled taut and supported every four feet — but rigid 4-inch or 6-inch round duct with proper fittings is the better long-term choice. The electrical connection for the exhaust fan must be done by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor in Ontario. Need help finding a contractor? Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q71

How much does it cost to install a range hood exhaust duct through an exterior wall in the GTA?

Installing a range hood exhaust duct through an exterior wall in a GTA home typically costs $500 to $1,800, depending on the wall construction, duct run length, and whether the installation triggers Ontario Building Code make-up air requirements. A straightforward installation where the range hood is on an exterior wall with a short, direct duct run falls at the lower end. Complex installations through brick, stone, or concrete walls with longer duct runs push costs higher.

The installation involves cutting a hole through the exterior wall (including brick veneer if applicable), installing a wall cap with a backdraft damper, running rigid duct from the range hood to the wall cap, sealing all joints with UL 181-rated foil tape or mastic, and connecting the electrical. **Material costs include the wall cap ($30 to $80), rigid round or rectangular duct ($8 to $20 per linear foot), elbows and transitions ($15 to $40 each), and fire caulking around the wall penetration.** Labour for cutting through a single-wythe brick wall — the most common exterior in Toronto — runs $200 to $500 because it requires a core drill or masonry saw and careful work to avoid cracking surrounding bricks. Frame walls with siding are simpler and cheaper to penetrate at $100 to $250.

The critical cost factor many GTA homeowners miss is the make-up air requirement. Under the Ontario Building Code, when total exhaust capacity exceeds 75 litres per second (approximately 159 CFM), a make-up air system must be installed. Most decorative range hoods sold at big-box stores are rated at 400 to 1,200 CFM — well above the threshold. This means installing that powerful range hood triggers a make-up air system costing $2,000 to $5,000 installed, which must be interlocked with the range hood so it activates automatically when the hood runs. The make-up air unit brings fresh outdoor air into the home to replace the air being exhausted, preventing

dangerous depressurization that can cause gas appliances to backdraft carbon monoxide into your living space.

If you want to avoid the make-up air requirement, choose a range hood rated at 150 CFM or less, which stays under the 75 L/s threshold. Many homeowners find that a well-designed 150 CFM hood handles everyday cooking perfectly well. For serious home cooks who want a professional-style 600 or 1,200 CFM hood, the make-up air system is a non-negotiable code and safety requirement.

Use rigid smooth-wall duct for range hood exhaust — never flex duct. Grease accumulates in the corrugated interior of flex duct, creating a fire hazard. Rigid galvanized steel or stainless steel duct can be cleaned and does not trap grease. Keep the duct run as short as possible with minimal elbows — every 90-degree elbow adds the equivalent of 5 to 10 feet of straight duct in resistance. The electrical connection requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor. Find local ductwork and ventilation professionals through the Toronto Construction Network to get quotes for your specific kitchen layout.

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Q72

What is the typical cost for duct modifications when adding central air to a Toronto home?

Duct modifications when adding central air conditioning to an existing Toronto home typically cost $1,500 to $5,000 on top of the air conditioning equipment itself, and this is the part of the project most homeowners underestimate. Many GTA homes built before the 1990s have ductwork that was designed for heating only, and simply bolting an air conditioner onto the existing furnace without addressing the ductwork often results in disappointing cooling performance, humidity problems, and rooms that never get comfortable.

The fundamental issue is that **cooling requires more airflow than heating**. A properly designed cooling system needs approximately 400 CFM per ton of cooling capacity, compared to about 300 CFM per ton for heating. If your existing ductwork was sized only for the heating load — which is the case in most post-war Toronto homes across Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and the inner suburbs — the ducts cannot move enough air for effective cooling. The result is a system that runs constantly, fails to dehumidify properly, and leaves second-floor bedrooms sweltering on hot summer nights while the basement is frigid.

The most common duct modifications needed when adding central air include upsizing the return air system ($800 to $2,500), adding return air ducts to bedrooms ($300 to $800 per return), upsizing undersized trunk lines ($1,500 to $5,000), and replacing the supply plenum to accommodate the evaporator coil ($200 to $600). The evaporator coil sits in the supply plenum above the furnace and is the component that actually cools the air. Installing it often requires modifying or replacing the plenum to fit the coil and maintain proper airflow.

Return air is almost always the biggest deficiency. Older Toronto homes frequently have a single large return grille on the main floor, which was adequate for a heating-only system but is grossly insufficient for cooling. Hot air stratifies at ceiling level and in upper-floor bedrooms — without return air ducts in those spaces, the thermostat on the main floor reads the correct temperature while second-floor rooms remain 3 to 5 degrees warmer. Adding dedicated returns to each bedroom and the second-floor hallway is the single most impactful duct modification for cooling comfort.

Before committing to modifications, have a contractor measure the static pressure in your existing duct system. Readings above 0.5 inches of water column with all registers open indicate the system is restricted and duct modifications are needed. A Manual D calculation based on the cooling load will identify exactly which runs are undersized and what changes will deliver the best improvement for the investment. Some GTA contractors include basic duct assessment in their central air installation quote, while others charge separately — always ask upfront. Get matched with a ductwork contractor for a free estimate through Toronto Ductwork and the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q73

How much does it cost to install exposed industrial-style ductwork in a Toronto loft?

Exposed industrial-style ductwork in a Toronto loft typically costs $5,000 to $15,000 for a complete installation, depending on the size of the space, the type of duct material, and how much of the existing system can be reused versus replaced. This style has become increasingly popular in converted warehouse lofts in Liberty Village, the Distillery District, Queen West, and King West, as well as in basement renovations across the GTA where homeowners want that raw, open-ceiling aesthetic.

The key cost driver is the material. **Spiral round duct is the go-to choice for exposed installations** because of its clean, factory-finished appearance and minimal air leakage at the spiral seam. In the GTA market, spiral duct runs $10 to $25 per linear foot installed, compared to $8 to $20 per linear foot for standard snap-lock round duct. For a typical 1,200 to 1,800 square foot loft space, you might need 80 to 150 linear feet of trunk and branch duct, plus fittings, registers, and hangers. The fittings — elbows, tees, reducers, and takeoffs — add significantly to both material and labour costs because every joint is visible and must be finished cleanly.

Finishing quality is what separates a $5,000 job from a $15,000 job. A basic exposed duct installation using standard galvanized spiral duct with visible hangers and simple round registers sits at the lower end. A premium installation with powder-coated or painted ductwork, architectural-grade round diffusers, custom-fabricated fittings, and concealed mounting hardware pushes toward the higher end. Many Toronto loft owners also opt for matte black or brushed steel finishes, which adds $2 to $5 per linear foot for painting or powder coating. Every joint, seam, and hanger is on display, so the sheet metal contractor needs to work with a level of precision and care that goes well beyond a standard concealed installation.

There are practical considerations beyond aesthetics. Exposed ducts in conditioned spaces do not need insulation the way attic or crawlspace ducts do, which saves on material costs. However, **exposed supply ducts carrying cold air conditioning in summer can develop condensation in humid conditions**, especially in lofts with large windows and limited climate control. Applying a thin layer of internal duct liner or ensuring adequate dehumidification prevents dripping condensation and water stains on floors and furniture. Noise is another factor — exposed ductwork transmits system noise directly into the living space. Using larger duct sizes to reduce air velocity, installing flexible connectors at the air handler, and adding internal duct liner where needed all help manage noise levels.

If your loft has existing ductwork that is currently concealed above a drop ceiling, removing the drop ceiling and cleaning up the existing duct system is typically less expensive than a complete new installation — expect $2,000 to $6,000 for cleanup, resealing, repainting, and new registers. For a ground-up exposed installation in a new loft or

major renovation, budget $8,000 to $15,000 for a professionally designed and finished system. Get at least three quotes from sheet metal contractors experienced with exposed residential work — not all HVAC contractors have the fabrication skills for high-quality visible ductwork. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals experienced in industrial-style installations through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q74

What is the price to relocate a furnace and reroute all ductwork in a GTA home?

Relocating a furnace and rerouting the entire duct system in a GTA home typically costs $8,000 to $25,000 or more, depending on where the furnace is moving, how far the new duct runs need to travel, the size of the home, and whether the existing ductwork can be partially reused or must be completely replaced. This is one of the most involved HVAC projects a homeowner can undertake, and it requires careful planning with both an HVAC contractor and often a general contractor handling the structural and finishing work.

The furnace relocation itself — disconnecting the existing unit, moving it to the new location, reconnecting gas, electrical, venting, condensate drainage, and combustion air — typically runs $2,000 to $5,000 for the mechanical work alone. **Gas line extension or rerouting must be performed by a TSSA-registered contractor**, and the new gas connection requires a TSSA inspection. Electrical work for the new furnace location, thermostat wiring, and any associated circuits requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor. The furnace exhaust flue and fresh air intake must be rerouted to meet Ontario Building Code clearance requirements from windows, doors, and property lines — this alone can add $500 to $2,000 depending on the new venting path.

The ductwork rerouting is where costs escalate. **A complete trunk line reroute for a typical 1,500 to 2,500 square foot GTA home runs $5,000 to $15,000**, including new supply and return plenums ($200 to $600 each),

new trunk lines, branch runs to each room, register boots, and all fittings. If the furnace is moving from one end of the basement to the other, every supply and return run changes direction and length, essentially requiring a brand-new duct system designed with Manual D calculations for the new layout. If you are moving the furnace from the basement to the attic or a mechanical closet on the main floor, costs climb higher because of the additional structural work, attic duct insulation requirements (minimum R-8 duct wrap in unconditioned spaces), and the complexity of routing ducts vertically through walls and chases.

Common reasons GTA homeowners relocate furnaces include basement renovations where the furnace occupies valuable living space, kitchen or bathroom expansions that conflict with the existing mechanical room, converting a basement apartment into rental space (each unit needs its own mechanical system under the OBC), or improving the duct layout in older post-war homes where the original furnace location creates excessively long duct runs to some rooms. In older Scarborough, North York, or Etobicoke homes with the original gravity furnace location in the centre of the basement, moving to a corner mechanical room frees up significant floor space but requires complete duct redesign.

A building permit is required for this scope of work — expect $400 to $800 in permit fees from the City of Toronto or your local municipality. The permit covers mechanical, and you will likely need separate electrical and gas permits as well. Budget a minimum of $10,000 to $15,000 for a straightforward basement-to-basement relocation in a mid-size GTA home, and $15,000 to $25,000 or more for complex relocations involving floor changes or major rerouting. Get at least three detailed quotes that break out furnace relocation, ductwork, gas, electrical, and permit costs separately so you can compare accurately.

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Q75

How much does professional duct pressure testing cost in the Toronto area?

Professional duct pressure testing in the Toronto area typically costs $300 to $800 for a standard residential system, with the price depending on the size of the home, the complexity of the duct system, and whether the test is standalone or bundled with other diagnostic services like blower door testing or duct sealing. This is one of the most valuable diagnostic tools available for identifying hidden duct leakage that wastes energy and creates comfort problems — yet most GTA homeowners have never had it done.

Duct pressure testing, also called duct leakage testing or duct blaster testing, uses a calibrated fan and digital manometer to pressurize the duct system and measure how much air escapes through leaks. The test quantifies total duct leakage in CFM (cubic feet per minute) at a standard test pressure of 25 Pascals. **A well-sealed duct system should leak less than 4% of total system airflow.** Many older GTA homes — particularly post-war homes in Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and the inner suburbs with 50 to 70-year-old galvanized duct systems — leak 20 to 40% of their conditioned air into basements, crawlspaces, wall cavities, and attics. That is like heating and cooling your home with a quarter of the windows open.

The test itself takes about one to two hours. The technician seals all supply registers and return grilles with temporary covers, connects the duct blaster fan to a central register or the air handler opening, and pressurizes the entire duct system. The manometer reads the airflow required to maintain the test pressure, which directly indicates total leakage. More sophisticated testing can isolate leakage to specific zones or sections of the duct system by selectively sealing portions. **Some contractors offer duct pressure testing as part of a comprehensive energy audit**, which typically costs $400 to $600 and includes blower door testing, thermal imaging, and duct diagnostics together — this bundled approach provides the best value and the most complete picture of your home's performance.

There are several situations where duct pressure testing is particularly worthwhile for GTA homeowners. If you have rooms that are consistently too hot or too cold despite the system running, duct leakage is a prime suspect. If your energy bills seem high relative to similar homes, leaky ducts may be dumping conditioned air into unconditioned spaces. If you are planning a duct sealing project (either manual mastic sealing or Aeroseal), a before-and-after pressure test documents the improvement and confirms the investment was worthwhile — Aeroseal contractors include pressure testing as part of their $1,500 to $3,500 service. If you are buying an older GTA home and want to understand the condition of the duct system before closing, a duct pressure test is far more informative than a visual inspection.

For new construction, duct pressure testing may be required by the Ontario Building Code to demonstrate compliance with energy efficiency requirements. If you are building a new home or addition in the GTA, your HVAC contractor should include duct testing as part of the installation scope. For existing homes, duct pressure testing is not required but is strongly recommended as a diagnostic starting point before investing in duct sealing, duct

replacement, or HVAC equipment upgrades. Find a qualified HVAC diagnostic contractor through the Toronto Construction Network directory.

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Q76

What does it cost to install zoned ductwork with dampers in a Toronto two-storey home?

Installing a zoned ductwork system with motorized dampers in a Toronto two-storey home typically costs $2,500 to $8,000, depending on the number of zones, the condition of the existing ductwork, and whether the project involves adding new duct runs or modifying existing ones. For most two-storey GTA homes, a two-zone system (main floor and upper floor) is the most common and cost-effective configuration, while three or four-zone systems provide finer control but at significantly higher cost.

A basic **two-zone system includes a zone control panel, two motorized zone dampers, two thermostats, and a bypass damper** — the hardware package alone runs $800 to $2,000 depending on brand and features. Installation labour adds $1,500 to $4,000 because the contractor needs to install the motorized dampers in the trunk duct at each zone's takeoff point, wire the damper motors to the zone control panel, install a thermostat for each zone, and configure the system. A bypass damper is typically required to relieve excess static pressure when one zone's dampers close — without it, the restricted airflow can damage the blower motor and create noise. Some modern variable-speed furnaces and air handlers can ramp down airflow when zones close, reducing or eliminating the need for a bypass damper, but this depends on your specific equipment.

The reason zoning is so popular in GTA two-storey homes comes down to physics and housing design. **Heat rises, so the upper floor of a two-storey home is naturally warmer than the main floor** — often by 3 to 5 degrees Celsius in summer. A single thermostat on the main floor keeps running the air conditioning trying to cool the main floor to setpoint while the upstairs bedrooms remain uncomfortably warm. With zoning, the upstairs thermostat independently calls for cooling, directing more conditioned air upstairs where it is needed most. In winter, the opposite applies — the upper floor thermostat can reduce heating while the main floor gets more attention. This is particularly effective in 1990s and 2000s-era homes across Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, Vaughan, and Richmond Hill where the open-concept main floor and bedrooms-upstairs layout creates significant temperature stratification.

For the system to work properly, the existing ductwork must be correctly sized for zone operation. This is where costs can climb. If the existing supply ducts to the upper floor are undersized — common in older homes where ductwork was designed for heating only at 300 CFM per ton rather than cooling at 400 CFM per ton — the ductwork may need upsizing before zoning will deliver meaningful improvement. Adding or enlarging duct runs can add $1,000 to $4,000 to the project. The return air system also needs attention — each zone needs adequate return air capacity so the system can circulate air properly when operating in single-zone mode.

A more advanced approach uses **smart zoning systems with variable damper positions and communicating thermostats**, which modulate airflow rather than simply opening and closing dampers. These systems cost $4,000 to $8,000 installed but provide smoother temperature control and less stress on the equipment. For a straightforward two-zone retrofit in a well-ducted GTA two-storey home, budget $2,500 to $4,500 installed. Get quotes from HVAC contractors experienced with zoning — not all contractors install zone systems regularly, and improper zoning setup causes more problems than it solves. Toronto Ductwork can connect you with local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q77

How much does it cost to run ductwork through an attic space in a Toronto bungalow?

Running ductwork through an attic space in a Toronto bungalow typically costs $3,000 to $10,000, depending on how many supply and return runs are needed, the length of the duct runs, insulation requirements, and whether the project involves extending an existing system or installing an entirely new attic duct network. Attic duct installations are common in GTA bungalow renovations where the basement is being converted to living space and the homeowner wants to relocate ductwork out of the basement ceiling to gain headroom.

The critical factor with attic ductwork in the GTA is insulation and condensation management. Toronto's climate creates a worst-case scenario for attic ducts — in winter, attic temperatures drop well below freezing while supply ducts carry 45 to 55 degree Celsius heated air, and in summer, attic temperatures can exceed 60 degrees Celsius while supply ducts carry 12 to 15 degree Celsius air-conditioned air. Without proper insulation, this temperature differential causes massive energy loss and severe condensation. The Ontario Building Code and

industry best practice require a minimum of **R-8 duct wrap insulation on all supply and return ducts in unconditioned attic spaces**, and many experienced GTA contractors recommend R-12 for attics to account for the extreme temperature swings.

For a typical three-bedroom Toronto bungalow, running a new trunk line through the attic with branch supply runs to each room involves approximately 60 to 100 linear feet of insulated duct. Using galvanized steel trunk duct at $12 to $30 per linear foot installed, plus spiral round or flex duct for branch runs at $8 to $18 per linear foot installed, plus R-8 duct wrap at $1.50 to $3.00 per square foot, the material and installation costs add up quickly. Add register boots ($15 to $40 each), ceiling registers, hangers, sealing materials, and fittings, and the total reaches $4,000 to $8,000 for a typical installation. If new return air ducts also need to run through the attic — which is strongly recommended for balanced airflow — add another $1,500 to $3,000.

Attic access and working conditions significantly affect labour costs in GTA bungalows. Many Toronto bungalows built in the 1950s and 1960s have low-pitch roofs with limited attic clearance — sometimes only 3 to 4 feet at the peak. Working in these tight spaces is slow, physically demanding, and requires careful coordination to avoid damaging ceiling drywall, insulation, and electrical wiring. In summer, GTA attic temperatures make extended work periods unsafe, limiting productive work hours and extending project timelines. These factors push labour rates higher compared to basement duct installations.

There are important practical concerns to discuss with your contractor. **All duct joints in the attic must be sealed with mastic and UL 181 foil tape** — attic ducts are the most leak-prone part of any system because temperature cycling loosens connections over time. Ducts must be properly supported with hangers every 4 to 8 feet to prevent sagging, and flex duct must be pulled taut with no kinks or excessive bends. A vapour barrier on the insulation is essential to prevent moisture from attic humidity migrating into the insulation and reducing its R-value. A building permit is typically required for new attic ductwork — expect $200 to $500 in permit fees from the City of Toronto or your local municipality. Budget $5,000 to $10,000 for a complete attic duct installation in a GTA bungalow, and get multiple quotes from contractors experienced with attic work specifically.

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Q78

What is the average cost to install a kitchen exhaust system in a Toronto restaurant?

A commercial kitchen exhaust system installation in a Toronto restaurant typically costs $15,000 to $50,000 or more, depending on the size of the hood, the length of the exhaust duct run, fire suppression requirements, make-up air system complexity, and the extent of structural and electrical work needed. Commercial kitchen ventilation is a completely different scope than residential work — it involves engineered fire-rated ductwork, integrated fire suppression, high-powered exhaust fans, and strict compliance with the Ontario Building Code, Ontario Fire Code, and Toronto Public Health requirements.

The **Type 1 grease hood** — required over all commercial cooking equipment that produces grease-laden vapours (fryers, grills, ranges, charbroilers) — is the centrepiece of the system. A standard stainless steel Type 1 hood with built-in grease baffles and lighting runs $3,000 to $10,000 depending on size, typically 4 to 16 feet long. The **exhaust ductwork must be constructed from minimum 16-gauge (1.5 mm) carbon steel or 18-gauge stainless steel**, welded at all seams (not screwed — screws collect grease and create leak points), and routed to the roof with proper clearances from combustible materials. Exhaust duct fabrication and installation costs $3,000 to $12,000 depending on the length of the run and number of penetrations through floors and the roof. The **exhaust fan**, mounted on the roof or exterior wall, costs $2,000 to $6,000 installed for a typical restaurant-size unit rated at 1,500 to 4,000 CFM.

Fire suppression is non-negotiable. An automatic fire suppression system (wet chemical type, such as Ansul or similar) integrated into the hood costs $3,000 to $8,000 installed, including nozzles positioned over each cooking station, agent tanks, manual pull stations, and automatic gas shut-off valves. The Ontario Fire Code requires fire suppression for all Type 1 hood installations, and the system must be inspected and tagged by a certified fire protection company every six months.

Make-up air is the hidden cost that surprises many restaurant owners. When you exhaust 2,000 to 4,000 CFM from a commercial kitchen, that air must be replaced. The Ontario Building Code requires a make-up air system that replaces 80 to 100% of exhausted air, and the incoming air must be tempered in winter — you cannot blow -20 degree Celsius outdoor air into a kitchen. A heated make-up air unit with ductwork, controls, and interlocking with the exhaust system adds $5,000 to $15,000 to the project. Many first-time restaurant owners underbudget this component.

Additional costs include Toronto building permits ($500 to $2,000 for commercial mechanical), electrical work by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor for fan motors, controls, and interlocking ($1,500 to $4,000), gas piping modifications by a TSSA-registered contractor if needed, roof penetration and weatherproofing ($500 to $2,000), and engineering drawings if required by the building department ($1,000 to $3,000). Budget a minimum of $20,000 to $35,000 for a mid-size Toronto restaurant kitchen exhaust installation, and get quotes from commercial kitchen ventilation specialists — this is highly specialized work that general HVAC contractors may not be equipped to handle.

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Q79

How much does ductwork cost for a Toronto laneway suite or garden suite?

Ductwork for a Toronto laneway suite or garden suite typically costs $3,000 to $8,000 as part of the overall HVAC installation, depending on the size of the unit, the heating and cooling system chosen, and the complexity of the layout. Since the City of Toronto legalized laneway suites in 2019 and expanded permissions for garden suites in 2022, these secondary dwelling units have become increasingly popular across established neighbourhoods — and getting the HVAC and ductwork right in these compact spaces requires thoughtful design from the start.

The ductwork scope depends heavily on which HVAC system is selected. **A ducted mini-split heat pump system** — the most popular choice for Toronto laneway and garden suites — uses a compact air handler with short duct runs to supply and return registers. Because these units are typically 400 to 1,000 square feet with an open-concept layout, the duct system is small: a compact supply plenum, 4 to 8 short branch runs, and 2 to 4 return air paths. Material and installation for this scale of ductwork runs $2,000 to $5,000. The mini-split air handler itself and outdoor condenser unit add another $4,000 to $8,000 installed, bringing total HVAC costs for a laneway suite to $6,000 to $13,000. Alternatively, a **ductless mini-split system** eliminates ductwork entirely using wall-mounted indoor units — this costs $3,500 to $7,000 installed for a one or two-head system, but some homeowners prefer ducted systems for the cleaner aesthetic without wall units.

If the laneway suite uses a **small high-efficiency furnace with central air conditioning**, the ductwork scope is more traditional — a supply plenum, trunk line, branch runs, return air system, and all associated fittings. For a 600 to 800 square foot suite, this runs $3,500 to $8,000 for ductwork plus $3,000 to $6,000 for the furnace and air conditioner. This approach requires gas service to the suite (TSSA-registered contractor for installation), a flue venting path, combustion air supply, and condensate drainage — all of which add cost and complexity compared to an electric heat pump system.

There are several GTA-specific considerations for laneway and garden suite ductwork. Since these are new construction, the Ontario Building Code requires engineered duct design using Manual D calculations, and all ductwork must meet current energy efficiency standards including proper sealing and insulation. If ducts run through unconditioned spaces (unlikely in a well-designed suite but possible in attic or floor assemblies), R-8 minimum insulation is required. The suite needs its own independent mechanical system — it cannot share ductwork with the main house. An HRV or ERV is strongly recommended and often required under the OBC energy provisions for new airtight construction, adding $2,500 to $5,000 for the unit and dedicated ventilation ductwork.

Building permits are mandatory for laneway and garden suites, and the mechanical portion of the permit covers the HVAC and ductwork installation. Toronto permit fees for laneway suites typically run $5,000 to $15,000 total

(covering building, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing), with the mechanical portion being $500 to $1,500. Budget $3,000 to $8,000 for ductwork specifically, and discuss HVAC system options with your contractor early in the design process — the system choice drives the ductwork design. Toronto Ductwork can help you find qualified HVAC contractors experienced with laneway suite projects through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q80

What is the price difference between insulated and uninsulated ductwork in the GTA?

Insulated ductwork costs approximately 30 to 60% more than uninsulated ductwork in the GTA, with the premium varying based on the insulation method, R-value, and duct type. For a typical residential installation, the difference works out to roughly $3 to $8 per linear foot additional for insulated duct runs — but in many GTA installations, insulation is not optional. It is a necessity that pays for itself in energy savings, condensation prevention, and long-term system performance.

Here is how the numbers break down for common duct types in the GTA market. **Uninsulated galvanized steel round duct** runs $8 to $20 per linear foot installed. Adding **R-8 fibreglass duct wrap with a foil vapour barrier** adds $1.50 to $3.00 per square foot of duct surface area, which translates to approximately $3 to $7 per linear foot for typical 6 to 10-inch round duct. So insulated galvanized round duct runs $11 to $27 per linear foot installed — roughly 35 to 50% more than bare duct. For **rectangular trunk duct**, uninsulated runs $12 to $30 per linear foot, and adding R-8 wrap brings it to $16 to $38 per linear foot. **Flex duct is pre-insulated** with built-in R-4.2 to R-8 insulation and vapour barrier, which is one reason it is popular for branch runs in unconditioned spaces — at $8 to $18 per linear foot installed, the insulation is included.

Another option is **internally lined duct**, where a layer of fibreglass duct liner is bonded to the inside of the metal duct. This provides both insulation and sound absorption. Internally lined duct costs $4 to $10 per linear foot more than bare duct, but it reduces the external footprint since the insulation is inside. The downside is that internal liner reduces the effective duct diameter, so the duct may need to be upsized to maintain adequate airflow.

In Toronto's climate, insulation is essential for any ductwork running through unconditioned spaces — attics, crawlspaces, unheated garages, and exterior wall chases. The Ontario Building Code requires insulation on ducts in unconditioned spaces, and R-8 is the minimum recommended value for GTA attics where temperature differentials can exceed 50 degrees Celsius between duct interior and surrounding air. In summer, uninsulated supply ducts carrying 12 to 15 degree air through a 60-degree attic lose enormous cooling capacity and develop heavy condensation that drips onto ceiling drywall and promotes mould growth. In winter, uninsulated supply ducts in cold attics lose 25 to 40% of their heat before the air reaches the living space.

For ducts running through conditioned spaces — basement ceilings in heated basements, interior wall chases, and between floors in conditioned spaces — insulation is less critical for energy performance but still provides benefits. Even in conditioned basements, supply duct insulation reduces noise transmission and prevents minor condensation during humid summer months. Many GTA homeowners skip insulation on basement ductwork to save costs, which is reasonable if the basement is fully heated and cooled year-round.

The bottom line: for a typical GTA home with 100 to 150 linear feet of ductwork, insulating all runs adds $500 to $1,500 to the project cost. For ducts in unconditioned spaces, this investment typically pays for itself in 2 to 4 years through energy savings alone — not counting the avoided costs of condensation damage and mould remediation.

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Q81

How much does it cost to install return air grilles and ductwork in a Toronto home?

Adding return air grilles and ductwork to a Toronto home typically costs $300 to $800 per return location, including the duct run, register boot, grille, and installation labour. For a whole-home return air upgrade — which might involve adding returns to 4 to 8 rooms — expect to spend $2,000 to $6,000 total. This is one of the most impactful and cost-effective ductwork upgrades available for older GTA homes, where inadequate return air is the single most common cause of uneven heating and cooling, stuffy bedrooms, and doors that swing shut when the furnace kicks on.

Most post-war Toronto homes built between 1945 and 1985 have a single large return air grille on the main floor, usually in a hallway near the furnace. This design forces the system to pull all return air through one location, creating a pressure imbalance throughout the house. With bedroom doors closed at night, bedrooms become positively pressurized by supply air with no way for air to return to the furnace — the room gets stuffy, the system starves for air, and the furnace works harder while delivering less comfort. Adding individual return air grilles to bedrooms, the living room, and basement living spaces solves this problem dramatically.

The cost per return location depends on several factors. **A straightforward basement return** where the duct runs along the basement ceiling joists from the new grille location to the existing return plenum costs $300 to $500 — the duct run is short, accessible, and requires minimal finishing. **A main floor return** where the duct must drop through the floor, run through the basement ceiling, and connect to the return plenum costs $400 to $700. **A second-floor return** is the most expensive at $500 to $800 per location because the duct must run vertically through the wall, across the main floor ceiling, and down to the basement return plenum — this often involves opening walls and ceilings and patching drywall afterward.

Material costs for each return location include galvanized steel duct ($8 to $20 per linear foot for round, depending on diameter — 8 to 12-inch duct is typical for room returns), a register boot ($15 to $40), a return air grille ($10 to $30 for a standard stamped steel grille, $30 to $80 for a decorative grille), and sealing materials. The labour component is typically 60 to 70% of the total cost because of the time required to plan the route, cut openings, run the duct, seal all joints with mastic, and finish the visible portions.

An alternative to full return ductwork is installing transfer grilles or jump ducts between rooms and the hallway where the existing return grille is located. A transfer grille — a through-wall grille connecting a bedroom to the hallway — costs $100 to $250 per location and allows air to flow back to the return even when doors are closed. Jump ducts (short flex duct connecting the ceiling of the bedroom to the hallway above the wall) cost $150 to $300 each. These are less effective than dedicated return ducts but far less expensive and minimally invasive.

For a comprehensive return air upgrade in a typical three-bedroom, two-storey GTA home — adding returns to three bedrooms and the basement living area — budget $2,500 to $4,500 for ducted returns or $600 to $1,200 for transfer grilles. The improvement in comfort and air quality is immediately noticeable. Find experienced ductwork contractors through the Toronto Construction Network directory to get competitive quotes on your return air project.

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Q82

What does a Toronto sheet metal contractor charge to fabricate custom duct fittings?

Custom duct fitting fabrication by a Toronto sheet metal contractor typically costs $50 to $300 per fitting, depending on the complexity, size, material gauge, and whether the fitting is fabricated in the shop or on-site. Standard catalogue fittings like 90-degree elbows, tees, and reducers in common sizes are usually available off the shelf at HVAC supply houses for $15 to $60 each, but many residential and commercial ductwork projects require custom fittings that do not exist in standard catalogues — and that is where a skilled sheet metal contractor's fabrication ability becomes essential.

Simple custom fittings — a non-standard-angle elbow, an offset, a transition from one duct size to another, or a rectangular-to-round adapter in an unusual dimension — typically cost $50 to $120 each for shop fabrication. The contractor works from measurements taken on-site, lays out the pattern on flat galvanized sheet metal (typically 26-gauge for residential branch fittings or 24-gauge for trunk fittings), cuts, brakes, rolls, and seams the fitting in the shop, then delivers it to the job site. **Complex custom fittings** — multi-piece radiused elbows, large rectangular trunk transitions, plenums with multiple takeoffs, or fittings that must navigate around structural obstacles like beams, plumbing, and electrical — can cost $120 to $300 or more each. These require more material, more layout time, and more skilled labour.

For **exposed industrial-style ductwork** in Toronto lofts and basement renovations, custom fittings command premium pricing because every joint is visible and must be finished to a higher standard. Exposed spiral duct fittings with clean welds, smooth transitions, and precise angles can cost $100 to $250 each, and a typical exposed installation might require 10 to 25 custom fittings. For premium finishes like powder-coated or painted custom fittings, add another $20 to $50 per fitting for finishing.

Shop fabrication versus on-site fabrication affects both cost and quality. Shop-fabricated fittings are made on a proper sheet metal brake, shear, and roller in a controlled environment — they are more precise, cleaner, and typically less expensive per fitting because the contractor works more efficiently in the shop. On-site fabrication is necessary when exact dimensions cannot be determined until the installation is underway, particularly in renovation work in older GTA homes where nothing is square, plumb, or level. On-site fabrication typically costs 20 to 40% more per fitting due to the less efficient working conditions and the need to bring portable tools to the job site.

The **material gauge** also affects pricing. Standard 26-gauge galvanized steel is the most economical for residential branch fittings. Trunk line fittings in 24-gauge cost 15 to 25% more. Heavy-duty 22-gauge fittings for high-pressure commercial systems cost 30 to 50% more. Stainless steel custom fittings — used in kitchen exhaust, corrosive environments, or high-end exposed installations — cost 2 to 3 times more than galvanized equivalents.

When getting quotes for a ductwork project that involves custom fittings, ask the contractor to itemize fitting fabrication costs separately from straight duct runs and installation labour. A project requiring 15 to 20 custom fittings at $80 to $150 each adds $1,200 to $3,000 to the total project cost — a significant line item that is worth understanding upfront. Experienced sheet metal contractors with their own fabrication shop can often suggest design alternatives that use fewer custom fittings without compromising performance, saving money while maintaining quality.

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- The English Carpenter
- LMP Scaffolding Services
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- Norseman Construction & Development

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Q83

How much does it cost to remediate asbestos-wrapped ductwork in an older Toronto home?

Asbestos remediation on ductwork in a Toronto home typically costs $2,000 to $8,000 or more, depending on the extent of contamination, the size of the duct system, and how accessible the affected sections are. This is not a project where you can cut corners — Ontario law requires that asbestos removal be performed by licensed abatement professionals, and the material must be disposed of at approved facilities.

In many pre-1980 Toronto homes, especially those in established neighbourhoods like the Danforth, High Park, Leaside, and parts of Scarborough and Etobicoke, original duct systems were wrapped with asbestos-containing insulation or sealed with asbestos tape at joints. As long as this material remains intact and undisturbed, it poses minimal risk. The danger comes when it deteriorates, becomes friable (crumbly), or when someone attempts renovation work that disturbs it. If you are planning any ductwork modification, replacement, or even professional duct cleaning in a home built before 1985, asbestos testing should be your first step. A certified inspector can take samples for around $300 to $600, and lab results typically come back within a few days.

The remediation process itself involves setting up containment barriers with negative air pressure, carefully removing the asbestos-containing material while wearing full protective equipment, and disposing of it in sealed bags at a licensed facility. For a typical Toronto home with asbestos wrap on basement trunk ducts and some branch connections, expect to pay **$3,000 to $6,000 for the abatement alone**. If asbestos is found in attic ductwork or hard-to-reach wall chases, costs can climb to $8,000 or beyond due to the difficulty of access and the additional containment required. Disposal fees in the GTA run $200 to $500 depending on volume.

Keep in mind that asbestos removal is just the first phase of the project. Once the contaminated material is gone, the underlying ductwork is typically in poor condition — 50- to 70-year-old galvanized steel that may be rusted, leaking, and undersized for modern HVAC systems. Most homeowners end up replacing the entire duct system at that point, adding another **$5,000 to $15,000** depending on the home's size and layout. The combined cost of abatement plus new ductwork for a mid-size Toronto home commonly falls in the **$8,000 to $20,000 range**.

Never attempt to remove or disturb asbestos yourself. Beyond the serious health risks — asbestos fibres cause mesothelioma and asbestosis — doing so violates Ontario Regulation 278/05 under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Hire a licensed abatement contractor, get a clearance air test after removal, and then bring in a ductwork contractor to design and install a properly sized replacement system. If you need help finding qualified ductwork professionals after abatement is complete, Toronto Ductwork can match you with local contractors through the Toronto Construction Network at no cost.

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- Vista Builders Ltd
- Leveloff.LTD
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- Olkron Developments

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Q84

What is the price to install a fresh air intake duct for a Toronto furnace?

Installing a fresh air intake duct for a furnace in Toronto typically costs $400 to $1,500, depending on the length of the duct run, the type of system being served, and whether make-up air tempering is required. A basic combustion air intake — a dedicated duct bringing outdoor air directly to the furnace room — falls on the lower end, while a tempered fresh air intake integrated with the return plenum costs more.

Every gas furnace in Ontario needs an adequate supply of combustion air to operate safely. In older Toronto homes, combustion air seeped in naturally through gaps in the building envelope — drafty windows, unsealed rim joists, and gaps around doors provided more than enough. But modern energy retrofits that tighten the envelope with spray foam, new windows, and weatherstripping can starve the furnace of air, causing backdrafting that pulls combustion gases — including carbon monoxide — back into the living space. This is a genuine safety hazard and one of the most common issues TSSA inspectors flag in renovated GTA homes.

A **direct combustion air intake** runs a 6-inch insulated duct from the exterior wall to the furnace or mechanical room. This is the simplest and least expensive option, typically costing **$400 to $800** installed. The duct must be insulated where it passes through conditioned space to prevent condensation in winter, and the exterior termination needs a screen and hood to keep out rain, snow, and pests. For homes in lakefront neighbourhoods like Mimico, the Beaches, or Port Credit, extra attention to insulation is important due to the higher ambient humidity.

A **fresh air intake tied to the return plenum** is a more sophisticated approach that introduces measured outdoor air into the HVAC system's return side, where it mixes with recirculated air before being filtered, heated, and distributed. This method improves indoor air quality throughout the home and is often required in tightly sealed new construction. Expect to pay **$800 to $1,500** for this type of installation, which includes a motorized damper, a control to interlock with the furnace blower, and the duct run itself.

If your home has a high-CFM kitchen range hood — anything over 400 CFM — Ontario Building Code requires a **make-up air system** to replace the exhausted air. This goes well beyond a simple fresh air intake and involves a powered unit with tempering capability to heat incoming air in winter. Make-up air systems cost **$2,000 to $5,000** installed and must be interlocked with the range hood so they operate simultaneously.

Any work involving gas appliance connections or modifications to combustion air supply must be performed by a **TSSA-registered contractor** — this is Ontario law, not a suggestion. The installer should also verify that the fresh air intake does not create negative pressure problems with other combustion appliances like water heaters or fireplaces. Get at least three quotes and confirm TSSA registration and WSIB coverage before hiring. Toronto Ductwork can help you find qualified local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q85

How much does it cost to install ductwork for a mini-split ducted system in the GTA?

Installing ductwork for a ducted mini-split system in a GTA home typically costs $2,000 to $6,000 for the duct portion alone, with the complete system (unit plus ductwork) running $5,000 to $12,000 depending on capacity, number of zones, and installation complexity. Ducted mini-splits are an increasingly popular choice in Toronto for additions, basement apartments, and homes without existing ductwork.

Unlike traditional ductless mini-splits with wall-mounted heads, ducted mini-split systems use a compact air handler concealed in a closet, ceiling space, or soffit that connects to a small network of ducts serving multiple rooms. The air handler is much smaller than a conventional furnace, which makes it ideal for tight spaces — a major advantage in Toronto's older homes where mechanical rooms are cramped or nonexistent. The refrigerant line still runs to an outdoor condenser, but the indoor distribution is entirely through ductwork, giving you the efficiency of a heat pump without visible wall units in every room.

The ductwork for these systems is typically smaller than conventional HVAC duct — most ducted mini-split air handlers use 6-inch or 8-inch round supply ducts rather than the 10-inch to 14-inch trunk lines of a furnace system. This makes routing through existing walls, ceilings, and soffits much easier. For a **single-zone ducted mini-split** serving two to four rooms in a basement apartment or addition, the ductwork portion usually costs **$1,500 to $3,000** , including supply runs, register boots, a small return, and all connections. A **multi-zone system** serving an entire floor or small home runs **$3,000 to $6,000** for ductwork.

The total installed cost breaks down roughly as follows: the outdoor condenser unit runs **$2,000 to $4,000** depending on capacity (typically 18,000 to 36,000 BTU for residential), the indoor air handler is **$800 to $2,000**, refrigerant line set and installation labour adds **$1,000 to $2,500**, and ductwork is the variable described above. Multi-zone systems with multiple indoor air handlers connected to a single outdoor unit cost more but eliminate the need for separate outdoor condensers.

In Toronto's post-war homes across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke, ducted mini-splits are a practical solution for adding air conditioning to second floors that were never connected to the original duct system. The compact ductwork can often be routed through closets and soffits without major structural work. For basement apartments — especially those requiring separate HVAC under Toronto's second suite regulations — a ducted mini-split with its own thermostat provides the independent climate control that building inspectors require.

Permits may be required depending on the scope of work. The electrical connection for the outdoor unit and air handler requires an ESA-licensed electrician, and if any gas disconnection is involved, a TSSA-registered contractor must handle that portion. Get multiple quotes from contractors experienced with ducted mini-split

installations specifically — the duct design differs significantly from conventional forced-air systems. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local HVAC and ductwork professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q86

What is the average cost to replace rusted-out ductwork in a Toronto home crawl space?

Replacing rusted-out ductwork in a Toronto home's crawl space typically costs $2,500 to $8,000, with most projects landing in the $3,500 to $6,000 range for an average-sized home. The wide price range reflects the significant variation in crawl space accessibility, extent of damage, and the complexity of the replacement layout.

Crawl space ductwork in GTA homes takes a beating. Toronto's freeze-thaw cycles — over 50 per winter — cause expansion and contraction at every joint, loosening connections over time. Moisture from the ground migrates upward, and in homes without a proper vapour barrier on the crawl space floor, that moisture condenses on cold duct surfaces throughout the winter. Over years, this relentless cycle of condensation and drying corrodes galvanized steel from the outside in, creating rust holes that leak conditioned air into the crawl space. Homes in areas with high water tables — parts of Scarborough, Pickering, Ajax, and low-lying sections of Etobicoke near the Humber — experience accelerated corrosion due to elevated crawl space humidity.

The replacement process starts with a thorough assessment of the existing system. A contractor will need to determine whether just the branch runs are rusted or if trunk lines are also compromised. For a typical 1,200 to 1,800 square foot GTA bungalow with a full crawl space, replacing all supply and return ductwork runs **$3,000 to $6,000** including new galvanized steel or spiral round duct, fittings, register boots, mastic sealing at every joint, and insulation. If the trunk line and plenum connections also need replacement, costs climb to **$5,000 to $8,000**. Crawl

space work carries a labour premium of 20 to 40 percent compared to open-basement installations because contractors are working in confined, uncomfortable conditions — heights of 3 to 4 feet are common, and some crawl spaces are barely 2 feet.

Before new ductwork goes in, address the moisture source that caused the rust in the first place. Installing a **6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier** over the crawl space floor costs $500 to $1,500 and is essential for protecting the new ductwork. Without it, the replacement ducts will follow the same corrosion path as the originals. All new ductwork in the crawl space should be insulated with **R-8 duct wrap minimum** to prevent condensation — this adds $500 to $1,200 to the project but pays for itself in energy savings and duct longevity.

If the existing ductwork predates 1985, have it tested for **asbestos** before removal. Asbestos tape and insulation were commonly used on duct joints and fittings, and disturbing this material without proper abatement is both dangerous and illegal in Ontario. Testing costs $300 to $600, and professional removal adds $2,000 to $5,000 if asbestos is found.

Get at least three quotes from contractors willing to physically enter and assess the crawl space — not just peer in from the access hatch. Confirm WSIB coverage, as crawl space work carries higher injury risk. Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced local ductwork contractors through the Toronto Construction Network at no charge.

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Q87

How much do Toronto contractors charge to install ductwork in a commercial office space?

Commercial ductwork installation in Toronto typically costs $15 to $35 per square foot of office space, with a small to mid-size office (1,000 to 5,000 square feet) running $15,000 to $80,000 or more depending on the complexity of the layout, ceiling height, zoning requirements, and whether the space has existing ductwork that can be reused. Commercial projects are substantially more involved than residential work and carry different code requirements.

The cost per square foot varies enormously based on the type of commercial space. A basic open-plan office in a multi-tenant building where trunk ductwork already exists in the ceiling plenum might only need branch distribution and diffusers, costing **$10 to $20 per square foot**. A ground-up tenant build-out in a new commercial unit with no existing HVAC infrastructure — requiring roof-top unit connections, trunk lines, VAV boxes, zone controls, and fire dampers — runs **$25 to $40 per square foot**. Medical offices, server rooms, and spaces with specific ventilation requirements (laboratories, commercial kitchens) cost even more due to specialized exhaust, make-up air, and air change requirements.

Commercial ductwork in Toronto differs from residential in several important ways. **Fire dampers** are required at every point where ductwork crosses a fire-rated wall or floor assembly, adding $200 to $500 per damper. **Smoke dampers** and smoke detectors in ductwork are required in certain occupancy types under the Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code. **Variable Air Volume (VAV) boxes** — which control airflow to individual zones based on thermostat demand — are standard in commercial applications and cost $800 to $2,000 each installed. A 3,000 square foot office might need four to eight VAV boxes.

The **Ontario Building Code** and **City of Toronto** mechanical permit requirements for commercial spaces are more stringent than residential. Engineering drawings stamped by a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) are typically required for commercial HVAC design, adding **$2,000 to $8,000** in design fees depending on project size. Mechanical permits for commercial work in Toronto run **$500 to $2,000 or more** based on project value. Inspections are more frequent and detailed than residential, covering fire stopping, damper installation, duct pressure testing, and air balancing.

Labour rates for commercial ductwork in Toronto are governed in part by union agreements — many larger commercial projects in the GTA require union sheet metal workers (SMWIA Local 30), with journeyman rates running $45 to $65 per hour plus benefits. Non-union shops handle smaller commercial jobs at slightly lower rates but must still meet the same code requirements.

For any commercial ductwork project in Toronto, start with a mechanical engineer or a design-build HVAC contractor who can assess the space, calculate heating and cooling loads, design the duct layout, and pull permits. Get three competitive bids, verify WSIB clearance certificates, and confirm that the contractor carries commercial general liability insurance — typically $2 million minimum. Toronto Ductwork focuses primarily on residential projects, but the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com includes HVAC

contractors who handle commercial work across the GTA.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- A Renovation Company Toronto Corporation
- Norseman Construction & Development
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Q88

What is the cost to add a bypass damper for zoning in an existing Toronto duct system?

Adding a bypass damper to an existing zoned duct system in a Toronto home typically costs $400 to $1,200 installed, including the damper itself, the bypass duct connecting the supply plenum to the return plenum, and the labour to integrate it with the existing zone control panel. This is a relatively straightforward modification when performed by a contractor experienced with zoning systems.

A bypass damper solves a specific problem in zoned HVAC systems. When zone dampers close to stop airflow to satisfied zones, the furnace blower continues pushing the same volume of air into fewer open ducts. This creates excess static pressure that can damage the blower motor, cause noise, and strain duct connections. The bypass damper opens automatically when pressure rises, redirecting excess air from the supply side back to the return side, relieving the pressure and protecting the equipment. It is essentially a pressure relief valve for your duct system.

The bypass damper itself is a round or rectangular motorized damper that costs **$150 to $400** for the unit. It connects to a **barometric bypass duct** — typically a 10-inch to 14-inch round duct running between the supply plenum and the return plenum. The duct run, fittings, and sheet metal work add **$150 to $400** in materials and labour. Wiring the damper to the zone control panel and calibrating the static pressure set point adds another **$100 to $400** depending on the control system. Most GTA contractors can complete this installation in three to five hours.

There are a few important considerations for Toronto homeowners. First, a bypass damper is only necessary if your system uses a **single-speed or two-speed blower** with zone dampers. If your furnace or air handler has a **variable-speed ECM blower**, it automatically ramps down airflow when zone dampers close, reducing static pressure without needing a bypass. Many newer furnaces installed in GTA homes since 2010 have variable-speed motors, making a bypass damper unnecessary. Ask your contractor to check your blower type before proceeding.

Second, while a bypass damper protects equipment, it does introduce a small efficiency penalty. The bypassed air has already been heated or cooled and is being recirculated without delivering comfort to any zone. In practice, this penalty is modest — typically 5 to 10 percent of system efficiency during partial-zone operation — and is far preferable to the blower damage and noise that occur without pressure relief.

If you are adding zoning to an existing non-zoned system, the complete project — including zone dampers, a zone control panel, additional thermostats, wiring, and a bypass damper — runs **$2,500 to $6,000** for a typical two-zone system in a GTA home. Three or more zones cost $4,000 to $8,000. This is a worthwhile investment for multi-storey Toronto homes where the upper floor is consistently warmer than the main floor in summer.

Have a contractor experienced with zoning systems assess your existing ductwork before committing. Duct sizing, blower capacity, and airflow balance all affect whether zoning will deliver the comfort improvements you expect. Toronto Ductwork can help you find local HVAC and ductwork professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q89

How much does it cost to install ductwork for an in-law suite addition in the GTA?

Installing ductwork for an in-law suite addition in the GTA typically costs $2,000 to $7,000 if extending from the existing HVAC system, or $5,000 to $12,000 if a separate heating and cooling system with dedicated ductwork is required. The cost depends heavily on the suite's location, size, and whether Toronto's second suite bylaws require independent climate control.

For a **basement in-law suite** — the most common configuration in Toronto — extending ductwork from the home's existing furnace is often the simplest approach. This involves adding two to four supply runs and one or two return air ducts to serve the suite's bedrooms, living area, and bathroom. The ductwork itself typically costs **$2,000 to $4,500**, including galvanized steel trunk extensions, flex or rigid branch runs, register boots, and proper sealing with mastic. A key consideration is whether the existing furnace has enough capacity to handle the additional load. An HVAC contractor should perform a Manual J load calculation to verify — adding 500 to 800 square feet of conditioned space to an already adequately sized system can push it beyond its limits, resulting in poor comfort throughout the entire home.

If the in-law suite requires **independent HVAC** — and Toronto's second suite regulations often do, particularly for legal secondary suites with separate entrances — you are looking at a standalone system with its own ductwork. A **ducted mini-split heat pump** is the most popular choice for GTA in-law suites because it provides both heating and cooling without gas connections, fits in compact spaces, and operates on its own thermostat. The complete system with ductwork runs **$5,000 to $10,000** for a 500 to 800 square foot suite. A small **high-efficiency furnace and air conditioner** with dedicated ductwork costs **$8,000 to $15,000** installed but requires gas line extension (TSSA-registered contractor) and a separate flue.

Several GTA-specific factors affect the final price. **Permit requirements** are significant — the City of Toronto requires building permits for second suites, and the mechanical portion (ductwork and HVAC) must meet Ontario Building Code Part 6 requirements for ventilation, fire separation, and combustion air. Expect **$400 to $800** in permit fees. Ductwork penetrating the fire separation between the main dwelling and the suite requires **fire dampers** at every penetration point, adding $200 to $500 per damper. The suite also needs its own **bathroom exhaust fan** ducted to the exterior (not into the main home's system) and may need a dedicated range hood exhaust if it includes a kitchen.

Return air planning is critical and often overlooked. The suite needs adequate return air to function properly, and return air cannot be drawn from bathrooms, kitchens, or through the fire separation from the main home. Each bedroom should have either a ducted return or a transfer grille to a common return — building inspectors in Toronto check this carefully.

Get at least three quotes from contractors experienced with Toronto second suite builds. Confirm WSIB coverage, ESA licensing for electrical work, and TSSA registration if gas is involved. Toronto Ductwork can match you with qualified local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q90

What is the price for removing and replacing octopus furnace ductwork in a Toronto home?

Removing and replacing octopus furnace ductwork in a Toronto home typically costs $8,000 to $18,000 for the complete project, including demolition of the old gravity system, asbestos testing and possible abatement, design and installation of a modern forced-air duct system, and connection to a new high-efficiency furnace. This is one of the most transformative upgrades available for owners of pre-war Toronto homes.

Octopus furnaces — named for their large, tentacle-like ducts radiating from a central firebox — were standard in Toronto homes built before 1945. You will find them in neighbourhoods like the Annex, Cabbagetown, Riverdale, High Park, Roncesvalles, the Danforth, and older sections of East York and York. These gravity-fed systems relied on natural convection: hot air rises through oversized round ducts to upper floors, while cooled air falls back down through return openings near the floor. There is no blower motor, no filter, and no air conditioning capability. The ductwork is typically large-diameter round galvanized steel — 10 to 16 inches — running vertically through walls and horizontally across basement ceilings.

The replacement project breaks down into several phases. **Asbestos testing** should be done first, as virtually all octopus furnace systems used asbestos-containing insulation, tape, or cement at duct joints and around the firebox. Testing costs $300 to $600, and if asbestos is confirmed — which it almost always is — professional abatement adds **$2,000 to $5,000** depending on the extent. Never disturb an octopus furnace system without testing first.

After abatement, the old ductwork is removed. This creates an opportunity to **redesign the entire distribution system** using modern Manual D duct sizing calculations. The new system will include a properly sized supply plenum, trunk lines (typically 8-inch to 12-inch rectangular or round), branch runs to each room, return air ducts from every floor, and a filter rack. Material and installation for the new ductwork in a typical two-storey, 1,200 to 1,800 square foot Toronto home runs **$5,000 to $10,000**. Adding the new furnace — which is almost always part of this project, since octopus furnaces cannot be converted — adds **$3,500 to $6,500** for a mid-efficiency to high-efficiency gas unit installed by a TSSA-registered contractor.

One challenge specific to octopus furnace replacements in Toronto's older homes is that the original oversized duct chases through walls and floors are larger than what modern ductwork needs, while the modern system requires supply and return runs to rooms that the gravity system never served directly. Creative routing is often necessary — experienced ductwork contractors familiar with Toronto's older housing stock know how to use existing chases, add soffits where needed, and minimize drywall disruption.

The total project — asbestos abatement, old system removal, new duct design and installation, new furnace, permits, and inspections — runs **$10,000 to $18,000** for most Toronto homes. It is a significant investment, but the result is transformative: even heating and cooling to every room, proper air filtration, air conditioning capability, dramatically lower energy bills, and elimination of a system that may have been producing elevated carbon monoxide levels for years. City of Toronto building permits are required and cost $400 to $800 for the mechanical work. Get matched with experienced local ductwork contractors through Toronto Ductwork and the Toronto Construction Network.

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- Norseman Construction & Development
- Bhogal Metal
- The Deck Store Inc
- A Renovation Company Toronto Corporation

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Q91

How much does it cost to have ductwork professionally designed by an engineer in Toronto?

Professional ductwork design by a mechanical engineer in Toronto typically costs $1,500 to $5,000 for a residential project and $3,000 to $10,000 or more for commercial spaces, depending on the size and complexity of the building. This investment in proper engineering pays for itself many times over in comfort, efficiency, and avoided problems — yet most Toronto homeowners skip it entirely, relying instead on contractor experience alone.

A proper ductwork design starts with a **Manual J heat loss and heat gain calculation** — a room-by-room analysis that accounts for wall insulation values, window sizes and orientations, ceiling heights, air infiltration rates, and Toronto's specific climate data (design temperatures of approximately -22 degrees Celsius in winter and 33 degrees Celsius in summer). This determines exactly how many BTUs of heating and CFM of cooling each room needs. From there, the engineer performs a **Manual D duct design** — sizing every trunk line, branch run, and fitting to deliver the required airflow at acceptable velocity and static pressure. The result is a complete set of duct layout drawings with sizes, materials, damper locations, and register specifications.

For a **typical residential project** — new construction, major renovation, or complete duct replacement in an existing home — engineering design fees break down roughly as follows. A straightforward single-storey or two-storey home of 1,500 to 2,500 square feet costs **$1,500 to $3,000** for Manual J calculations plus Manual D duct design with stamped drawings. Larger or more complex homes — three storeys, multiple zones, radiant floor heating combined with forced air, or challenging layouts in older Toronto homes — run **$3,000 to $5,000**. These fees are for a licensed Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) in Ontario who will stamp the drawings, meaning they carry professional liability for the design.

Many homeowners question whether engineering design is worth the cost when their HVAC contractor offers to design the system as part of the installation quote. The honest answer is that **experienced ductwork contractors with decades of GTA residential experience often produce excellent results based on their practical knowledge**. Where engineering design becomes essential is in unusual situations: homes with very long duct runs, multiple storeys with complex routing, high-performance building envelopes where oversizing wastes energy, mixed systems (radiant plus forced air), or when the homeowner wants documentation to hold the installer accountable to specific performance targets.

For **new construction** in Toronto, engineered HVAC design is effectively required — the Ontario Building Code demands that mechanical systems be designed to meet specific performance standards, and building inspectors increasingly ask for documentation. Most production builders include HVAC engineering in their mechanical

package, but custom home builders typically hire a mechanical engineer separately at **$2,000 to $4,000** for a full HVAC design including ductwork.

If you are renovating an older Toronto home and adding or replacing ductwork, consider at minimum requesting a Manual J load calculation from your HVAC contractor — many reputable GTA contractors perform these as part of their quoting process at no additional charge. If the project is complex or you want independent verification, hiring a mechanical engineer for the design ensures that the ductwork will be properly sized from the start. Find ductwork and HVAC contractors through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com.

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Q92

What is the average cost to install transfer grilles for bedroom return air in a GTA home?

Installing transfer grilles for bedroom return air in a GTA home typically costs $150 to $400 per grille, with most homes needing three to five grilles for a total project cost of $500 to $1,500. This is one of the most cost-effective ductwork upgrades available — it improves comfort, reduces noise, and helps your HVAC system operate more efficiently, all for a modest investment.

The problem transfer grilles solve is simple but widespread. When bedroom doors are closed at night — which most people do for privacy and noise control — the room becomes a sealed box. The supply register continues pushing conditioned air in, but with no return air path, pressure builds up in the bedroom. This positive pressure forces conditioned air out through gaps around the door, through electrical outlets, and into the attic or wall cavities, wasting energy. Meanwhile, the rest of the home — where the central return grille is located — goes slightly negative, pulling unconditioned air in from the basement, attic, garage, or outdoors. The result is rooms that are too

warm in summer and too cold in winter, uneven temperatures throughout the home, and a furnace or air conditioner working harder than it should.

A **transfer grille** is a pair of matching grilles installed on opposite sides of an interior wall or door, connected by a short lined duct or open cavity. They allow return air to flow from the bedroom back to the central return without requiring a dedicated return air duct to each room. The grilles are lined with acoustic material to prevent sound transmission between rooms — privacy is maintained while airflow is restored.

Installation is straightforward for an experienced contractor. Each transfer grille requires cutting openings in the wall or door, installing the grille frames, and if using a through-wall design, lining the cavity between them. **Wall-mounted transfer grilles** are the most common, typically installed high on the wall near the ceiling (warm air rises, so high placement maximizes return airflow). They cost **$150 to $350 per location** installed. **Door-mounted transfer grilles** or **undercut doors** are cheaper at **$75 to $200** but provide less airflow and more sound transmission.

For a typical three-bedroom GTA home with a single central return on the main floor, installing transfer grilles in all three bedrooms costs **$500 to $1,200** total. Adding a transfer grille for the basement recreation room or a home office brings the total to **$700 to $1,500**. This compares very favourably to the alternative of running dedicated return air ducts to each bedroom, which costs **$300 to $800 per room** and requires significant drywall work.

Transfer grilles are especially valuable in post-war Toronto homes across Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and the inner suburbs, where the original duct system typically has a single return air grille on the main floor. These homes were designed when air conditioning was rare and bedroom doors were left open. The original ductwork design simply did not account for closed-door operation. Adding transfer grilles is the simplest and most affordable way to modernize the return air system without tearing into walls and ceilings for new duct runs.

This is a project that a handy homeowner can tackle as a DIY weekend project — the grilles, acoustic lining, and tools are available at building supply stores. However, cutting into walls requires checking for wiring, plumbing, and structural members first. If you prefer professional installation, Toronto Ductwork can match you with local ductwork contractors through the Toronto Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- yourCloset.ca
- The Deck Store Inc

- Ideal Heating and Air Conditioning
- Bhogal Metal

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Q93

How much does it cost to install a whole-house ventilation system with ductwork in Toronto?

A whole-house ventilation system with dedicated ductwork typically costs $4,000 to $10,000 installed in the GTA, depending on the type of system, home size, and whether you are retrofitting into an existing home or installing during new construction. The two main options are an HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) at $2,500 to $5,000 installed and an ERV (Energy Recovery Ventilator) at $3,000 to $6,000 installed, with dedicated ventilation ductwork adding $1,500 to $4,000 on top of the unit cost.

The biggest cost variable is whether the ventilation system can share existing HVAC ductwork or needs its own dedicated duct runs. A fully ducted system with independent supply and exhaust runs to each major room is the gold standard for indoor air quality, but it requires running new ductwork through walls, ceilings, and chases — which is straightforward in new construction but labour-intensive in a retrofit. In older Toronto homes with finished ceilings and limited chase space, running dedicated ventilation ducts can push total project costs toward the $8,000 to $10,000 range. Homes with unfinished basements or accessible attic spaces keep costs closer to the $4,000 to $6,000 range because duct routing is simpler.

For air-conditioned GTA homes, an ERV is generally the better choice because it transfers both heat and moisture between the incoming and outgoing air streams. During Toronto's humid summers, an ERV prevents humid outdoor air from overwhelming your air conditioning by pre-dehumidifying the incoming fresh air. During winter, it recovers heat from the outgoing stale air and pre-warms the incoming fresh air, reducing heating costs. An HRV only transfers heat, not moisture, so it can over-dry the home in winter — a common complaint in GTA homes that already struggle with dry indoor air during heating season.

The Ontario Building Code requires mechanical ventilation in new construction and major renovations to meet ASHRAE 62.2 fresh air requirements. Even in older homes where it is not code-required, adding whole-house ventilation dramatically improves indoor air quality by diluting cooking odours, VOCs from building materials, carbon dioxide from occupants, and moisture from showers and cooking. This is especially important in GTA homes that have been air-sealed and insulated for energy efficiency — a tight building envelope without mechanical ventilation traps pollutants and moisture inside.

When budgeting, include these often-overlooked costs: balancing the system after installation ($200 to $400), electrical work for controls and wiring ($300 to $600, ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor required), exterior wall or roof caps for intake and exhaust ($100 to $300), and a City of Toronto mechanical permit ($200 to $500). Annual maintenance includes cleaning or replacing filters every 3 to 6 months ($30 to $80 per filter set) and cleaning the heat exchange core once per year.

Get at least three quotes from contractors experienced with ventilation system installation, and ask specifically about dedicated versus shared ductwork, the ERV versus HRV recommendation for your home, and whether the system will be balanced and commissioned after installation. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local ventilation professionals for free estimates through the Toronto Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- Metro Rent-All
- The English Carpenter
- Leveloff.LTD
- Youbility Inc.

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Q94

What is the price to install ductwork for a Toronto home gym or workshop ventilation?

Installing ventilation ductwork for a home gym or workshop in a GTA home typically costs $800 to $3,500, depending on whether you need exhaust-only ventilation, supply and exhaust, or a full conditioned air setup with heating and cooling duct runs tied into your existing HVAC system.

The simplest and most affordable option is **exhaust-only ventilation** using an inline fan and rigid duct run to the exterior. For a garage workshop or basement gym, this typically runs $500 to $1,200 installed, including a 6-inch or 8-inch inline fan ($150 to $400), rigid metal ductwork ($10 to $20 per linear foot installed), an exterior wall or roof cap ($50 to $150), and a speed controller. This setup pulls stale, humid, or dusty air out of the space and relies on passive air intake (an open door, transfer grille, or intake vent) to replace it. For a workshop producing sawdust or fumes, an exhaust fan rated at a minimum of 1 CFM per square foot of floor space is recommended — so a 400-square-foot garage workshop needs at least a 400 CFM fan.

For a basement home gym that needs temperature control, extending your existing HVAC ductwork with new supply and return runs is the better approach, costing $1,500 to $3,500. This includes running a new supply branch from the nearest trunk duct ($300 to $800 per register including branch duct and boot), adding a return air duct ($300 to $800), and potentially a dedicated exhaust fan for moisture removal ($300 to $600). A gym generates significant heat and humidity from exercise — a single treadmill session can produce a litre of moisture — so adequate return air and exhaust are critical to prevent moisture problems in your basement.

Garage workshops present unique challenges in Toronto's climate. **The Ontario Building Code prohibits connecting garage spaces to the home's HVAC duct system** because of carbon monoxide risk from vehicles. A garage gym or workshop needs a separate heating and ventilation solution — typically a ceiling-mounted unit heater for heat and a dedicated exhaust fan for ventilation. Running ductwork for a separate system in a garage costs $1,000 to $2,500 depending on the setup.

Toronto's extreme temperature swings matter here too. Ductwork running through unheated garage spaces must be insulated with minimum R-8 duct wrap to prevent condensation in summer and heat loss in winter. Any ductwork penetrating the wall between a garage and living space must include a fire damper, as required by the Ontario Building Code.

Electrical work for fan wiring and controls requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor, adding $200 to $500 to the project. If your workshop involves solvent fumes, paint spraying, or significant dust, you may need an explosion-proof fan and additional safety measures — discuss this with your contractor during the quoting process. Get matched with a local ductwork professional through Toronto Ductwork for free estimates on your project.

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- Kitchen Land
- Leveloff.LTD
- LMP Scaffolding Services
- Youbility Inc.
- The Deck Store Inc

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Q95

How much does it cost to repair ductwork damaged by ice damming in a Toronto attic?

Repairing attic ductwork damaged by ice damming in a GTA home typically costs $500 to $3,000, depending on the extent of the damage, the type of ductwork, whether insulation needs replacement, and how accessible the affected area is. In severe cases where ice dam water has saturated duct insulation and caused mould growth, costs can reach $4,000 to $6,000 when professional mould remediation is involved.

Ice damming is a persistent problem in Toronto's freeze-thaw climate, and when ice dams form along roof edges, meltwater backs up under shingles and drips into the attic — directly onto ductwork running through that space. **The most common damage includes saturated duct wrap insulation that loses its R-value and promotes mould growth, rusted galvanized steel duct connections, water-damaged duct board that becomes soft and crumbles, and flex duct outer jackets that tear or delaminate from repeated freeze-thaw cycles.** A typical repair involves removing and replacing damaged duct insulation ($1.50 to $3.00 per square foot for R-8 duct wrap), resealing joints that have separated due to ice expansion ($150 to $400 per repair), and replacing any sections of ductwork that have rusted through or been crushed by ice weight ($300 to $1,500 per section).

Flex duct is particularly vulnerable to ice dam damage. When water saturates the fibreglass insulation layer inside flex duct, it compresses the insulation permanently, reducing its R-value even after drying. The inner plastic liner can also develop tears where ice has formed and expanded inside the duct. **If your attic flex duct has been water-damaged, replacement is usually more cost-effective than repair** — new flex duct runs $8 to $18 per linear foot installed, and a full replacement of damaged flex runs typically costs $1,000 to $2,500.

Before any repair work begins, the attic should be inspected for mould growth on ductwork, surrounding wood framing, and insulation. Water from ice dams creates ideal conditions for mould in the enclosed, poorly ventilated spaces around attic ductwork. If mould is found, professional remediation is required before ductwork repairs — this adds $1,500 to $3,500 depending on the affected area. Ontario regulations require professional mould remediation when affected areas exceed 10 square feet.

The critical long-term fix is addressing the ice damming itself, not just repairing the ductwork. Ice dams form when heat escaping from the living space warms the roof deck, melting snow that refreezes at the cold eaves. Ironically, poorly insulated ductwork in the attic contributes to ice damming — warm air leaking from duct joints heats the attic space, accelerating snowmelt on the roof. Sealing and insulating your attic ductwork with mastic at every joint and R-8 minimum duct wrap both protects the ducts and reduces the heat loss that causes ice dams in the first place.

Have a qualified contractor inspect all attic ductwork after any ice dam event, even if no water stains are visible from below. Toronto Ductwork can connect you with local professionals experienced in attic duct repair and insulation through the Toronto Construction Network.

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- Kitchen Land
- LMP Scaffolding Services
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- Leveloff.LTD
- The English Carpenter

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Q96

What is the cost to upgrade round ductwork to rectangular for a Toronto basement ceiling?

Converting round trunk ductwork to rectangular in a Toronto basement typically costs $2,000 to $6,000, depending on the length of the trunk run, the number of branches and fittings, and whether the goal is to gain ceiling height, accommodate a bulkhead, or improve aesthetics for a basement finishing project. For a

straightforward swap of a single 20 to 30 foot trunk line, expect $2,000 to $3,500 including removal of the old round duct and installation of the new rectangular system.

The primary reason GTA homeowners make this change is **ceiling clearance**. A 10-inch round trunk duct hangs 10 inches below the floor joists, while a 20x8 rectangular duct carrying the same airflow hangs only 8 inches — gaining 2 inches of headroom. In Toronto basements where ceiling height is already tight (many older homes have 7-foot or even 6-foot-8 basement ceilings), those 2 inches can make the difference between meeting the Ontario Building Code minimum of 6 feet 5 inches for finished basement ceiling height and falling short. Some homeowners go further with low-profile rectangular ducts — a 24x6 or 28x6 configuration can carry equivalent airflow while hanging only 6 inches below the joists.

The cost breakdown for a typical basement trunk conversion includes: custom rectangular duct fabrication ($15 to $30 per linear foot for material), installation labour ($30 to $60 per linear foot), transition fittings where the new rectangular trunk meets existing round branches ($40 to $80 each, typically 6 to 12 needed), a new supply plenum if the furnace connection needs modification ($200 to $600), sealing all joints with mastic and UL 181 foil tape (included in quality installation), and removal and disposal of the old ductwork ($200 to $500). If the project is part of a basement renovation, the ductwork conversion should happen before framing and drywall to keep costs down.

One important technical consideration: **rectangular duct has more surface area than round duct of equivalent airflow capacity, which means slightly higher friction loss.** A qualified contractor will calculate the equivalent rectangular dimensions using duct sizing tables or Manual D calculations to ensure your HVAC system maintains proper airflow after the conversion. Simply guessing at dimensions or choosing the flattest profile possible can result in undersized ducts that restrict airflow, increase static pressure, create noise, and reduce your furnace and air conditioner efficiency.

For GTA homes with post-war galvanized steel round trunk ducts that are 50 to 70 years old, this conversion is an opportunity to replace aging ductwork with new sealed and insulated rectangular duct — effectively killing two birds with one stone. Old round trunk ducts often have leaky joints, minimal sealing, and surface rust. New rectangular duct with mastic-sealed joints can reduce duct leakage by 20 to 30 percent, improving both comfort and energy efficiency.

Get at least three quotes and make sure each contractor provides the specific rectangular dimensions they plan to use and confirms that airflow will be maintained. Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced sheet metal contractors through the Toronto Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- The Deck Store Inc
- Youbility Inc.
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- A Renovation Company Toronto Corporation

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Q97

How much does it cost to install makeup air ductwork for a commercial kitchen in Toronto?

Make-up air ductwork for a commercial kitchen in Toronto typically costs $5,000 to $20,000 or more, depending on the exhaust hood CFM rating, the length and complexity of the make-up air duct run, whether tempering (heating) of incoming air is required, and the specific requirements of Toronto Public Health and the Ontario Building Code. Small commercial kitchens with a single hood may fall in the $5,000 to $10,000 range, while full-service restaurant kitchens with high-volume exhaust often run $12,000 to $20,000 or higher.

The Ontario Building Code requires make-up air whenever total exhaust capacity exceeds 75 litres per second (approximately 159 CFM). Commercial kitchen exhaust hoods typically range from 1,000 to 4,000 CFM or more, which means **every commercial kitchen in the GTA requires a dedicated make-up air system** — this is not optional. The make-up air unit must be interlocked with the exhaust hood so that make-up air flows whenever the hood is operating, and the incoming air must be tempered during Toronto's heating season to avoid dumping -20 degree Celsius outdoor air directly into the kitchen.

The major cost components include: the make-up air unit itself ($2,000 to $8,000 depending on capacity and whether it includes gas-fired heating, electric heating, or a hot water coil), ductwork from the exterior intake to the kitchen ($1,500 to $5,000 depending on run length and routing), roof or wall penetrations and weatherproof intake hoods ($500 to $1,500), gas piping for a gas-fired tempering coil ($500 to $1,500, TSSA-registered contractor required), electrical wiring and controls ($800 to $2,000, ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor required), and balancing and commissioning ($500 to $1,000).

Commercial kitchen ventilation in Toronto must comply with both the Ontario Building Code Part 6 and the Ontario Fire Code. The duct system must be constructed from minimum 18-gauge galvanized steel for grease-laden exhaust ducts, with welded or soldered seams — mechanical fasteners and duct tape are not permitted on grease exhaust ductwork because grease accumulates at screw points and tape joints, creating fire hazards. Make-up air ducts do not carry grease-laden air and can use standard commercial duct construction, but they must be sized to replace 80 to 100 percent of the exhausted air volume to maintain neutral or slightly negative pressure in the kitchen.

City of Toronto permits are mandatory for commercial kitchen ventilation work. You will need a mechanical permit for the ductwork and ventilation system, a plumbing permit if the hood includes a grease trap connection, and potentially a building permit if structural modifications are needed for duct routing. Permit fees for commercial mechanical work typically run $500 to $1,500. Toronto Public Health also inspects commercial kitchen ventilation as part of their food premises requirements.

Timing matters in the GTA commercial kitchen market — experienced sheet metal contractors who specialize in commercial kitchen ventilation are in high demand, and lead times of 4 to 8 weeks for equipment and scheduling are common. Start the process early in your restaurant buildout timeline. Toronto Ductwork can connect you with qualified contractors experienced in commercial kitchen ventilation through the Toronto Construction Network.

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- Kitchen Land
- Leveloff.LTD
- LMP Scaffolding Services
- Norseman Construction & Development
- Vista Builders Ltd

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Q98

What does it cost to replace flex duct with rigid metal in a GTA home?

Replacing flex duct with rigid metal ductwork in a GTA home typically costs $200 to $600 per run for individual branch replacements, or $3,000 to $8,000 for a whole-house flex-to-rigid conversion, depending on the number of runs, accessibility, and the length of each duct. Most GTA homes built between the 1970s and 2000s have flex duct for branch runs connecting the main trunk to individual room registers, and after 20 to 40 years, much of this flex duct is sagging, kinked, disconnected, or compressed — all of which dramatically reduce airflow.

The per-run cost breakdown is straightforward: rigid round galvanized steel duct runs $10 to $20 per linear foot installed, compared to $8 to $18 per linear foot for flex duct. While the material cost difference is modest, rigid metal duct delivers significantly better airflow performance. A typical 6-inch flex duct branch run has roughly the same friction loss as a 5-inch rigid metal duct because of the corrugated interior surface — meaning flex duct effectively reduces your duct size by about one inch compared to smooth rigid metal. Replacing a 6-inch flex run with a 6-inch rigid run can increase airflow to that room by 15 to 25 percent without any other changes to the system.

For a typical 1,500 to 2,500 square foot GTA home with 10 to 15 flex duct branch runs, a full conversion to rigid metal runs $3,000 to $6,000 if the ducts are accessible in an unfinished basement, or $5,000 to $8,000 if the

runs are in an attic, crawlspace, or enclosed ceiling where access is limited. Attic work in Toronto homes is particularly labour-intensive — GTA attics reach extreme temperatures (50+ degrees in summer, well below freezing in winter), and working in cramped attic spaces with insulation is slow and physically demanding, which drives up labour costs.

Not every flex duct run needs replacement. **Prioritize replacing flex ducts that are kinked or crushed** (reducing airflow by 50 percent or more at each kink), runs that have disconnected from the trunk or register boot (dumping conditioned air into the attic or basement ceiling), runs longer than 25 feet (where flex duct friction losses become severe), and any flex duct with torn or missing vapour barrier in unconditioned spaces (causing condensation and insulation damage). A skilled contractor can assess each run individually and recommend which ones to replace and which are still performing adequately.

When replacing flex with rigid metal in an attic, **insulating the new rigid ducts with R-8 duct wrap is essential** — add $1.50 to $3.00 per square foot for insulation. All joints on new rigid metal ductwork should be mechanically fastened with sheet metal screws and sealed with duct mastic and UL 181 foil tape. This belt-and-suspenders approach to sealing ensures the joints remain airtight through decades of GTA temperature cycling.

Get at least three quotes and ask each contractor to specify which runs they recommend replacing and why. Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced ductwork professionals through the Toronto Construction Network for free estimates.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- Bhogal Metal
- Youbility Inc.
- SIMMCO Inc
- Ideal Heating and Air Conditioning

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Q99

How much should I budget for ductwork when finishing a Toronto basement with a separate zone?

Budget $3,000 to $8,000 for ductwork when finishing a Toronto basement with a separate HVAC zone, with the total depending on whether you are extending your existing duct system with zone dampers or installing a dedicated mini-split or secondary system. A basic duct extension with manual dampers for seasonal adjustment falls at the lower end, while a fully automated zoned system with motorized dampers and a dedicated thermostat pushes toward the higher end.

The ductwork component breaks down into several parts. **Supply ductwork** to deliver conditioned air to the finished basement typically requires 3 to 6 new supply runs with register boots, costing $300 to $800 per register installed — so $1,200 to $4,000 for supply alone. **Return air ductwork** is equally critical and often overlooked in basement finishes. The basement needs at least one dedicated return air duct (ideally two for spaces over 600 square feet), costing $400 to $1,000 per return. **Zone dampers and controls** for a separate basement zone add $1,000 to $3,000, including motorized dampers ($150 to $400 each, typically 2 to 4 needed), a zone control panel ($300 to $600), and a dedicated basement thermostat ($100 to $300).

Toronto basements present specific ductwork challenges that affect cost. Many older GTA homes have a single trunk duct running the length of the basement ceiling, and the existing duct system was sized for the original home — adding a finished basement increases the conditioned floor area by 30 to 50 percent. **Your existing furnace and ductwork may not have the capacity to handle the additional load.** A Manual J heat loss and cooling load calculation ($200 to $400 from an HVAC designer) should be done before committing to a duct-based zoning approach. If the existing system is undersized, you may be better off with a ductless mini-split for the basement ($3,500 to $6,000 installed) rather than trying to squeeze more performance from an undersized duct system.

The Ontario Building Code has specific requirements for finished basement ductwork. Return air cannot be drawn from bathrooms, kitchens, or utility rooms. If the basement includes a bathroom, it needs a dedicated exhaust fan ducted to the exterior ($300 to $800 installed). Ductwork passing through the furnace room or utility room must maintain fire separation requirements. And the ceiling height after ductwork bulkheads must meet the minimum 6 feet 5 inches — this is where the duct routing gets critical. Work with your contractor to plan the duct layout before framing begins so bulkheads can be minimized and ceiling height maximized.

Timing matters for cost efficiency. Ductwork should be the first trade in the basement after framing is roughed in — running ducts before drywall, electrical, and plumbing keeps labour costs 20 to 30 percent lower than retrofitting ducts after finishes are in place. Coordinate with your general contractor to schedule the ductwork rough-in alongside electrical and plumbing rough-in. Toronto Ductwork can connect you with local ductwork contractors experienced in basement finishing projects through the Toronto Construction Network.

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- Kitchen Land
- Leveloff.LTD
- Norseman Construction & Development
- The Deck Store Inc
- The English Carpenter

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Q100

What is the price to install an inline exhaust fan and ductwork for a Toronto bathroom?

Installing an inline exhaust fan with ductwork for a Toronto bathroom typically costs $600 to $1,800, depending on the fan model, duct run length, number of bathrooms served, and whether you are replacing an existing ceiling-mounted fan or installing a completely new exhaust system. A basic single-bathroom inline fan setup runs $600 to $1,000, while a multi-port inline fan serving two or three bathrooms from a single unit costs $1,200 to $1,800.

Inline exhaust fans mount inside the duct run (typically in the attic, between joists, or in a mechanical closet) rather than in the bathroom ceiling. This design offers two major advantages over traditional ceiling-mounted fans: **significantly quieter operation** because the motor is remote from the bathroom (0.3 to 1.0 sones compared to 2.0 to 4.0 sones for ceiling-mounted units), and the ability to serve multiple bathrooms with a single fan using a multi-port configuration. For GTA homeowners renovating bathrooms in older homes where ceiling fan noise is a common complaint, an inline fan is a worthwhile upgrade.

The cost breakdown includes: the inline fan unit itself ($150 to $500 depending on CFM rating and brand — Fantech and Panasonic are the most common in the GTA market), rigid metal ductwork from the bathroom intake grille to the fan and from the fan to the exterior ($10 to $20 per linear foot installed, typically 15 to 30 feet total), an intake grille for the bathroom ceiling ($20 to $50), an exterior wall or roof termination cap ($50 to $150), insulated duct wrap for any sections running through unconditioned attic space ($1.50 to $3.00 per square foot), and electrical wiring and controls ($200 to $500, ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor required).

The Ontario Building Code requires bathroom exhaust fans to provide a minimum of 50 CFM and vent directly to the exterior of the building — **never into the attic, soffit, or crawlspace.** Venting bathroom exhaust into the attic is one of the most common code violations found in GTA homes and causes serious moisture problems including mould growth on roof sheathing, wood rot, and premature shingle failure. If your current bathroom fan vents into the attic, correcting this during an inline fan installation is essential. The duct run should use rigid metal (galvanized steel or aluminum) rather than flex duct wherever possible — rigid duct has lower friction loss, is easier to clean, and lasts longer. Where flex duct is necessary for the final connection, keep it short (under 6 feet), pull it taut, and ensure it slopes toward the exterior to drain any condensation.

For Toronto's climate, insulating the exhaust duct run through the attic is critical. Warm, moist bathroom air travelling through a cold attic duct in winter will produce condensation inside the duct, which drips back through the ceiling grille and stains the bathroom ceiling. Insulating the duct with R-8 duct wrap and ensuring the exterior cap has a damper that closes when the fan is off prevents both condensation and cold air backdraft.

All electrical work for the fan, timer switch, or humidity sensor must be performed by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor. Get matched with a qualified ductwork contractor through Toronto Ductwork for free estimates on your bathroom ventilation project.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- yourCloset.ca
- Vista Builders Ltd
- Olkron Developments
- Ideal Heating and Air Conditioning

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Q101

How much does it cost to add a humidifier bypass duct to an existing Toronto HVAC system?

Adding a bypass humidifier with ductwork to an existing Toronto HVAC system typically costs $400 to $1,200 installed, including the humidifier unit, the bypass duct connecting the supply and return plenums, the water supply line, and labour. A basic bypass humidifier (such as an Aprilaire 400 or GeneralAire 1042) runs $150 to $350 for the unit, with installation labour adding $250 to $600. The bypass duct itself is a relatively simple 6-inch round duct connecting the supply plenum to the return plenum, costing $50 to $150 in materials.

Toronto homeowners deal with brutally dry indoor air every winter. When outdoor temperatures drop to -15 or -20 degrees Celsius, indoor relative humidity in a GTA home without a humidifier can plummet to 15 to 20 percent — well below the recommended 30 to 45 percent range. This causes dry skin, nosebleeds, static electricity, cracking hardwood floors, and splitting wood trim. A bypass humidifier adds moisture to the air stream as it passes through your furnace ductwork, raising indoor humidity to a comfortable level throughout the heating season.

A bypass humidifier works by diverting a small portion of warm supply air through a water-soaked evaporator pad, then returning the now-humidified air to the return side of the system. The bypass duct is the connection that makes this loop possible — it is a 6-inch round duct (typically 2 to 4 feet long) connecting the supply plenum to the return plenum with the humidifier mounted between them. Installation requires cutting two 6-

inch holes in the sheet metal plenums, mounting the humidifier, connecting the bypass duct, running a water supply line from the nearest cold water pipe, and installing a drain line for overflow water.

The installation is straightforward for a qualified HVAC contractor and typically takes 2 to 4 hours. However, there are important considerations for GTA homes. **The humidifier must be set up with a humidistat** (either standalone or integrated into a smart thermostat) that automatically reduces humidity output as outdoor temperatures drop. Over-humidifying in extreme cold causes condensation on windows — a common complaint in Toronto homes. At -20 degrees Celsius, indoor humidity should be kept at 25 to 30 percent maximum to avoid window condensation and potential moisture damage to window frames and surrounding drywall.

One alternative worth considering is a **fan-powered (flow-through) humidifier**, which costs slightly more ($500 to $1,500 installed) but does not require a bypass duct. Fan-powered units have their own small fan that pushes air through the evaporator pad, so they mount directly on the supply or return plenum without needing a duct connection between the two. They also produce 30 to 50 percent more moisture output than bypass models, which can be important for larger GTA homes over 2,500 square feet.

The water supply connection is basic plumbing, but if the humidifier drain needs to connect to the floor drain and routing is complex, add $100 to $300 for plumbing work. No building permit is typically required for adding a humidifier to an existing system, but any electrical wiring should be done properly. Browse HVAC and ductwork contractors in your area through the Toronto Construction Network directory for quotes on your humidifier installation.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Toronto Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Kitchen Land
- Leveloff.LTD
- Focus on Flooring and General Contracting
- LMP Scaffolding Services
- Vista Builders Ltd

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Q102

What is the average cost of sheet metal ductwork fabrication for a custom Toronto home?

Custom sheet metal ductwork fabrication and installation for a custom Toronto home typically costs $8,000 to $25,000 or more, depending on the home's size, the number of zones, ceiling and wall configurations, and the complexity of the duct layout. Custom homes generally cost 30 to 50 percent more for ductwork than production-built homes because the duct system must be designed and fabricated specifically for the unique floor plan, architectural features, and mechanical layout — there are no cookie-cutter solutions.

The cost breaks down into three major components. **Design and engineering** runs $1,000 to $3,000 and includes Manual J heating and cooling load calculations for each room, Manual D duct sizing and layout design, and coordination with the architect and mechanical engineer. This step is non-negotiable for a custom home — guessing at duct sizes in a custom build leads to comfort problems that are extremely expensive to fix after the walls are closed. **Fabrication** of the sheet metal ductwork itself costs $12 to $30 per linear foot for rectangular trunk ducts and $8 to $20 per linear foot for round branch runs, with custom fittings (offsets, transitions, reducers, and register boots) adding $40 to $150 each. A typical 3,000 to 4,000 square foot custom home might have 150 to 300 linear feet of ductwork and 30 to 60 fittings. **Installation labour** in the GTA runs $50 to $90 per hour for experienced sheet metal workers, and a custom home duct installation typically requires 40 to 80 labour hours depending on complexity.

Custom homes often have architectural features that significantly increase ductwork costs. Cathedral ceilings eliminate attic space for duct runs, requiring ducts to be routed through soffits, bulkheads, or between floor joists — adding design complexity and fabrication cost. Open-concept layouts with large great rooms need careful supply register placement and oversized return air to handle the volume. Multi-storey homes require vertical chases for duct risers, which must be coordinated with the structural design. Radiant floor heating in some zones combined with forced air in others requires a hybrid mechanical design. High ceilings (10 to 12 feet) need higher supply air velocities to push conditioned air down to the occupied zone.

For exposed ductwork in modern or industrial-style custom homes — increasingly popular in GTA new builds — **spiral round duct is the preferred choice** at $10 to $25 per linear foot installed. Spiral duct has a clean, architectural appearance and can be powder-coated in custom colours ($5 to $10 per linear foot additional). Exposed ductwork installations require cleaner fabrication, polished welds, and visible hangers, which adds 15 to 25 percent to the cost compared to concealed installations.

Ontario Building Code compliance adds specific requirements. Fire dampers are required at all duct penetrations through fire-rated assemblies. Make-up air is required if any exhaust hood exceeds 75 litres per second. All ductwork must be sealed with mastic and UL 181 tape. A mechanical permit from the City of Toronto or your municipality is required, typically $400 to $800 for a custom home.

Start the ductwork design process early — ideally during the architectural design phase, not after framing. Get matched with experienced sheet metal contractors through Toronto Ductwork and the Toronto Construction Network for detailed quotes on your custom home project.

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Q103

How much does it cost to install concealed ductwork in a Toronto home with a flat roof?

Installing concealed ductwork in a Toronto flat-roof home typically costs $8,000 to $20,000 for a full system, depending on the size of the home, the number of supply and return runs, and how much structural modification is needed to hide everything within walls, soffits, and ceiling cavities. Flat-roof homes present a unique challenge because there is no attic space to run ducts through — the ceiling joists sit directly below the roof deck with minimal clearance, sometimes as little as 6 to 10 inches of insulation space that cannot be compromised.

In Toronto, flat-roof homes are common in mid-century neighbourhoods across Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, and parts of the old city. Many of these homes were built in the 1950s through 1970s with original galvanized steel ductwork that is now 50 to 70 years old and often undersized for modern cooling loads. When these systems need replacement, homeowners face a real design challenge: where do you put new ducts when there is no attic and the ceilings are already low? The answer usually involves a combination of strategies — running trunk lines through the basement ceiling, using interior wall cavities or purpose-built bulkheads for vertical risers to upper floors, and creating strategic soffits in hallways or closets to conceal horizontal runs. Each soffit or bulkhead adds $500 to $2,000 in framing and finishing costs on top of the duct installation itself.

The concealment work is often the most expensive part of the project. The ductwork materials and installation might run $4,000 to $10,000, but the framing, drywalling, taping, mudding, and painting of soffits and bulkheads can add another $3,000 to $8,000. Some homeowners opt for a dropped ceiling in the basement to conceal trunk lines, which is more affordable at $3 to $6 per square foot but reduces headroom. If ceiling height is already tight, a better option is to use low-profile oval duct or rectangular duct that fits within shallow joist bays — oval duct in a 3.25-inch by 14-inch profile can fit where round duct cannot.

Condensation is a serious concern in flat-roof homes because ducts running near the roof deck in summer are exposed to extreme heat on the other side of the insulation. Any supply duct carrying cooled air through a warm ceiling cavity must be insulated to a minimum of R-8 with a proper vapour barrier to prevent sweating. In Toronto's humid summers with humidex values above 40, uninsulated concealed ducts will drip condensation inside the ceiling, causing mould and water damage that you will not see until it has spread significantly.

A building permit is required for a new duct system installation in Toronto, with permit fees typically running $200 to $800. The duct system must be designed using Manual D calculations to ensure proper sizing and airflow delivery to each room. Get at least three quotes from experienced sheet metal contractors, and ask specifically about their experience with flat-roof homes — not every ductwork installer has dealt with the space constraints these homes

present. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals who handle concealed duct installations through the Toronto Construction Network.

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- Kitchen Land
- Norseman Construction & Development
- yourCloset.ca
- Bhogal Metal
- The Deck Store Inc

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Q104

What is the price to install ductwork for radiant ceiling panels in a Toronto commercial space?

Installing ductwork for radiant ceiling panel systems in a Toronto commercial space typically costs $10 to $25 per square foot of conditioned ceiling area for the duct distribution network, with total project costs ranging from $15,000 to $60,000 or more depending on the size of the space, panel type, and integration with existing HVAC infrastructure. However, it is important to clarify that radiant ceiling panels themselves are primarily hydronic (water-based) systems rather than ducted air systems, so the ductwork component in these projects is usually for supplemental ventilation and fresh air delivery rather than for the radiant panels themselves.

In a typical Toronto commercial radiant ceiling installation, the radiant panels handle the heating and cooling loads through hot or chilled water circulating in overhead panels, while a separate duct system delivers the required ventilation air per the Ontario Building Code. This ventilation ductwork is sized for fresh air requirements — typically 0.06 CFM per square foot of floor area plus occupant-based ventilation rates per ASHRAE 62.1, which Ontario references. The duct system for ventilation in a radiant panel setup is significantly smaller than a conventional all-air HVAC system because the ducts are only handling ventilation air, not the full heating and cooling load. The ductwork portion alone — supply and return runs, diffusers, fresh air intake, and exhaust — typically runs $5,000 to $25,000 for a small to mid-size commercial space of 1,000 to 5,000 square feet.

For the GTA market, expect total installed costs including panels, piping, and ductwork to run $30 to $60 per square foot. Commercial spaces in downtown Toronto, Mississauga, and Markham are increasingly adopting radiant ceiling systems for offices, medical clinics, and retail because they offer superior comfort with no drafts, quieter operation than forced-air systems, and reduced ceiling height requirements compared to large commercial duct systems. The ductwork for these installations is typically spiral round duct at $10 to $25 per linear foot, sized much smaller than conventional systems since it carries only ventilation air.

Permitting for commercial mechanical installations in Toronto is more involved than residential work. You will need mechanical permits from the City of Toronto Building Division, and the design typically requires stamped engineering drawings from a licensed Professional Engineer. Permit fees for commercial mechanical work can run $1,000 to $3,000 or more depending on project scope. Any gas connections require TSSA-registered contractors, and all electrical work for controls, thermostats, and fan units must be performed by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor.

This type of project requires a mechanical contractor experienced in both radiant systems and commercial ductwork design. Get at least three detailed quotes that break out the radiant panel installation, piping, ductwork, controls, and permitting as separate line items so you can compare accurately. The Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com can help you find HVAC contractors experienced with commercial installations in the GTA.

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Q105

How much does it cost to upgrade a Toronto home from single-zone to multi-zone ductwork?

Upgrading a Toronto home from single-zone to multi-zone ductwork typically costs $3,000 to $12,000, depending on the number of zones, the type of zoning equipment, and how much modification your existing duct system requires. A basic two-zone system with motorized dampers and a zone control panel runs $3,000 to $6,000 installed, while a three- or four-zone system with upgraded ductwork and a bypass damper ranges from $6,000 to $12,000.

The core of a zoning system consists of motorized zone dampers installed in the trunk or branch ducts, a zone control panel that manages the dampers based on thermostat calls, and individual thermostats for each zone. Motorized zone dampers cost $150 to $400 each installed, depending on duct size and damper quality. The zone control panel itself runs $500 to $1,500 for a quality unit, and each additional thermostat adds $150 to $400 including wiring. The electrical work for thermostat wiring and damper motor connections must be done by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor in Ontario.

Where costs escalate is in the duct modifications needed to make zoning work properly. A single-zone duct system was designed to deliver all its airflow all the time. When you close dampers to one zone, that airflow has to go somewhere — if it has nowhere to go, static pressure spikes in the system, the blower motor strains, and air leaks increase at every joint. Most zoning installations require a bypass damper and bypass duct that redirects excess air back to the return side when zones close. This bypass duct and damper adds $500 to $1,500. In some cases, especially in older Toronto homes from the 1950s through 1980s across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke, the existing ductwork is already undersized for cooling loads, and adding zone dampers without addressing undersized trunk lines just makes existing airflow problems worse.

For homes with two storeys — which is the most common zoning scenario in the GTA — a two-zone system with the upstairs and downstairs on separate zones is the most popular and cost-effective upgrade. This solves the classic Toronto comfort complaint of the second floor being 3 to 5 degrees warmer than the main floor in summer. The thermostat upstairs calls for more cooling during hot afternoons while the damper to the cooler main floor partially closes, directing more conditioned air where it is needed most.

A modern alternative to traditional zone dampers is a variable-speed or multi-stage furnace paired with a communicating thermostat system, which adjusts airflow and output based on demand rather than using dampers. This approach costs more upfront — $5,000 to $10,000 for the furnace upgrade alone — but avoids the static pressure issues of damper-based zoning.

A building permit may be required if the zoning project involves significant duct modifications or new trunk lines. Get at least three quotes and ask each contractor how they plan to handle bypass air and static pressure management — this is the detail that separates a properly engineered zoning system from one that creates new problems. Toronto Ductwork can match you with experienced HVAC contractors for free through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q106

What is the cost to install sound-attenuating ductwork in a Toronto home theatre room?

Installing sound-attenuating ductwork for a home theatre room in a Toronto home typically costs $1,500 to $5,000, depending on the length of duct runs, the level of noise reduction required, and whether you are modifying existing ductwork or installing a dedicated system from scratch. Achieving a truly quiet home theatre — with background noise levels at or below NC-25 (Noise Criteria 25), which is the standard for premium theatre rooms — requires attention to duct sizing, layout, lining, and register selection.

The primary source of HVAC noise in a home theatre is air velocity through the ducts and turbulence at fittings, dampers, and registers. The most effective strategy is to oversize the ducts serving the theatre room, which reduces air velocity and therefore noise. Standard residential duct sizing targets air velocity around 600 to 900 feet per minute, but for a home theatre you want 400 to 500 FPM maximum. This typically means stepping up one or two duct sizes for the branch run to the theatre — for example, using an 8-inch round duct where a 6-inch would normally suffice. Oversizing the duct run adds $200 to $600 in material and labour depending on length.

Duct liner and sound attenuators are where the real noise reduction happens. Acoustically lined duct — galvanized steel duct with 1-inch fibreglass liner bonded to the interior — absorbs sound energy as air travels through, reducing both equipment noise from the furnace and airflow noise. Lined duct costs roughly 30 to 50 percent more than standard unlined duct, adding $300 to $800 for a typical theatre run. For even greater noise reduction, rectangular sound attenuator silencers can be installed inline in the duct — these are essentially mufflers for your HVAC system, containing sound-absorbing baffles. Quality sound attenuators cost $200 to $600 each, and you will want one on both the supply and return runs serving the theatre, so budget $400 to $1,200 for the pair.

Return air is often the bigger noise problem in home theatres. Many Toronto homes, especially those built in the 1970s through 1990s across Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, and Vaughan, have undersized return air systems. An undersized return grille in a sealed theatre room creates a whistling or rushing sound that ruins the viewing experience. Installing an oversized return air grille — or better yet, a transfer duct through the wall with sound-absorbing lining — keeps return airflow quiet. A lined transfer duct costs $300 to $800 installed.

Additional details matter for a professional result. Use low-velocity supply diffusers rated for quiet operation — linear slot diffusers or large-format ceiling diffusers with adjustable pattern vanes run $50 to $200 each and make a noticeable difference compared to standard stamped-steel registers. Flex duct connections at the register boot also help isolate vibration noise, and a short 3-to-5-foot section of flex duct at the end of a rigid metal run is acceptable practice for noise isolation.

This type of project benefits from a contractor who understands both HVAC design and acoustics. Get quotes from ductwork contractors who have experience with home theatre or recording studio installations. Toronto Ductwork can help you find qualified professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q107

How much does emergency ductwork repair cost on a weekend or after hours in the GTA?

Emergency ductwork repairs on weekends or after hours in the GTA typically cost $300 to $1,200, which includes a service call fee of $150 to $350 on top of the standard repair cost. After-hours and weekend rates are generally 1.5 to 2 times the regular hourly rate, with most GTA HVAC and sheet metal contractors charging $120 to $200 per hour for emergency calls compared to $75 to $130 per hour during regular business hours.

The most common ductwork emergencies that prompt after-hours calls are a disconnected or collapsed duct run that leaves part of the home without heating or cooling, a damaged exhaust vent allowing carbon monoxide concerns, a supply duct that has fallen and is blocking a hallway or damaging a ceiling, or a dryer vent that has disconnected inside a wall creating a fire hazard. A straightforward reconnection of a disconnected duct joint in an accessible basement might take an hour and cost $300 to $500 total including the service call. A more involved repair — such as replacing a crushed or corroded section of trunk duct, reattaching a fallen attic duct run, or addressing a duct that has separated at the furnace plenum — can run $500 to $1,200 with after-hours pricing.

Before calling for emergency service, consider whether the situation is truly urgent. If a single room has lost airflow but the rest of the house is heating or cooling normally, that is uncomfortable but not an emergency — you can wait for a regular weekday appointment and save $150 to $350 on the service call premium. True emergencies

include situations where the entire system is not functioning because a trunk duct has disconnected, where there is a potential carbon monoxide risk from a damaged combustion air or exhaust duct, where a dryer vent failure creates an immediate fire hazard, or where a duct failure is causing active water damage from condensation pouring onto finished surfaces.

Toronto's winter climate makes some ductwork failures more urgent than they would be in milder regions. When it is minus 15 to minus 20 degrees Celsius outside and the furnace cannot deliver heat because the supply plenum has separated, you cannot wait until Monday — pipes can freeze, and the home becomes uninhabitable quickly. In these situations, the emergency service call fee is money well spent.

To minimize emergency costs, ask about the service call fee upfront before the technician dispatches. Some companies waive the service call fee if you proceed with the repair, while others charge it regardless. Get a verbal estimate for the repair itself before authorizing the work — emergency situations can lead to pressure to approve inflated pricing. If the repair is not safety-critical, ask whether a temporary fix can get you through until regular business hours when a permanent repair will cost less. For example, a disconnected flex duct branch can sometimes be temporarily reattached with foil tape as a short-term measure until a proper mechanical connection with mastic and draw bands can be made during a regular appointment.

Keep your HVAC contractor's after-hours number saved in your phone before you need it. Toronto Ductwork can help you find reliable local ductwork professionals through the Toronto Construction Network before an emergency arises.

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Q108

What is the price to install a condensate drain for ductwork in a humid Toronto basement?

Installing a condensate drain for ductwork in a Toronto basement typically costs $200 to $800, depending on the scope of work, the length of the drain run, and whether a condensate pump is needed. A simple gravity drain from a drip pan beneath sweating ductwork to a nearby floor drain runs $200 to $400, while a more involved installation requiring a condensate pump, longer drain lines, or multiple collection points ranges from $500 to $800.

Condensation on basement ductwork is one of the most common issues in GTA homes, especially during Toronto's humid summers when humidex values regularly exceed 40. When your air conditioner is running, supply ducts carry cooled air at roughly 12 to 15 degrees Celsius through basement spaces where the air temperature might be 20 to 25 degrees and humidity is high. If those ducts are uninsulated or poorly insulated, moisture from the surrounding air condenses on the cold duct surfaces and drips onto whatever is below — finished ceilings, stored belongings, electrical panels, or the floor. Left unaddressed, this creates mould, water staining, rust that corrodes the ducts, and potential damage to anything stored beneath.

The right solution involves both a condensate drain and addressing the root cause — inadequate duct insulation. Installing a drip pan and drain line without insulating the ducts is treating the symptom, not the problem. Wrapping the cold supply ducts with R-8 fibreglass duct insulation with a vapour barrier costs $1.50 to $3.00 per square foot installed and dramatically reduces or eliminates condensation in most cases. For a typical basement with 40 to 60 linear feet of supply ductwork, insulation runs $600 to $1,800. Combined with a condensate drain as a backup, the total project cost is $800 to $2,500 — but you solve the problem properly rather than just managing the water.

If the ducts are already insulated but condensation persists, the issue is usually a vapour barrier failure — gaps, tears, or unsealed seams in the insulation's foil facing allow humid air to reach the cold duct surface behind the insulation. Repairing or replacing damaged vapour barrier sections costs $200 to $600. Another common cause is excessive basement humidity, which a dehumidifier running at 45 to 50 percent relative humidity can help control at a cost of $250 to $500 for a quality unit.

For the drain installation itself, a condensate pump is needed when there is no floor drain nearby or when the drain must route upward before running to a sink or drain point. Condensate pumps cost $100 to $300 for the unit, plus $100 to $300 for installation and tubing. The pump collects water in a small reservoir and pumps it to a drain or utility sink. These pumps require periodic maintenance — cleaning the reservoir and checking the float switch — and should be replaced every 3 to 5 years.

This is generally a straightforward project for an experienced ductwork or HVAC contractor, and most can complete it in half a day. No building permit is typically required for adding a condensate drain to existing ductwork. Get two or three quotes and make sure the contractor inspects your duct insulation as part of the assessment — a good contractor will address the insulation issue rather than just installing a drain. Toronto Ductwork can match you with local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q109

How much does it cost to install ductwork for a Toronto home with hydronic heating conversion?

Installing a complete duct system when converting a Toronto home from hydronic (hot water baseboard or radiator) heating to forced-air costs $8,000 to $20,000 for the ductwork alone, with the total conversion project — including a new furnace, air conditioning, and ductwork — ranging from $15,000 to $35,000. This is one of the most involved residential HVAC projects because hydronic homes have no existing ductwork whatsoever, so every supply run, return duct, trunk line, and plenum must be designed and built from scratch.

Hydronic-to-forced-air conversions are extremely common in Toronto, particularly in older neighbourhoods like the Annex, Roncesvalles, High Park, Leslieville, the Danforth, and Leaside, where post-war homes and century homes were built with hot water boilers and cast iron radiators or baseboard convectors. Homeowners convert for two primary reasons: they want central air conditioning, which requires ductwork, and modern high-efficiency furnaces combined with ductwork offer better energy efficiency than aging boilers. The challenge is finding space for ducts in homes that were never designed to have them.

The duct layout in a conversion project is the biggest cost driver. In a typical two-storey Toronto home with a basement, the trunk line runs through the basement ceiling, supply branches rise through interior walls or purpose-built chases to reach upper floors, and return air ducts run parallel routes back down. The basement is relatively straightforward — trunk duct along the ceiling joists with supply boots dropping down to floor registers. But getting ducts to the second floor requires cutting into walls, building closet chases, or creating soffits in first-floor ceilings, each adding $500 to $2,000 per vertical run in carpentry and finishing costs on top of the duct installation. A two-storey home typically needs 6 to 10 supply runs to the second floor, so the structural and finishing work alone can add $3,000 to $10,000.

Many Toronto contractors offer a high-velocity small-duct system as an alternative for hydronic conversions. Systems like Unico or SpacePak use 2-inch flexible supply tubes instead of standard 6- to 8-inch ducts, making them far easier to snake through existing walls and ceilings without major renovation. High-velocity systems cost $12,000 to $25,000 for the complete installation including the air handler, but they avoid the extensive drywall work and bulkheads that standard ductwork requires. The trade-off is slightly higher operating noise and the need for a compatible air handler rather than a standard furnace.

Ontario Building Code requirements add to the project scope. A new forced-air system requires a building permit from the City of Toronto, typically $300 to $800 in permit fees. The duct system must be designed using Manual D calculations based on Manual J heating and cooling load analysis. Any gas furnace installation or gas line work requires a TSSA-registered contractor. Electrical work for the thermostat, air handler, and air conditioning

condenser requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor. The old boiler must be properly decommissioned, which includes capping gas and water lines — budget $500 to $1,500 for boiler removal and disposal.

Get at least three quotes from contractors experienced specifically in hydronic-to-forced-air conversions, as this is a specialty project that not every HVAC installer handles regularly. Toronto Ductwork can connect you with experienced local professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q110

What is the average cost to add a duct booster fan for a weak room in a Toronto home?

Adding a duct booster fan to improve airflow to a weak room in a Toronto home typically costs $200 to $700 installed, depending on the type of booster fan, duct size, and whether electrical wiring needs to be run to the installation location. An inline duct booster fan — which installs inside the duct run — costs $100 to $300 for the unit itself plus $100 to $400 for installation and wiring. Register booster fans that sit on top of a floor or wall register are a simpler option at $40 to $150, require no installation beyond plugging into an outlet, but are less effective.

Before investing in a booster fan, it is worth understanding why the room has weak airflow in the first place. In many Toronto homes — particularly those built in the 1960s through 1990s across Scarborough, North York, Mississauga, Brampton, and Markham — the most common causes of poor airflow to individual rooms are undersized branch ducts, excessively long duct runs with too many bends, crushed or kinked flex duct in attic or crawlspace sections, disconnected duct joints hidden behind finished walls, or a dirty air filter restricting overall system airflow. A booster fan can mask these problems, but it does not fix them. If the branch duct to the weak

room is only 4 inches in diameter when it should be 6 inches, a booster fan will help slightly but never fully solve the airflow deficit.

Inline duct booster fans are the most effective type. These mount inside the branch duct between the trunk line and the register, pulling additional air through the run. Quality models from manufacturers like Tjernlund or Fantech move 100 to 250 CFM and cost $100 to $300 for the fan unit. Installation involves cutting into the duct to insert the fan, sealing all connections with mastic and UL 181 foil tape, and running electrical power to the fan. The electrical work — wiring the fan to operate when the furnace blower runs, typically using a current-sensing relay on the furnace circuit — must be done by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor in Ontario. The electrical portion adds $100 to $300 to the total project cost depending on the distance from the nearest circuit.

Register booster fans are the budget option. These units sit directly over a floor or wall register and use a small fan to pull air from the duct into the room. They plug into a standard outlet and have a built-in thermostat that activates the fan when airflow is detected. At $40 to $150, they are the cheapest solution, but they add some noise and only modestly increase airflow. They work best for rooms that are slightly underserved rather than severely starved of air.

A smarter long-term approach in many cases is to have a contractor diagnose the root cause of the weak airflow. A duct inspection and airflow test costs $150 to $400 and may reveal a crushed flex duct, disconnected joint, or closed damper that can be fixed for less than the cost of a booster fan while providing better results. If you do proceed with a booster fan, make sure the installer checks that the trunk duct feeding the branch has adequate capacity — boosting airflow to one room can starve adjacent rooms if the trunk is already at capacity. Toronto Ductwork can help you find a ductwork professional to diagnose and solve airflow problems through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q111

How much does it cost to seal and insulate ductwork in a Toronto home attic to meet code?

Sealing and insulating attic ductwork in a Toronto home to meet Ontario Building Code requirements typically costs $2,000 to $6,000, depending on the amount of ductwork, accessibility, and current condition of the ducts. For a typical GTA home with 60 to 100 linear feet of attic ductwork including trunk and branch runs, expect to pay $2,500 to $5,000 for professional sealing and insulation that meets code minimums.

Attic ductwork in Toronto homes faces the most extreme conditions of any duct location in the house. In summer, attic temperatures regularly exceed 50 to 60 degrees Celsius, while in winter they can drop to minus 20 or colder — nearly matching outdoor temperatures. Supply ducts carrying cooled air at 12 to 15 degrees Celsius through a 55-degree attic will sweat profusely with condensation unless properly insulated with a vapour barrier. In winter, heated air at 45 to 50 degrees flowing through ducts in a minus 15-degree attic loses enormous energy before reaching living spaces. Studies consistently show that uninsulated, leaky attic ductwork wastes 25 to 40 percent of heating and cooling energy — sealing and insulating attic ducts is one of the highest-return energy upgrades a Toronto homeowner can make.

The sealing component typically costs $1,500 to $3,500. Every joint, seam, connection, and takeoff in the attic ductwork must be sealed with duct mastic or UL 181-rated foil tape — never grey cloth duct tape, which dries out and fails within 2 to 5 years in GTA temperature extremes. For ductwork that is difficult to access or has numerous small leaks throughout, Aeroseal — a patented process that seals ducts from the inside using aerosolized polymer particles — costs $1,500 to $3,500 for the whole house and is highly effective for hard-to-reach attic runs. Manual sealing with mastic on accessible joints runs $1,500 to $2,500 depending on the number of connections.

Insulation adds $1,000 to $3,000 on top of sealing costs. The Ontario Building Code and the Ontario energy code require a minimum of R-8 insulation on all ducts in unconditioned spaces, which includes attics. R-8 fibreglass duct wrap with a foil vapour barrier costs $1.50 to $3.00 per square foot installed. For 80 linear feet of 8-inch round duct, that works out to approximately 170 square feet of duct surface, or $250 to $500 in material plus $750 to $1,500 in labour. Rectangular trunk duct has more surface area per foot and costs proportionally more to wrap. The vapour barrier must be continuous and sealed at all seams with foil tape — any gap allows humid air to reach the cold duct surface and causes condensation behind the insulation, which is worse than no insulation at all because the moisture is hidden.

Working in a Toronto attic is physically demanding and potentially hazardous — extreme heat in summer, limited space, and the risk of stepping through the ceiling. This is not a recommended DIY project. Professional contractors use proper support boards, lighting, and safety equipment. A building permit is generally not required for insulating

and sealing existing ductwork, but if the project includes significant duct modifications, check with your local building department. Get at least three quotes and ask each contractor to specify the R-value of insulation they will use and their sealing method. Toronto Ductwork can connect you with qualified professionals through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q112

What is the price to install a powered fresh air damper on Toronto home ductwork?

Installing a powered fresh air damper on a Toronto home's ductwork typically costs $500 to $1,500, depending on the damper type, duct modifications required, and the complexity of the control wiring. The damper unit itself ranges from $150 to $400, with installation labour adding $300 to $1,000 depending on where the fresh air intake is located and how it connects to the existing duct system.

A powered fresh air damper — also called a motorized fresh air intake damper — is an electrically operated damper installed in a duct that connects the outdoors to the return air side of your HVAC system. When the furnace or air handler runs, the damper opens and draws a controlled amount of fresh outdoor air into the system, diluting indoor pollutants, reducing carbon dioxide levels, and helping maintain positive pressure to prevent uncontrolled infiltration through cracks and gaps. When the system shuts off, the damper closes to prevent cold winter air or hot summer air from entering the home. This is particularly important in Toronto, where winter temperatures regularly drop below minus 15 degrees Celsius — an open fresh air duct without a motorized damper would allow freezing air to pour into the home continuously.

Modern Toronto homes are often tight enough to need mechanical ventilation. Homes built after 2000 across Vaughan, Markham, Brampton, Mississauga, and other rapidly growing GTA suburbs are constructed with better air barriers and insulation than older homes, which is great for energy efficiency but can trap stale air, moisture, cooking odours, and volatile organic compounds indoors. The Ontario Building Code requires mechanical ventilation for new construction, and a powered fresh air damper connected to the furnace is one of the simplest and most affordable ways to meet this requirement in existing homes that lack an HRV or ERV.

The installation involves cutting a round opening through the exterior wall or rim joist, installing an insulated duct from the exterior to the return air plenum, mounting the motorized damper in the duct, and wiring the damper motor to operate with the furnace blower. The exterior penetration needs a proper wall cap with a screen to keep out insects and debris, plus weatherproof sealing around the duct. The duct running through unconditioned space must be insulated to R-8 minimum to prevent condensation in summer and heat loss in winter. The electrical wiring — connecting the damper motor to the furnace control board or a relay — must be done by an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor in Ontario, which typically adds $100 to $300 to the project.

For Toronto homeowners wanting more control over indoor air quality, an HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) is a superior but more expensive option at $2,500 to $5,000 installed. An HRV recovers 70 to 80 percent of the heat from outgoing stale air and transfers it to the incoming fresh air, dramatically reducing the energy penalty of ventilation. A powered fresh air damper provides no heat recovery — cold outdoor air enters at whatever

temperature it is outside and must be heated by the furnace, adding to winter heating costs. However, for homeowners on a budget, a powered fresh air damper at $500 to $1,500 is a practical and affordable step toward better indoor air quality.

This is a straightforward project for an experienced HVAC contractor and typically takes half a day. No building permit is usually required for adding a fresh air damper to an existing system. Toronto Ductwork can help you find a qualified local contractor through the Toronto Construction Network.

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Q113

How much does it cost to install return air pathways in a renovated Toronto Victorian home?

Installing return air pathways in a renovated Toronto Victorian home typically costs $2,500 to $8,000, depending on how many rooms need returns, how the home is configured, and whether you're adding fully ducted returns or transfer grilles to supplement an existing single-return setup.

Most Victorian-era homes in Toronto neighbourhoods like the Annex, Cabbagetown, Parkdale, and Riverdale were built with gravity-fed heating systems that had no return air ductwork at all, or at best a single large return grille on the main floor. When these homes were converted to forced-air heating and cooling decades ago, the installer usually added one central return and called it a day. The result is a system that starves for air — bedrooms with closed doors get stuffy and hot in summer because conditioned air is being pushed in through supply registers but has no pathway back to the furnace. This creates positive pressure in bedrooms and negative pressure near the return, pulling unconditioned air through every crack and gap in the old building envelope.

Adding dedicated return air ducts to individual rooms is the gold standard but also the most expensive approach in a Victorian home. Running new return ductwork through plaster-and-lath walls, around balloon-framed cavities, and through finished ceilings typically costs $500 to $1,200 per room for duct, register boot, grille, and finishing. For a three-bedroom Victorian, expect $1,500 to $3,600 just for the bedroom returns, plus $800 to $1,500 for a basement return if one doesn't exist. Add another $500 to $1,500 for tying into the existing return plenum and potentially upsizing it to handle the additional airflow.

Transfer grilles and jump ducts are a more affordable alternative at $150 to $400 per room. A jump duct is a short insulated flex duct connecting two rooms through the ceiling or wall cavity above a door, allowing return air to flow from a closed bedroom back to the hallway where the central return is located. Transfer grilles are simple louvred openings that serve the same purpose. These solutions cost a fraction of full return ductwork and dramatically improve comfort, though they're not as effective as dedicated returns.

Victorian homes present unique challenges that drive costs higher than average. Plaster walls are difficult to cut without cracking, balloon framing creates fire-stopping concerns that may require permits and inspection, and the irregular floor plans and room layouts of these homes rarely allow straight duct runs. If the home has had a recent renovation with insulated walls and modern drywall, routing ductwork is somewhat easier, but you may still need soffits or bulkheads in certain areas to conceal the runs.

Before any work begins, a qualified HVAC contractor should measure the static pressure of your existing system to determine whether the blower motor and existing trunk ductwork can handle the additional return air volume. In many older Toronto homes, the return trunk itself is undersized and needs to be enlarged — a project that adds $500 to $2,000 depending on the run. The contractor should also check for asbestos on any existing ductwork or pipe insulation before cutting into walls or ceilings, since homes built before 1980 frequently have asbestos-containing materials. Professional asbestos testing costs $200 to $400, and abatement adds $2,000 to $5,000 if found.

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Q114

What is the average cost for a Toronto HVAC contractor to do a complete duct leakage test?

A complete duct leakage test in a Toronto home typically costs $300 to $700, with most GTA contractors charging between $400 and $600 for a standard residential test using calibrated equipment. This test measures exactly how much conditioned air your duct system is losing before it reaches your living spaces.

The industry-standard method is the **duct blaster test**, which uses a calibrated fan and digital manometer to pressurize your duct system and measure total air leakage in cubic feet per minute (CFM). The technician seals all registers and grilles, connects the duct blaster to a main supply or return opening, and pressurizes the system to 25 pascals — the standard test pressure. The equipment then measures how much air is leaking through gaps, unsealed joints, disconnected runs, and failed tape. A well-sealed duct system should leak less than 4% of total system airflow. Many older GTA homes leak 20 to 40% of their conditioned air, which means you're paying to heat and cool your attic, crawlspace, and wall cavities.

Some contractors offer a **two-part test** — total leakage and leakage to the outside — which provides more useful information. Total leakage includes air escaping into conditioned spaces (less wasteful) and air escaping into unconditioned spaces like attics and garages (very wasteful). This more detailed test may run $500 to $700 but gives you a clearer picture of where your energy dollars are going.

When a duct leakage test makes financial sense depends on your situation. If you're experiencing uneven temperatures, high energy bills, excessive dust, or rooms that never seem comfortable despite a properly functioning furnace and air conditioner, a duct leakage test can identify whether your ductwork is the culprit. The test often pays for itself quickly — a home losing 30% of its airflow through duct leaks is wasting roughly $400 to $800 per year in heating and cooling costs in the GTA market. Sealing those leaks with professional mastic application ($1,500 to $4,000) or Aeroseal ($1,500 to $3,500) typically delivers a two- to four-year payback.

Many Toronto HVAC contractors will **include the duct leakage test at no extra charge** if you hire them to perform duct sealing or a complete duct system upgrade — so it's worth asking. Some energy audit programs also include duct testing as part of a comprehensive home energy assessment, which may qualify for rebates through the Enbridge Home Efficiency Rebate program or the Canada Greener Homes initiative.

Post-war homes in Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke with original 1950s and 1960s galvanized ductwork almost always fail duct leakage tests dramatically. Decades of freeze-thaw cycling in the GTA climate loosen joints, and many of these homes use panned joist cavities as return air plenums — essentially sheet metal nailed to the bottom of floor joists — which are inherently leaky and impossible to seal effectively. If your test reveals panned joist returns, replacing them with proper ducted returns is far more effective than attempting to seal them.

Get matched with a ductwork contractor who offers duct leakage testing through the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac.

Q115

How much does it cost to install ductwork for a second furnace in a large GTA home?

Installing a complete duct system for a second furnace in a large GTA home typically costs $8,000 to $20,000 for the ductwork alone, not including the furnace and air conditioner themselves. The total project cost including equipment, ductwork, electrical, gas piping, and permits generally runs $15,000 to $35,000 depending on the home's size, layout, and complexity.

Large GTA homes — particularly those over 3,000 square feet or homes with three or more storeys — often need two separate HVAC zones because a single furnace and duct system simply cannot deliver consistent comfort throughout the entire house. The physics are straightforward: hot air rises, and a single system trying to keep a basement at 21 degrees Celsius while also cooling a third-floor bedroom in July is fighting a losing battle. A second furnace with its own dedicated ductwork gives each zone independent temperature control.

The ductwork cost for the second system depends heavily on where the new furnace is located and how the home is configured. The most common setup in large GTA homes is a basement furnace serving the main floor and basement, with a second furnace in the attic serving the upper floors. Attic installations are more expensive because the ductwork runs through unconditioned space and requires R-8 minimum insulation on all supply and return runs to prevent condensation in summer and heat loss in winter. An attic duct system for upper floors typically costs $10,000 to $20,000 installed, while a basement system for main and lower floors runs $6,000 to $14,000 because the runs are shorter and more accessible.

The breakdown typically looks like this for a second-zone duct system: supply plenum fabrication and installation at $400 to $600, return plenum at $300 to $500, main trunk lines at $12 to $30 per linear foot for rectangular galvanized steel, branch runs at $8 to $20 per linear foot for round duct, register boots at $15 to $40 each, and supply and return grilles at $20 to $80 each. A typical upper-floor zone might need 8 to 12 supply runs and 4 to 6 return runs. Add $1,500 to $3,000 for duct insulation if running through the attic, plus $500 to $1,500 for mastic sealing of all joints.

Permit and trade costs add up quickly on a dual-furnace project. You'll need a building permit from your municipality ($400 to $800 in the City of Toronto), a TSSA-registered contractor for all gas piping and furnace connections, and an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor for the dedicated electrical circuit, thermostat wiring, and any associated fan or damper wiring. Gas piping from the meter to the new furnace location typically costs $800 to $2,500 depending on the run length.

In newer GTA subdivisions across Vaughan, Brampton, and Markham, many large homes were built with two furnaces from the start, but budget-conscious builders sometimes installed undersized ductwork for the second

zone. If you're adding a second furnace to an existing home that was built with only one, the ductwork design should be based on proper Manual J load calculations and Manual D duct sizing — not guesswork. An experienced HVAC contractor will calculate the heating and cooling loads for each zone separately and design the ductwork accordingly.

Need help finding an HVAC contractor experienced with dual-furnace installations? Browse ductwork contractors in the Toronto Construction Network directory at torontoconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=hvac.

Q116

What is the price to install a barometric relief damper in a Toronto commercial duct system?

Installing a barometric relief damper in a Toronto commercial duct system typically costs $800 to $3,500, depending on the damper size, mounting location, and whether modifications to the existing ductwork or building envelope are required. For a straightforward installation on an existing duct opening, expect $800 to $1,500. More complex installations requiring new duct penetrations, structural modifications, or integration with building automation systems run $2,000 to $3,500.

A barometric relief damper is a gravity-operated damper that opens automatically when building pressure exceeds a set point, allowing excess air to escape and preventing over-pressurization. In commercial buildings, these are commonly needed when large exhaust systems, kitchen hoods, or make-up air units create pressure imbalances. The damper itself is a relatively simple device — a counterweighted blade assembly in a frame that swings open when pressure differential pushes against it — but proper sizing and placement are critical to its function.

The damper hardware cost ranges from $200 to $1,200 depending on size and construction. Small units (12 by 12 inches) for minor pressure relief start around $200 to $400. Larger commercial units (24 by 24 inches or bigger) with insulated blades and motor-operated overrides for winter closure run $600 to $1,200. For Toronto's climate, you want an insulated damper with a tight seal when closed — an uninsulated barometric damper in an exterior wall is essentially an open hole to -20 degree winter air when it's not actively relieving pressure, creating massive heat loss and potential freeze-up of nearby pipes or equipment.

Labour and installation typically account for $500 to $2,000 of the total project cost. The installer needs to cut an opening in the duct system or building wall, mount the damper frame, seal all connections, and set the counterweight to the correct opening pressure. If the damper is mounted in an exterior wall, weatherproofing with proper flashing and a rain hood adds $200 to $500. Electrical work for motorized dampers or integration with the building's HVAC control system requires an ESA-Licensed Electrical Contractor and adds $300 to $800.

Ontario Building Code considerations are important for commercial installations. The damper must be sized to handle the required relief airflow without creating excessive noise or drafts in occupied spaces. If the building has a commercial kitchen with exhaust hoods exceeding 75 litres per second total exhaust capacity, the make-up air and pressure relief system design must comply with OBC Part 6 mechanical requirements. A building permit is typically required for new duct penetrations through fire-rated assemblies, and fire dampers may be needed depending on the wall or ceiling rating.

For a commercial project of this nature, hire a qualified sheet metal contractor with commercial HVAC experience. They'll perform pressure measurements to properly size the damper and determine the optimal mounting location. Getting three quotes is always advisable — commercial HVAC pricing in the GTA varies significantly between contractors, and you want someone who understands both the mechanical design and the code requirements.

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Q117

How much does it cost to reline existing ductwork instead of replacing it in Toronto?

Relining existing ductwork in a Toronto home typically costs $3,000 to $8,000 for a whole-house treatment, which is roughly 40 to 60% less than complete duct replacement. The exact cost depends on the total linear footage of ductwork, the condition of the existing system, accessibility, and which relining method is used.

Duct relining involves applying a new interior surface to existing ductwork rather than tearing it out and installing new ducts. This approach makes the most sense when the existing duct system is properly sized and routed but has deteriorated from the inside — rusted galvanized steel, deteriorating fibreglass duct board, or old ductwork with interior mould contamination that can't be adequately cleaned. It's also valuable when the ducts are buried in finished walls, ceilings, or concrete slabs where physical replacement would require significant demolition and reconstruction.

The most common relining methods available in the GTA market include spray-applied polymer coatings, which cost $2,500 to $6,000 for a typical home. A technician cleans the ductwork thoroughly, then sprays a flexible antimicrobial polymer coating onto the interior surfaces using specialized equipment. The coating seals small leaks, encapsulates residual contaminants, and provides a smooth new interior surface. This method works well for galvanized steel ducts with minor rust and for fibreglass duct board where the interior fibreglass surface has deteriorated. The coating adds a negligible reduction in duct diameter — typically less than 1/16 of an inch — so airflow impact is minimal.

Aeroseal duct sealing at $1,500 to $3,500 is sometimes confused with relining but serves a different purpose. Aeroseal seals leaks at joints and connections by blowing polymer particles through the system, but it does not coat or reline the interior duct surfaces. If your primary concern is air leakage rather than interior surface deterioration, Aeroseal may be all you need and costs significantly less than full relining.

Relining is not always the right choice. If your existing ductwork is severely undersized for your current HVAC equipment — a common problem in post-war GTA homes across Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke where heating-only ductwork was never upgraded when air conditioning was added — relining won't fix the fundamental sizing problem. Similarly, if duct runs are crushed, disconnected, or have major structural damage, replacement is the only real solution. And if asbestos insulation or tape is present on older ductwork, it must be professionally abated before any relining work can begin, adding $2,000 to $5,000 to the project.

Compare relining costs against full replacement to make an informed decision. Complete duct replacement for a typical 1,500 to 2,500 square foot GTA home runs $5,000 to $18,000 including removal of old ductwork. If your ducts are properly sized and routed but just showing their age, relining at $3,000 to $8,000 saves considerable money and avoids the disruption of tearing out ceilings and walls. But if the system has fundamental design problems — undersized trunks, inadequate returns, excessive flex duct — spending money on relining is putting lipstick on a problem that needs a real solution.

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Q118

What is the cost difference between a top-vent and side-vent dryer duct installation in a GTA condo?

A side-vent dryer duct installation in a GTA condo typically costs $200 to $500, while a top-vent (vertical) installation runs $400 to $900 — roughly double the cost due to the added complexity of routing ductwork vertically through cabinetry, ceilings, or chase walls to reach an exterior termination point.

The cost difference comes down to routing complexity and run length. A **side-vent installation** is the simpler of the two — the dryer exhausts horizontally through a short duct run to an exterior wall. In most GTA condo layouts, the laundry area is near an exterior wall, making a side-vent the most straightforward option. The installation involves rigid or semi-rigid aluminum duct (never flex duct or foil accordion duct for dryer vents — these trap lint and are fire hazards), a wall cap with a backdraft damper, and typically a run of 5 to 15 feet. Materials cost $50 to $150, and labour runs $150 to $350 for a clean installation with proper sealing.

Top-vent installations are more involved because the exhaust must travel vertically, often through a cabinet chase or dedicated soffit, before reaching an exterior termination. In high-rise GTA condos, the dryer vent may need to connect to a shared vertical exhaust riser that runs up through multiple floors to the rooftop — in which case you're working within the building's existing exhaust infrastructure and the installation cost depends on the distance to the riser connection and any modifications needed. Connecting to an existing shared riser typically costs $400 to $700, while a standalone vertical vent through a single-storey ceiling to an exterior wall or roof runs $500 to $900.

Condo-specific considerations in the GTA significantly affect both cost and feasibility. Most condo corporations require approval from the property manager or board before any duct modifications, and some buildings have strict rules about which venting configuration is permitted. Buildings with shared dryer exhaust risers typically require you to connect to the existing riser — you can't just punch a hole in an exterior wall. If your unit is on a higher floor, the exterior wall may not be an option at all due to wind loading on the vent cap and aesthetic restrictions on the building facade.

For either installation type, the **dryer vent duct must be rigid or semi-rigid aluminum** — the Ontario Building Code and dryer manufacturers require smooth-walled metal duct to minimize lint accumulation and reduce fire risk. The maximum recommended run length is 25 feet for straight runs, with each 90-degree elbow reducing the allowable length by 5 feet and each 45-degree elbow reducing it by 2.5 feet. If your condo layout requires a run longer than the maximum, a dryer vent booster fan ($150 to $300 installed) may be needed to maintain adequate airflow.

Always hire a qualified installer for condo dryer vent work rather than attempting a DIY installation. Improper dryer venting is a leading cause of residential fires, and condo corporations typically require professional installation with documentation. Annual dryer vent cleaning ($100 to $200) is essential regardless of the venting configuration — lint buildup reduces drying efficiency and creates a serious fire hazard.

Need help finding a contractor for your condo dryer vent installation? Toronto Ductwork can match you for free through the Toronto Construction Network.

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