

NEW BRUNSWICK CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

Basement Finishing

Questions about basement development, finishing,
and conversions in New Brunswick

12 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/construction-brain

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What ceiling height do i actually need to finish a walkout basement in Riverview — the joists are right at the 6'10" mark?

Your 6'10" ceiling height meets New Brunswick's minimum requirements for finished basement space. The National Building Code of Canada 2020 (adopted by NB) requires a minimum ceiling height of 1.95 meters (6 feet 5 inches) for habitable rooms, so you're actually 5 inches above the minimum.

However, there's an important catch with your joist measurement. That 6'10" is likely to the bottom of your floor joists, but once you add drywall and potentially a drop ceiling for mechanical access, you'll lose 2-4 inches. If you're planning pot lights or need to accommodate ductwork, HVAC, or plumbing runs, you might need to create bulkheads that drop the ceiling further in some areas.

For your Riverview location, you'll need a building permit from the Town of Riverview Development Services department since you're within municipal boundaries. They'll want to see your plans showing the finished ceiling heights, egress windows (mandatory for any bedrooms), and how you're addressing moisture control — this is critical in Riverview given the area's clay soils and high water table.

Before you frame anything, consider having your basement tested for radon. New Brunswick has some of the highest radon levels in Canada, with about 1 in 4 homes exceeding Health Canada's guideline. If levels are high, you'll want to install a sub-slab depressurization system (\$2,500-\$5,000) before finishing, which is much cheaper than retrofitting later.

The smart move is to map out exactly where your mechanicals run and plan your ceiling treatment around them. You might end up with 6'6" in most areas with some 6'2" bulkheads — still code compliant and much more cost-effective than trying to relocate plumbing or ductwork.

Contact Riverview's Development Services to confirm permit requirements and discuss your specific layout plans.

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Is it worth digging out a crawl space to make a full basement under my Miramichi bungalow?

Converting a crawl space to a full basement under your Miramichi bungalow is a major undertaking that typically costs \$75,000-\$150,000+ and requires careful evaluation of your home's structure and soil conditions. While it can add significant living space and home value, the complexity and cost often make it one of the most expensive renovation projects you can tackle.

Structural and Foundation Considerations

Your bungalow's existing foundation will need thorough assessment by a structural engineer before any excavation begins. The process involves underpinning the existing foundation walls — essentially supporting the house while digging deeper and pouring new foundation walls. In Miramichi's clay soils, you'll also need to consider groundwater management, as the area's proximity to the Miramichi River creates higher water table conditions in many neighborhoods.

The excavation must extend below the 4+ foot frost line, and you'll need proper weeping tile and waterproofing systems given the region's spring thaw conditions. Many older Miramichi homes have fieldstone or concrete block foundations that may not be suitable for underpinning without significant reinforcement.

Permits and Code Requirements

This project requires a building permit from the City of Miramichi, and the work must comply with the National Building Code of Canada 2020 edition. You'll need engineered drawings showing the underpinning method, new foundation design, and structural modifications. The basement must meet current egress requirements — bedroom windows must be minimum 3.8 square feet with a minimum width of 15 inches and sill height no more than 5 feet above floor level.

Any electrical, plumbing, or heating work requires separate permits and licensed trades. NB Power issues electrical wiring permits (1-800-615-0522), while TIS handles plumbing permits and inspections (1-888-659-3222). If you're adding a bathroom, you'll need proper drainage connections and potentially a sewage ejector pump.

Cost Breakdown and Practical Realities

Excavation and soil removal typically runs \$15-25 per cubic yard, but access can be challenging in established Miramichi neighborhoods with mature trees and tight lot lines. Foundation underpinning costs \$200-400 per linear foot, while new basement walls run \$25-45 per square foot. Add waterproofing (\$8-15/sq ft), new concrete floor (\$8-12/sq ft), and finishing costs, and you're looking at substantial investment.

Alternative Approaches Worth Considering

Before committing to full excavation, consider whether a basement addition or above-grade addition might better serve your needs. Many Miramichi homeowners find that finishing existing basement space (if you have partial basement areas) or adding a second story provides more cost-effective square footage.

Next Steps

Start with a structural engineer consultation (\$800-1,500) to assess feasibility. They'll evaluate your foundation, soil conditions, and provide preliminary cost estimates. Contact the City of Miramichi planning department early in your process to understand permit requirements and any neighborhood restrictions that might affect the project scope.

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Q3

How do i insulate the ceiling of an unfinished basement in Campbellton to keep the main floor warmer without finishing the whole thing?

Insulating your basement ceiling is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve comfort and reduce heating bills in Campbellton's harsh winters. You can absolutely do this without finishing the entire basement, and it's a project many homeowners can tackle themselves.

Batt insulation between the floor joists is your most practical option. Install R-20 to R-24 fiberglass or mineral wool batts (typically 6" thick) between the joists, with the vapor barrier facing up toward the heated main floor. The batts should fit snugly without compression — compressed insulation loses effectiveness. You'll need safety gear including a dust mask, safety glasses, and long sleeves since fiberglass is irritating to skin and lungs.

Proper installation technique matters significantly. Cut batts to fit tightly between joists without gaps. Work around electrical wiring, plumbing, and ductwork carefully — don't compress insulation around these obstacles. For

areas with numerous pipes or wires, consider using blown-in cellulose or spray foam, though these require professional installation. Pay special attention to the rim joist area (where the foundation meets the floor framing) — this is often the biggest heat loss area and may need rigid foam board insulation.

In Campbellton's climate, where winter temperatures regularly hit -25°C to -35°C, this ceiling insulation can reduce your heating bills by 10-15% while making your main floor noticeably more comfortable. The project typically costs \$2-4 per square foot for materials if you do the work yourself.

Consider moisture management carefully. Northern New Brunswick homes often have humidity issues, and insulating the basement ceiling can change moisture dynamics. Ensure your basement has adequate ventilation and address any existing moisture problems before insulating. If you plan to finish the basement later, you might want to use unfaced batts now and add the vapor barrier when you install drywall.

Start by measuring your basement ceiling area and checking the joist spacing (typically 16" on center in most homes). Visit a local building supply store to calculate materials needed — you'll need batts, a utility knife for cutting, and staples or wire supports to hold everything in place. This is definitely a DIY-friendly project that can make a real difference in your home's comfort this winter.

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What heating options work best for a basement apartment in New Brunswick?

For a basement apartment in New Brunswick, you'll want heating that handles our harsh winters while meeting code requirements for secondary suites. The best options depend on your existing system, budget, and whether this is a legal secondary suite.

Heat pumps with backup heating are increasingly popular for basement apartments. A cold-climate mini-split system rated to -25°C or below can efficiently heat and cool the space most of the year. However, you'll need backup heating for our coldest winter days when temperatures drop to -30°C or lower. Electric baseboard heaters are the most common backup, adding \$800-\$2,500 depending on the apartment size. Total installation typically runs \$4,000-\$8,000 for a quality system.

Electric baseboard heating remains the most straightforward option, especially if you're converting an existing basement. Installation costs \$150-\$300 per room, making it budget-friendly upfront. Operating costs are higher than heat pumps but predictable. Each room needs its own thermostat for tenant control, and you'll need dedicated 240V circuits installed by a licensed electrician.

Extending your existing forced-air system works if your current furnace has adequate capacity. However, the National Building Code requires fire-rated ductwork between separate dwelling units. This means installing fire dampers and ensuring proper fire separation - typically adding \$3,000-\$6,000 to the project. If your home still runs on oil heat (common in older NB homes), this might be a good time to consider upgrading the entire system.

Critical code considerations for any heating system: The NBC requires secondary suites to have either a completely separate heating system OR fire-rated connections if sharing with the main house. You'll also need proper ventilation - bathroom exhaust fans and either operable windows or mechanical ventilation. The apartment needs interconnected smoke and carbon monoxide alarms throughout.

Basement-specific challenges in New Brunswick include our high water tables and clay soils that create moisture issues. Ensure proper dehumidification - many heat pump systems include this feature. Address any foundation moisture problems before installing heating, as humid conditions reduce efficiency and can damage equipment.

Before choosing any system, **contact your municipality or Regional Service Commission** to confirm the basement apartment meets zoning requirements and obtain necessary permits. You'll also need electrical permits from NB Power (1-800-615-0522) for any new circuits, and the heating system must be inspected by Technical Inspection Services.

Next step: Have a licensed HVAC contractor assess your basement's heat loss and existing electrical capacity. They can recommend the most cost-effective solution for your specific situation and handle the permit applications.

Find qualified HVAC contractors familiar with basement apartment requirements in our New Brunswick directory.

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Q5

Why are there cracks appearing in my foundation wall in Saint John?

Foundation cracks in Saint John homes can stem from several factors, with settlement, freeze-thaw cycles, and the area's unique soil conditions being the most common culprits. Given Saint John's location on the Bay of Fundy with its marine clay soils and extreme weather variations, foundation issues are unfortunately quite common in both older and newer homes.

Settlement and soil movement are major factors in the Saint John area. Much of the city sits on marine clay deposits that can shift and compress over time, especially during wet periods or after heavy spring runoff. The dramatic freeze-thaw cycles that Saint John experiences - with temperatures swinging from -25°C in winter to above freezing multiple times per season - cause the soil around your foundation to expand and contract repeatedly, putting stress on foundation walls.

Age and construction era also play a significant role. If you're in one of Saint John's older neighborhoods like the South End or Uptown area, your home might date to the Victorian era (1870s-1920s) when foundation construction standards were quite different. These older foundations often used fieldstone or early concrete mixes that weren't as durable as modern materials. Post-war homes from the 1950s-70s in areas like the East Side may have concrete block foundations that are more prone to cracking than poured concrete.

Water infiltration is another serious concern, particularly given Saint John's proximity to the Bay of Fundy and the city's history of spring flooding. Poor drainage around your foundation, failed weeping tile systems, or inadequate waterproofing can allow water to penetrate and freeze, expanding the cracks further. The Saint John River has flooded parts of the city multiple times in recent years (notably 2018 and 2019), and even minor flooding can

saturate soils and affect foundation stability.

When to act immediately: If cracks are wider than 1/4 inch, growing noticeably, allowing water infiltration, or if you notice doors and windows sticking, contact a structural engineer right away. For smaller hairline cracks that aren't actively leaking, monitor them over a full seasonal cycle to see if they're expanding.

Professional assessment is crucial for any foundation concerns in Saint John. The City of Saint John's building inspection department (506-658-2835) can help determine if structural permits are needed for repairs. For major foundation work, you'll need both a building permit from the city and compliance with the National Building Code of Canada 2020 edition (effective May 1, 2025 for new applications in NB).

Start by having a qualified foundation contractor assess the cracks and check your home's drainage systems - addressing water management issues now can prevent much more expensive structural repairs down the road.

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Q6

What's the best flooring for a basement that gets a bit damp in the spring?

For a basement that experiences spring dampness, luxury vinyl plank (LVP) or luxury vinyl tile (LVT) are your best options — they're completely waterproof, comfortable underfoot, and can handle New Brunswick's challenging spring conditions when snowmelt and high water tables create moisture issues.

Luxury vinyl flooring has become the go-to choice for New Brunswick basements because it performs well in our climate. Quality LVP runs \$4-8 per square foot installed, while premium options with thicker wear layers cost \$6-12 per square foot. Look for products with rigid core construction (SPC or WPC) that won't expand or contract with moisture changes. The click-lock installation also means you can remove and reinstall sections if you ever need to access plumbing or address water issues.

Polished concrete is another excellent option if your existing concrete floor is in good condition. A professional concrete polishing and sealing job costs \$8-15 per square foot but creates a completely moisture-proof surface that actually looks better with age. This works particularly well in older New Brunswick homes where the concrete slab is already well-cured.

Avoid these materials in damp basements: laminate (swells when wet), hardwood (warps and cups), carpet (mold magnet), and standard tile with grout lines (grout absorbs moisture and can crack during freeze-thaw cycles).

Before installing any flooring, **address the moisture source**. Spring dampness in New Brunswick basements typically comes from poor exterior drainage, missing or failed weeping tile, or hydrostatic pressure from our clay soils. Check that your gutters drain at least 6 feet from the foundation, ensure proper grading slopes away from the house, and consider a dehumidifier rated for your square footage.

For a DIY-friendly installation, luxury vinyl planks with click-lock systems are straightforward for most homeowners. However, if you're dealing with an uneven concrete floor or need moisture mitigation work, bringing in a flooring contractor ensures proper subfloor preparation and vapor barrier installation.

Your next step is to monitor the basement's humidity levels with a hygrometer for a few weeks — if it consistently stays above 60% relative humidity, address the moisture issue before installing any flooring.

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Do I need to live in my house to rent out a basement apartment in New Brunswick?

No, you don't need to live in your house to rent out a basement apartment in New Brunswick — there's no province-wide owner-occupancy requirement like some other jurisdictions have. However, zoning compliance and proper permitting are absolutely essential regardless of whether you live there or not.

Zoning is your first critical step. New Brunswick doesn't have blanket secondary suite permissions across the province. Each municipality and Regional Service Commission (RSC) sets their own rules. In Fredericton and Moncton, secondary suites are generally permitted in residential zones with proper permits. Saint John's rules vary by neighbourhood. If you're in a rural area, your RSC administers the land use plan — some have minimal restrictions while others require development permits.

Building Code compliance is mandatory whether you live there or not. Your basement apartment must meet National Building Code 2020 requirements: separate entrance, egress windows in bedrooms (minimum 3.8 sq ft opening), interconnected smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, minimum 1.95m (6'5") ceiling height, and fire separation between units with minimum 45-minute fire rating. If you're modifying electrical, plumbing, or structural elements, you'll need the appropriate permits and licensed trades.

The permit process varies by location. If you're in an incorporated area like Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John, contact your municipal planning department first. For rural areas, contact your Regional Service Commission. Building permits typically run \$1,500-\$5,000 depending on scope. Any electrical work requires a wiring permit from NB Power (1-800-615-0522) and must be done by a TIS-licensed electrician. Plumbing modifications need TIS permits and licensed plumbers.

Consider the practical implications of being a non-resident landlord. You'll need reliable local contacts for maintenance emergencies, especially during New Brunswick's harsh winters when frozen pipes or heating failures can cause serious damage quickly. Many non-resident landlords hire local property management companies or maintain relationships with trusted contractors for urgent repairs.

Your next step: Contact your municipal planning office or RSC to confirm zoning compliance before investing in any renovations. Get that approval in writing — it protects you from costly surprises later and ensures your rental income won't be jeopardized by zoning violations.

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Q8

What is the best way to soundproof between the basement and main floor?

Effective soundproofing between your basement and main floor requires addressing both airborne noise (voices, TV) and impact noise (footsteps, dropped objects). The most effective approach combines multiple strategies rather than relying on a single solution.

Ceiling Treatment Options

The most practical upgrade for existing homes is improving the basement ceiling. Adding a second layer of 5/8" drywall with Green Glue viscoelastic compound between layers can reduce sound transmission by 8-12 decibels. This damping compound converts sound energy to heat and costs around \$1.50-\$2.00 per square foot for materials.

For better results, consider resilient channels or sound isolation clips with hat channel. These metal strips decouple the drywall from the joists, preventing vibrations from transferring directly through the framing. Expect to pay \$2-4 per square foot for materials, plus installation costs of \$8-15 per square foot if hiring professionals.

Insulation Upgrades

If your basement ceiling is open or you're doing major renovations, adding dense insulation between floor joists significantly improves soundproofing. Rockwool Safe'n'Sound or similar acoustic insulation (around \$1.20 per square foot) outperforms standard fiberglass for sound control. The denser material better absorbs sound waves traveling through the cavity.

Floor-Side Improvements

Working from above can be more effective but also more disruptive. Adding underlayment beneath hardwood or laminate flooring helps with impact noise. Cork, rubber, or specialized acoustic underlayments cost \$1-3 per square foot. For carpet areas, upgrading to thicker padding reduces both airborne and impact sound transmission.

New Brunswick Building Code Considerations

The National Building Code 2020 (adopted in NB, effective May 1, 2025 for new applications) requires minimum sound transmission ratings for multi-family construction but doesn't mandate specific soundproofing between floors in single-family homes. However, if you're creating a legal secondary suite, you'll need to meet NBC sound transmission requirements and obtain proper permits from your municipality or Regional Service Commission.

Professional vs. DIY Approach

Adding insulation and basic drywall improvements are reasonable DIY projects for experienced homeowners. However, proper installation of resilient channels or sound clips requires precision - incorrect installation can actually worsen sound transmission by creating rigid connections. Complex soundproofing projects often benefit from professional installation, especially when dealing with HVAC penetrations, electrical boxes, or structural modifications.

Realistic Expectations and Costs

Basic improvements (insulation plus second drywall layer) typically cost \$8-15 per square foot installed and can reduce noise by 10-15 decibels. More comprehensive solutions using decoupling systems range from \$15-25 per square foot but can achieve 20+ decibel reductions. Remember that every 10-decibel reduction represents roughly a 50% decrease in perceived loudness.

Start with a professional assessment to identify your biggest noise sources and most cost-effective solutions for your specific situation.

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Q9

What's the best insulation for basement walls in New Brunswick's climate?

For New Brunswick basements, rigid foam insulation on the interior side of foundation walls is typically your best bet, providing excellent moisture control and thermal performance in our challenging climate.

Polyisocyanurate (polyiso) rigid foam boards are the top choice for most NB basements. At 2-3 inches thick, they deliver R-12 to R-18 while creating a continuous thermal barrier that prevents condensation on cold concrete walls. The foil facing acts as a vapor barrier, which is crucial given our high humidity levels and frequent freeze-thaw cycles. Expect to pay \$3-5 per square foot for materials, with professional installation adding \$8-12 per square foot.

Extruded polystyrene (XPS) is another excellent option, particularly for below-grade applications. It handles moisture better than expanded polystyrene and won't lose R-value if it gets damp. At 2 inches thick, XPS provides about R-10 and costs slightly less than polyiso.

New Brunswick's climate creates unique basement challenges that make insulation choice critical. Our deep frost line (4+ feet), spring flooding risks along the Saint John River system, and clay soils with high water tables mean basement walls face both exterior moisture pressure and interior condensation issues. Many older NB homes - especially those 1970s-1990s split-levels common in Riverview, Quispamsis, and suburban Moncton - have chronic basement moisture problems that proper insulation can help address.

Installation requires careful attention to code compliance. Under the National Building Code 2020 (effective May 1, 2025 for new applications in NB), finished basements need proper vapor barriers, fire-rated assemblies, and adequate egress windows. If you're creating living space, you'll need a building permit from your municipality (like Moncton Planning & Development at 856-4375) or your Regional Service Commission if you're in a rural area.

The **professional vs. DIY decision** depends on your scope. Installing rigid foam boards is manageable for experienced DIYers, but electrical work (moving outlets, adding circuits) requires a licensed electrician with proper NB Power permits (1-800-615-0522). If you're finishing the entire basement, hiring a contractor ensures proper fire separation, egress compliance, and integration with your heating system.

Start by testing for radon - New Brunswick has some of Canada's highest radon levels, with about 1 in 4 homes exceeding Health Canada guidelines. A long-term test kit (\$30-50) will tell you if you need mitigation before insulating. Address any moisture issues first, then consider upgrading your heating system - many NB homes still rely on oil furnaces that struggle to heat finished basements efficiently.

Find verified basement finishing contractors in our New Brunswick directory who understand local moisture challenges and code requirements.

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How long does a typical basement finishing project take in Fredericton?

A typical basement finishing project in Fredericton takes 6-12 weeks from start to finish, depending on the scope and complexity of your renovation. This timeline assumes you're working with experienced contractors and don't encounter major surprises along the way.

The process breaks down into several key phases that each take time to complete properly. **Permit approval and planning** typically takes 2-3 weeks in Fredericton - you'll need to submit your plans to the City of Fredericton Development Services (506-460-2020) for a building permit, especially if you're adding bedrooms, bathrooms, or making structural changes. The city has been fairly efficient with residential permits, but allow extra time during busy spring/summer seasons.

Framing and rough-in work usually takes 2-3 weeks and involves the most coordination. Your electrical contractor needs to pull a wiring permit from NB Power (1-800-615-0522) before starting any electrical rough-in work. If you're adding a bathroom or wet bar, licensed plumbing work requires permits and inspections from NB Dept. of Justice and Public Safety - Technical Inspection Services (TIS). This phase often reveals surprises in older Fredericton homes - many post-war bungalows and 1970s split-levels have foundation issues, outdated electrical panels, or moisture problems that need addressing first.

Insulation and drywall typically adds another 2-3 weeks to your timeline. Given Fredericton's cold winters (regularly hitting -25°C), proper insulation is crucial - you'll want R-20 minimum in basement walls. Many contractors also recommend addressing radon during this phase, as New Brunswick has some of Canada's highest radon levels. A radon test kit costs \$30-50 and could save you thousands later if mitigation is needed.

Flooring, painting, and finishing work rounds out the final 2-3 weeks. Spring flooding is a consideration in some Fredericton areas near the Saint John River, so choose moisture-resistant materials like luxury vinyl plank or ceramic tile rather than carpet in flood-prone neighborhoods.

Seasonal factors significantly impact timelines in New Brunswick. Projects starting in late fall or winter may face delays due to material delivery challenges during snowstorms, and concrete work becomes difficult once temperatures drop below -10°C . The best time to start a basement project is late winter or early spring, allowing you to finish before the busy summer construction season.

Your next step should be getting quotes from at least three licensed contractors and confirming all permit requirements with the City of Fredericton before work begins. Make sure any contractor you hire carries current WorkSafeNB coverage - it's mandatory for employers with 3+ workers and protects you from liability.

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Q11

Can I use Airbnb for my basement apartment in Moncton?

Yes, you can potentially use Airbnb for your basement apartment in Moncton, but you'll need to navigate both zoning compliance and short-term rental regulations. The key is ensuring your basement apartment meets all safety and legal requirements before listing it.

Zoning and Building Code Requirements

First, your basement apartment must comply with the City of Moncton's zoning bylaw for secondary suites. Moncton permits secondary suites in most residential zones with specific conditions. Contact Moncton's Planning & Development department at (506) 856-4375 or info.plans@moncton.ca to confirm your property's zoning allows secondary suites.

Your basement must meet National Building Code 2020 requirements for secondary dwelling units: separate entrance (or shared entrance with proper fire separation), egress windows in all bedrooms, minimum 1.95m (6'5") ceiling height, interconnected smoke and carbon monoxide alarms throughout both units, and 45-minute fire-rated separation between the units. The electrical, plumbing, and heating systems must be properly permitted and inspected by TIS (Technical Inspection Services) at 1-888-659-3222.

Short-Term Rental Regulations

Moncton has specific regulations for short-term rentals like Airbnb. You'll need a business license from the city, and there are restrictions on how many days per year you can rent (typically 180 days maximum for secondary suites). The city also requires that you maintain primary residence on the property - meaning you can't convert your entire house to short-term rentals.

Safety and Insurance Considerations

Verify your home insurance covers short-term rental activity - many standard policies exclude commercial use. You may need additional liability coverage. Install proper smoke and CO detectors as required by code, ensure all electrical work was done by a licensed contractor with proper NB Power wiring permits, and confirm your heating system can handle the additional occupancy load.

Practical Next Steps

Start by calling Moncton Planning & Development to confirm zoning compliance, then have a building inspector assess whether your basement meets secondary suite requirements. If upgrades are needed, hire licensed trades - electrical work requires a TIS-licensed electrician, and any plumbing modifications need a licensed plumber. Once compliant, apply for your business license and verify insurance coverage before listing on Airbnb.

The investment in proper compliance protects you legally and ensures guest safety - shortcuts here can result in serious liability issues and municipal enforcement action.

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Q12

Do I need a separate entrance for a basement apartment in New Brunswick?

Yes, a separate entrance is mandatory for all basement apartments (secondary suites) in New Brunswick under the National Building Code of Canada 2020 edition, which NB has adopted effective May 1, 2025 for new applications.

The separate entrance requirement ensures proper fire safety and allows independent access for tenants without going through the main dwelling unit. This entrance must lead directly to the secondary suite without passing through any part of the primary residence. You'll also need **egress windows in all bedrooms** that meet minimum size requirements (3.8 square feet opening area, minimum 15 inches wide and 24 inches high, with the sill no more

than 5 feet above the floor).

Additional NBC requirements for your basement apartment include:

- Fire separation between units with minimum 45-minute fire rating on walls and ceiling
- Interconnected smoke and carbon monoxide alarms throughout both units
- Minimum ceiling height of 1.95 meters (6'5") in habitable rooms
- Separate heating system or fire-rated ductwork if sharing systems
- Proper bathroom ventilation and natural light requirements

Before starting construction, you must confirm zoning compliance with your local authority. In **incorporated areas** like Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, or Dieppe, contact your municipal planning department. In **rural/unincorporated areas**, contact your Regional Service Commission (RSC). Secondary suite rules vary significantly across New Brunswick municipalities - some are very permissive while others have strict limitations or prohibit them entirely.

The entrance construction itself will require a **building permit** from your municipality or RSC, and any electrical work for lighting, outlets, or panel upgrades must be done by a TIS-licensed electrician with an NB Power wiring permit (1-800-615-0522). Plumbing modifications require a TIS-licensed plumber and plumbing permit.

Start by calling your local planning office to confirm secondary suites are permitted in your zone before investing in design or construction. This single call can save you thousands in potential compliance issues down the road.

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