

NEW BRUNSWICK CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

Bathroom Renovations

Questions about bathroom remodeling, fixtures,
layouts, and upgrades

16 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/construction-brain

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Is a curbless shower realistic in a second-floor bathroom in a Fredericton bungalow with low floor joists?

A curbless shower in a second-floor bathroom with low floor joists is challenging but potentially doable — it depends on your specific joist depth, existing plumbing layout, and how much structural modification you're willing to undertake.

The main obstacle is drainage slope. Curbless showers require a minimum 1/4" per foot slope to the drain, ideally 1/2" per foot for reliable drainage. In a typical 1960s-1980s Fredericton bungalow with 2x8 or 2x10 floor joists, you're working with limited depth — especially if there's a finished ceiling below that you want to preserve.

Your best bet is positioning the drain strategically. If you can locate the shower drain near an exterior wall where the floor slopes toward the foundation, you'll need less built-up slope. Some contractors create a "sunken" shower pan by lowering the subfloor between joists, but this requires careful engineering to maintain structural integrity. You'll definitely need a building permit from the City of Fredericton Development Services (506-460-2020) for any joist modifications.

Plumbing complexity adds cost and complications. The drain line needs to connect to your existing waste stack, which may require rerouting pipes through or around floor joists. A licensed plumber (TIS-licensed) will need to obtain permits and handle the rough-in work. If your existing bathroom is directly above the main floor bathroom, the plumbing routing is usually more straightforward.

Consider a low-profile shower base instead. Modern acrylic or solid-surface bases can be as low as 1.5-2 inches high while still providing proper drainage. This gives you most of the accessibility benefits without the structural headaches of true curbless installation.

Professional assessment is essential here. Have a licensed contractor evaluate your joist span, existing plumbing, and ceiling situation below. They can determine if your floor structure can handle the modifications or if you'd be better served with alternative low-threshold solutions. The structural work, plumbing permits, and waterproofing requirements make this a job for experienced professionals rather than a DIY project.

Budget \$8,000-\$15,000+ for a proper curbless conversion in this situation, with the higher end reflecting extensive structural modifications and plumbing rerouting.

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Q2

My bathroom fan isn't getting rid of the moisture after a shower. What's wrong?

Your bathroom fan likely isn't moving enough air to handle the moisture load, or it's not running long enough. Most bathroom ventilation problems come down to inadequate airflow, blocked ducts, or poor installation rather than a completely failed fan.

Start by checking the **fan's airflow strength**. Hold a tissue up to the grille while the fan runs — it should pull the tissue firmly against the opening. If there's barely any suction, you've found your problem. Many older fans lose effectiveness as dust builds up on the blades and housing, or the motor weakens over time.

Duct blockages are extremely common in New Brunswick homes, especially those built in the 1970s-1990s. The flexible duct running from your fan to the exterior may have sagged, creating low spots where condensation pools and lint accumulates. In our freeze-thaw climate, exterior vents can also ice up during winter, completely blocking airflow. Check that your exterior vent hood opens properly and isn't clogged with debris or ice.

The **fan capacity** might simply be too small for your bathroom. The National Building Code of Canada 2020 (which New Brunswick adopts, effective May 1, 2025 for new applications) requires bathroom fans to move at least 50 CFM (cubic feet per minute). Larger bathrooms need proportionally more — calculate roughly 1 CFM per square foot of floor area. Many builder-grade fans installed in the 1980s-2000s only move 30-40 CFM, which isn't adequate for today's tighter, more humid homes.

Runtime matters significantly. Your fan should run during the shower and for 15-30 minutes afterward to clear residual moisture. Consider upgrading to a fan with a built-in timer or humidity sensor that automatically runs until moisture levels drop. These smart controls typically add \$50-150 to the project cost but prevent the mold and mildew issues that plague many New Brunswick bathrooms.

For a **DIY assessment**, clean the fan grille and housing thoroughly, check that the exterior vent opens freely, and verify the ductwork isn't sagging or disconnected in the attic space. However, if you need to replace the fan or run new ductwork, electrical work must be done by a licensed electrical contractor in New Brunswick — contact NB Power at 1-800-615-0522 for the required wiring permit, and Technical Inspection Services will handle the final

inspection.

Expect **\$300-800** for a quality replacement fan installed, or \$150-400 if you're handy enough to swap the unit yourself while leaving electrical connections to a licensed professional.

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Q3

What's the best exhaust fan for a windowless bathroom in NB?

For a windowless bathroom in New Brunswick, you'll need a high-quality exhaust fan rated for continuous moisture removal — aim for at least 1 CFM per square foot of bathroom area, with a minimum 50 CFM even for small powder rooms.

The **Panasonic WhisperCeiling series** consistently ranks as the top choice among New Brunswick contractors. These fans operate at just 0.3 sones (whisper-quiet), move 80-150+ CFM depending on the model, and are built to handle our province's temperature extremes and high humidity levels. The **Broan-NuTone Ultra series** offers similar performance at a slightly lower price point, while **Delta BreezSmart fans** include built-in humidity sensors that automatically activate when moisture levels rise.

Key specifications for NB conditions: Look for fans rated for -40°C operation (essential for our winters), sealed ball bearings, and Energy Star certification. The fan should exhaust directly outside — never into an attic or crawl space, which can cause serious moisture and mold issues in our climate. Install a **spring-loaded or gravity damper** at the exterior wall cap to prevent cold air backdraft during winter.

Most windowless bathrooms in New Brunswick require **dedicated electrical circuits** for exhaust fans, especially if you're adding a timer switch or humidity sensor. This electrical work must be performed by a licensed electrician with a wiring permit from NB Power (1-800-615-0522), followed by a TIS inspection (1-888-659-3222). The National

Building Code requires mechanical ventilation in all bathrooms without operable windows.

Installation considerations: In older NB homes (common 1970s-1990s construction in Riverview, Quispamsis, suburban Moncton), you may encounter asbestos in ceiling materials. If your home was built before 1990, have materials tested before cutting ceiling openings. Professional installation typically runs \$400-\$800 including the fan unit, electrical work, and exterior venting.

Sizing matters significantly — undersized fans won't control moisture effectively, leading to mold growth and paint failure. For bathrooms over 100 square feet, consider two smaller fans rather than one large unit for better air circulation patterns.

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What's the price difference between a basic and upscale bathroom renovation in Dieppe?

A basic bathroom renovation in Dieppe typically runs \$18,000-\$28,000, while an upscale renovation ranges from \$45,000-\$75,000 — the difference comes down to finishes, fixtures, and scope of work.

For a **basic renovation** in Dieppe, you're looking at refreshing an existing 5x8 foot bathroom with mid-range materials. This includes a standard acrylic tub/shower combo (\$800-\$1,200), basic vanity with laminate countertop (\$600-\$1,000), standard toilet (\$300-\$500), ceramic tile flooring (\$4-\$8 per sq ft), and basic lighting fixtures. Most of the existing plumbing and electrical stays in place, keeping costs down. Labor typically accounts for 60% of the total cost.

Upscale renovations involve premium materials and often layout changes. Think custom tile work with natural stone (\$15-\$25 per sq ft), freestanding soaker tub (\$2,500-\$6,000), frameless glass shower enclosure (\$1,800-\$3,500), quartz countertops (\$80-\$120 per sq ft), and high-end fixtures from brands like Kohler or Delta. Moving plumbing lines adds \$2,000-\$5,000 to the project, and electrical upgrades for heated floors or additional circuits can add another \$1,500-\$3,000.

Dieppe-specific considerations include obtaining a building permit from the Town of Dieppe's Urban Planning department (506-877-7900) if you're moving walls or adding electrical circuits. Most bathroom renovations require permits for plumbing and electrical work. Licensed plumbers and electricians must be used — TIS (Technical Inspection Services) handles trade licensing and inspections province-wide at 1-888-659-3222. NB Power issues electrical permits at 1-800-615-0522.

Timeline differences are significant too. Basic renovations take 2-3 weeks with minimal disruption, while upscale projects often run 4-6 weeks due to custom work and potential structural changes. In Dieppe's newer subdivisions, you might discover that bathroom exhaust fans weren't properly vented to the exterior — a common issue that adds \$500-\$800 to address properly.

The **middle ground** (\$28,000-\$45,000) offers the best value — quality materials like porcelain tile, solid surface countertops, and good fixtures without the premium price tags. This range typically includes some layout improvements while keeping major plumbing moves to a minimum.

Find licensed bathroom renovation contractors familiar with Dieppe's requirements in our New Brunswick Construction Network directory to get accurate quotes based on your specific space and goals.

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Q5

What's the best tile for a shower in New Brunswick where humidity is high in summer?

Porcelain tile is your best choice for New Brunswick shower installations, offering superior moisture resistance and durability that handles our humid summers and freeze-thaw cycles year-round.

Porcelain vs. Ceramic Performance Porcelain tile has a water absorption rate below 0.5%, making it virtually waterproof compared to ceramic tile's 3-7% absorption rate. In New Brunswick's climate — where we see 80%+ humidity in summer followed by harsh winters — this low absorption prevents tile cracking from freeze-thaw expansion. Expect to pay \$3-12 per square foot for quality porcelain compared to \$2-8 for ceramic, but the longevity justifies the investment.

Size and Installation Considerations Larger format tiles (12"x24" or bigger) mean fewer grout lines, reducing potential water penetration points. However, New Brunswick's older homes — especially those Victorian and post-war bungalows common in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John — often have settling and movement that can crack large tiles. For homes built before 1980, consider 6"x6" or 8"x8" tiles that handle minor movement better.

Essential Waterproofing Requirements Under the National Building Code 2020 (effective May 1, 2025 for new applications), shower areas require a waterproof membrane behind the tile. RedGard, Schluter-Kerdi, or similar systems are mandatory — not just the old plastic sheeting. This is especially critical in New Brunswick where our clay soils and high water tables create foundation moisture issues that can compromise tile installations from behind.

Grout and Maintenance Use epoxy grout or high-quality urethane grout in shower areas — standard cement grout absorbs moisture and fails quickly in our climate. Seal natural stone annually, though porcelain doesn't require sealing. In coastal areas like Saint John or Shediac, salt air can accelerate grout deterioration, making quality grout

selection even more important.

Professional Installation Recommended While homeowners can handle simple tile work, shower installations require plumbing rough-in by a licensed plumber (TIS licence required), proper waterproofing, and often electrical work for ventilation fans. A licensed electrical contractor must handle any new electrical circuits (NB Power wiring permit: 1-800-615-0522). Poor waterproofing in showers leads to expensive structural repairs — this isn't a DIY learning project.

Next Steps Visit a local tile supplier to see porcelain options in person and get material estimates. Budget \$15-35 per square foot installed for quality porcelain tile work, including proper waterproofing. Find experienced tile installers in our New Brunswick contractor directory who understand local building requirements and climate challenges.

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Q6

Is heated tile flooring worth installing in a New Brunswick bathroom?

Absolutely — heated tile flooring is one of the best investments you can make in a New Brunswick bathroom, especially given our harsh winters and the comfort it provides during those -25°C February mornings.

Cost and Installation Expect to pay \$12-18 per square foot for electric radiant heating systems (including tile), with installation typically running \$2,500-4,500 for an average bathroom. The two main options are electric resistance cables or thin heating mats that go under the tile. Electric systems are most common in NB since they're easier to retrofit and don't require connection to your home's hydronic heating system.

Energy Efficiency Considerations With NB Power's current rates, operating costs run about \$0.50-1.50 per day during winter months for a typical bathroom, depending on usage patterns and your home's insulation. The system

typically adds 15-25% to your bathroom's heating costs, but many homeowners find the comfort worth every penny. Modern programmable thermostats let you schedule heating around your routine — warming up before your morning shower and cooling down when you're at work.

New Brunswick Climate Benefits Our province's extreme temperature swings make heated floors particularly valuable. The thermal mass of heated tile helps stabilize bathroom temperatures and reduces the shock of stepping onto cold floors during those brutal January cold snaps. It's especially beneficial in older homes with poor insulation or drafty bathrooms common in post-war bungalows throughout Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John.

Installation Requirements This is definitely a job for professionals. You'll need a licensed electrician (licensed through NB Dept. of Justice and Public Safety - Technical Inspection Services) to run the dedicated circuit and install the GFCI protection required by the National Building Code. An electrical permit from NB Power (1-800-615-0522) is required, and TIS inspection (1-888-659-3222) must be completed before the system is energized.

Practical Next Step Get quotes from both tile installers and electricians, as some contractors handle both aspects while others prefer to coordinate trades. The electrical rough-in must happen before tile installation, so proper sequencing is crucial for avoiding delays during our short renovation season.

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What kind of subfloor do I need under bathroom tile on the second floor?

For second-floor bathroom tile, you'll need a proper subfloor system that can handle moisture and provide adequate support for ceramic or stone tile. The key is creating a rigid, waterproof assembly that meets New Brunswick's National Building Code 2020 requirements.

Your subfloor system should consist of **3/4" tongue-and-groove plywood or OSB subflooring** over your floor joists, followed by a **cement backer board** like Hardiebacker, Durock, or similar fiber-cement product. The backer board is critical - standard drywall or even moisture-resistant drywall isn't adequate under tile in wet areas according to NBC requirements.

Deflection is your biggest concern on upper floors. The NBC requires that floor assemblies supporting ceramic tile deflect no more than $L/360$ under live loads (where L is the span length). For a 12-foot joist span, that's maximum 0.4 inches of deflection. If your existing joists are undersized - common in older New Brunswick homes from the 1970s-1990s - you may need to add blocking, sister joists, or install a beam underneath to stiffen the floor.

Before installing anything, check your joist spacing and size. **Joists 16" on center are preferred for tile floors**, though 24" spacing can work if the joists are adequately sized (typically 2x10 minimum for longer spans). Many post-war bungalows in areas like Riverview and suburban Fredericton have 2x8 joists at 24" centers, which often need reinforcement for tile.

The installation sequence matters: subfloor, then cement backer board screwed every 6-8 inches with appropriate fasteners, then waterproof membrane over the backer board, then tile. **Don't skip the waterproof membrane** - New Brunswick's freeze-thaw cycles make water penetration especially damaging.

For a typical 8x10 bathroom, expect to budget **\$800-\$1,500** for subfloor materials including backer board and waterproofing, plus \$1,200-\$2,500 for professional installation if structural work is needed. If you discover undersized joists during the project, reinforcement could add another \$1,000-\$3,000 depending on accessibility.

This is definitely professional territory if you're unsure about joist sizing or structural adequacy. A building permit from your municipality or Regional Service Commission may be required if structural modifications are needed, and you'll want the floor assembly inspected before covering it up.

Start by having a contractor evaluate your existing floor structure - many tile failures in New Brunswick homes stem from inadequate subfloor preparation rather than poor tile work.

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Q8

Can I add an ensuite to my master bedroom in a split-entry home in Riverview?

Yes, you can typically add an ensuite to your master bedroom in a split-entry home in Riverview, but you'll need to navigate both structural considerations and municipal permits since this involves plumbing rough-in work.

Split-entry homes in Riverview (very common from the 1970s-1990s) actually offer some advantages for ensuite additions. The upper level where your master bedroom is located usually has adequate floor joist depth to accommodate new drain lines, and you're likely close to the existing plumbing stack. The key challenge is often finding space within the bedroom itself and ensuring proper drainage slope to connect to your main waste line.

Structural and plumbing requirements are significant here. You'll need to verify that your floor joists can handle the additional load of fixtures, tile, and water. Most split-entries have 2x10 or 2x12 joists on 16" centers, which typically work fine, but an engineer should confirm if you're adding a heavy soaker tub. The new plumbing will need to tie into your existing waste stack, and you'll need adequate fall (minimum 1% grade) for the drain lines - this sometimes means lowering the ceiling below or raising the floor slightly.

For permits in Riverview, you'll need to contact the **Town of Riverview Development Services** since this involves both building and plumbing permits. The building permit covers the structural modifications, electrical work for new outlets and ventilation, and ensures the addition meets National Building Code 2020 requirements (effective May 1, 2025 for new applications). The plumbing work must be done by a **licensed plumber** (licence issued by NB Dept. of Justice and Public Safety - Technical Inspection Services), and you'll need a plumbing permit from **TIS at 1-888-659-3222**.

Ventilation is critical in New Brunswick's climate - you'll need a proper exhaust fan vented to the exterior (not into the attic) to handle moisture. Many split-entries have moisture issues already due to our clay soils and freeze-thaw cycles, so proper vapor barriers and ventilation are essential.

Budget-wise, expect \$25,000-\$45,000 for a basic ensuite addition in your split-entry, or \$45,000-\$75,000 for a luxury renovation with high-end fixtures. This includes the plumbing rough-in (\$3,000-\$5,000), electrical work (\$1,500-\$2,500), flooring, tiling, fixtures, and permits. Costs can increase if you need structural modifications or if access to existing plumbing is challenging.

Start by measuring your master bedroom to see where an ensuite could realistically fit - even a 5'x8' space can accommodate a three-piece bathroom. Then contact a licensed plumber to assess your existing plumbing configuration and determine the best connection point to your main stack.

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Q9

Should I get a walk-in shower or keep the tub in my Fredericton bungalow?

For most Fredericton homeowners, keeping at least one tub in the house is the smarter long-term choice — but a walk-in shower can absolutely work if it's not your only bathroom or if your specific needs make it the clear winner.

Your 1960s-70s Fredericton bungalow likely has that classic main bathroom setup with a tub/shower combo, and possibly a powder room. If this is your only full bathroom, **keeping the tub maintains broader appeal** when you eventually sell. Families with young children and many buyers still prefer having a tub option available, especially in a single-story home that's perfect for aging in place.

Walk-in showers excel for daily use and accessibility. They're easier to clean, feel more spacious, and eliminate the step-over barrier that becomes important as we age. In Fredericton's older homes, a walk-in shower renovation typically runs **\$8,000-\$18,000** depending on whether you're doing a basic refresh or gutting down to the studs. That includes waterproofing, new tile, fixtures, and glass enclosure.

Here's what matters for your specific situation: **Do you actually use the tub?** Many homeowners discover they haven't taken a bath in years. If you have a second bathroom with a tub elsewhere in the house, or if mobility and safety are priorities, the walk-in shower makes perfect sense.

Consider your home's layout and your timeline. If you're planning to stay long-term, design for your needs. If you might sell within 5-10 years, the tub keeps more doors open. A compromise option is a **low-threshold tub** — easier entry than traditional tubs but still functional for bathing kids or soaking.

For permits in Fredericton, contact Development Services at (506) 460-2020 if you're moving plumbing lines or doing structural work. Most shower-to-shower conversions don't require permits, but tub-to-shower often involves moving drain lines in these older homes.

Next step: Measure your current bathroom and sketch out both layouts. Visit a few showrooms to see walk-in showers in person — the visual impact might help you decide.

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Why is there a strong smell coming from my new bathroom renovation?

Strong odors after a bathroom renovation typically indicate sewer gas leaks, off-gassing from new materials, or moisture issues that need immediate attention.

The most concerning possibility is **sewer gas infiltration** — that distinctive rotten egg smell means harmful gases are entering your home. This happens when P-traps dry out, wax rings under toilets fail, or vent pipes aren't properly connected. In New Brunswick, all plumbing work requires a licensed plumber and TIS inspection, so if this was recent work, contact your contractor immediately and call TIS at 1-888-659-3222 to report the issue.

New material off-gassing is also common and usually less dangerous but still problematic. Fresh paint, adhesives, caulking, vinyl flooring, and composite materials release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) for weeks after installation. This creates that "new construction" chemical smell. The solution is aggressive ventilation — run exhaust fans continuously and open windows when weather permits (challenging during New Brunswick winters, but essential for air quality).

Moisture-related odors develop quickly in our humid climate, especially if vapor barriers were compromised during renovation or if the exhaust fan isn't properly vented to the exterior. Many older New Brunswick homes have exhaust fans that dump into the attic instead of outside — a code violation that creates mold and odor problems.

Check your **P-traps first** — run water in all drains for 30 seconds to refill the water seals. If the smell persists, examine the toilet base for wetness or movement, which indicates a failed wax ring. For chemical odors, increase ventilation and consider an air purifier with activated carbon filters.

When to call a professional: Persistent sewer gas smells require immediate plumbing attention. Any licensed New Brunswick plumber can diagnose and fix these issues, and the work must pass TIS inspection. Don't ignore these odors — sewer gas contains methane and hydrogen sulfide, which are both health hazards and potentially explosive.

If your contractor is unresponsive and the smell suggests a code violation, contact TIS directly. They can investigate whether proper permits were obtained and inspections completed.

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Q11

What's the minimum bathroom size that meets code in New Brunswick?

New Brunswick follows the National Building Code of Canada 2020 edition (effective May 1, 2025 for new applications), which sets specific minimum dimensions for bathroom fixtures and clearances.

The NBC doesn't specify an overall minimum bathroom size, but it does require specific clearances around each fixture that effectively determine the minimum room dimensions. For a standard three-piece bathroom (toilet, sink, bathtub/shower), you're looking at **approximately 5 feet by 7 feet (35 square feet) as the practical minimum** to meet all code requirements.

Key fixture clearances under the NBC include:

- Toilet: minimum 15 inches from centerline to any wall or fixture, with 21 inches of clear space in front
- Sink: minimum 4 inches clearance on each side, 21 inches clear space in front
- Bathtub/shower: minimum 21 inches of clear floor space in front of the opening
- Door swing: must not interfere with fixture use (can swing out or be a pocket door)

Additional code requirements that affect bathroom layout include a minimum ceiling height of 6 feet 5 inches (1.95m), proper ventilation (exhaust fan or operable window), and GFCI protection for all electrical outlets. The room must also have adequate lighting over the sink area.

For basement bathrooms or secondary suites, these same clearances apply. If you're adding a bathroom as part of a secondary suite, remember that you'll need permits from your local municipality (like Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John) or your Regional Service Commission if you're in a rural area. The plumbing work must be done by a TIS-licensed plumber with proper permits.

Practical tip: While 35 square feet meets code, most homeowners find a 6x8 or 7x8 bathroom (42-56 square feet) much more comfortable and functional. If space is extremely tight, consider a two-piece bathroom (toilet and sink only) which can work in as little as 3x6 feet, though you'd need shower facilities elsewhere to meet habitability requirements for rental units.

Before finalizing your bathroom layout, have your plans reviewed by your local building inspector to ensure compliance with both the NBC and any local requirements.

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Q12

Should I hire separate plumbing and tile contractors or one company for my bathroom renovation?

For most bathroom renovations in New Brunswick, hiring separate specialists typically delivers better results than using a single company that claims to do everything. Here's why this approach usually works better and what you need to know about coordinating the work.

Specialized expertise matters significantly in bathroom renovations. A licensed plumber who focuses on rough-in work, fixture installation, and code compliance will typically deliver more reliable results than a general contractor doing plumbing as a side service. Similarly, an experienced tile installer understands substrate preparation, waterproofing membranes, and proper slope calculations that prevent costly water damage down the road.

In New Brunswick, **all plumbing work must be performed by a TIS-licensed plumber** regardless of who you hire as your main contractor. The plumber needs to pull permits through TIS (1-888-659-3222) and arrange for inspections of the rough-in and final installation. This regulatory requirement actually supports the separate contractor approach – you're already dealing with a specialized trade anyway.

Timing coordination becomes your main challenge with separate contractors, but it's manageable with good communication. The typical sequence runs: demolition, plumbing rough-in and inspection, electrical rough-in (if needed), insulation, drywall/backer board installation, waterproofing, tile work, then final plumbing fixture installation. Most experienced contractors in the Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John areas are used to coordinating

with other trades and can provide realistic scheduling.

Cost-wise, you'll often save money with specialists. A plumber focused on bathrooms can rough-in your new layout efficiently, while a dedicated tile installer typically charges \$8-15 per square foot compared to \$12-20 that general contractors often quote for subcontracted tile work. For a typical 8x10 bathroom renovation, this difference can save you \$1,500-3,000.

The exception is smaller, simpler projects – if you're just replacing a vanity and toilet without moving plumbing lines, a handyman or general contractor might handle everything efficiently. But for full renovations involving new tile, shower installations, or layout changes, specialists usually deliver superior results.

Get your plumbing permit sorted first since TIS inspections drive the timeline. Once you have your licensed plumber lined up and permits pulled, coordinate with your tile contractor on the schedule. Most tile installers in New Brunswick stay busy year-round with interior work, so book early.

Find verified plumbers and tile specialists in our New Brunswick Construction Network directory to compare local professionals who understand our climate challenges and building requirements.

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What's the best way to deal with old galvanized pipes during a bathroom renovation in New Brunswick?

Replacing galvanized pipes during your bathroom renovation is the smart move — these pipes typically last 40-50 years and most in New Brunswick homes are well past their prime, causing reduced water pressure, rusty water, and potential leaks.

Complete replacement is your best option rather than partial repairs. Galvanized pipes corrode from the inside out, so even sections that look fine externally may be severely restricted internally. Mixing old galvanized with new copper or PEX creates galvanic corrosion at connection points, leading to premature failure.

For a typical New Brunswick bathroom renovation, expect **\$2,500-\$6,000** for complete pipe replacement depending on accessibility and whether you're doing just the bathroom or the whole house. This includes new supply lines in either copper (\$8-12 per linear foot installed) or PEX (\$6-10 per linear foot installed). PEX is increasingly popular in New Brunswick due to its freeze resistance and flexibility around obstacles in older homes.

All plumbing work requires a licensed plumber — this isn't a DIY project. The plumber must hold a valid licence from NB Department of Justice and Public Safety Technical Inspection Services (TIS), obtain a plumbing permit from TIS before starting work, and arrange for TIS inspection once complete. Contact TIS at 1-888-659-3222 for permit requirements.

Timing considerations are crucial in New Brunswick's climate. If your bathroom renovation spans winter months, ensure temporary water supply arrangements are made before disconnecting existing pipes. Frozen pipes during renovation can create expensive complications in homes built before modern insulation standards.

Many post-war bungalows and 1970s-80s homes across Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John still have original galvanized systems. **Check your home's other fixtures** while the plumber is there — if the bathroom pipes are failing, your kitchen and laundry connections likely need attention too. Addressing everything during one renovation saves on permit fees and labour costs.

Get multiple quotes from licensed plumbers and verify their TIS licensing status. A complete repipe during bathroom renovation typically adds 2-3 days to your project timeline but eliminates future water pressure headaches and potential flood damage from burst pipes.

Find licensed plumbing contractors in our New Brunswick directory to get started with proper quotes and timeline planning.

Find a Bathroom Renovations Contractor

New Brunswick Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- Copperstone Construction ?
- Sussex Rental ?
- Macca Roofing Inc. ?

Browse all contractors ?

Q14

How long does a complete bathroom renovation take in Moncton?

A complete bathroom renovation in Moncton typically takes 2-4 weeks, depending on the scope of work and whether you're dealing with any surprises behind the walls — which is common in older homes throughout the Greater Moncton area.

Timeline Breakdown for Moncton Projects

The first few days involve demolition and rough-in work. If you're moving plumbing or electrical (common in older Moncton homes built in the 1970s-80s), you'll need permits from the City of Moncton's Planning & Development department (506-856-4375) and licensed trades. All plumbing work requires a TIS permit and must be done by a licensed plumber, while electrical modifications need an NB Power wiring permit (1-800-615-0522) and a licensed electrician.

Weeks 2-3 typically cover framing modifications, insulation, drywall, and flooring installation. Many Moncton-area homes have concrete foundations that can complicate plumbing relocations, potentially adding 2-3 days to the schedule. Tile work usually takes 3-5 days including cure time — New Brunswick's winter humidity can extend drying times from November through March.

What Can Extend Your Timeline

Older homes in established Moncton neighborhoods often reveal galvanized plumbing that needs replacement or knob-and-tube electrical requiring updates. Asbestos-containing materials in pre-1980 homes require professional abatement, adding 1-2 weeks and \$3,000-\$8,000 to your project.

Supply chain delays can impact timelines — custom vanities or specialty tiles may take 6-8 weeks to arrive in the Maritimes. Smart contractors order materials 4-6 weeks before starting work. Winter weather can also delay deliveries to job sites, especially in rural areas around Moncton.

Moncton-Specific Considerations

The city's clay soil and high water table mean basement bathrooms often require additional waterproofing and proper ventilation to prevent moisture issues. Many 1990s homes in Riverview and Dieppe were built with builder-grade fixtures that are now failing — expect to address underlying issues during renovation.

Managing the Process

Plan to use an alternate bathroom for the full duration — partial access rarely works as planned. Most Moncton contractors work Monday-Friday, 7am-5pm, respecting municipal noise bylaws. Quality contractors book 6-8 weeks out during peak season (April-September).

Your best next step is getting 3 detailed quotes from licensed contractors who can assess your specific situation and provide realistic timelines based on your home's age and condition.

Find a Bathroom Renovations Contractor

New Brunswick Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [R.e.j Construction ?](#)
- [Leading Edge Homes Saint John ?](#)
- [SE Metal Roof ?](#)

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Q15

Should I replace my cast iron tub or refinish it during my renovation?

Refinishing your cast iron tub is often the smarter choice — these vintage fixtures are incredibly durable and can look stunning with proper restoration, plus you'll save thousands compared to replacement.

Cost considerations make refinishing attractive for most New Brunswick homeowners. Professional tub refinishing runs \$800-\$1,500, while a quality replacement cast iron tub costs \$2,000-\$5,000 before installation. Factor in plumbing modifications (often \$1,500-\$3,000), potential tile work, and disposal of the old tub, and replacement easily hits \$8,000-\$12,000 total.

Your home's age matters significantly in this decision. If you're in one of New Brunswick's older homes — whether it's a Victorian in Fredericton's University Avenue area, a Loyalist-era home in Saint John's Uptown, or a

farmhouse in the river valleys — that cast iron tub likely has character worth preserving. These tubs were built to last decades longer than modern alternatives and often feature desirable deep soaking dimensions that newer tubs don't match.

Refinishing works best when the tub's structure is sound but the surface is worn, stained, or chipped. Professional refinishing involves chemical stripping, repair of chips or cracks, primer application, and multiple topcoat layers. A quality job should last 15-20 years with proper care. The process takes 1-2 days and requires good ventilation due to chemical fumes.

Consider replacement if you're finding structural cracks, significant rust-through, or if the tub doesn't fit your renovation goals (switching from tub to shower, for example). Modern acrylic or fiberglass units are lighter and easier to install, which matters in older homes where floor reinforcement might be needed for cast iron.

Plumbing permits aren't typically required for refinishing, but replacement work needs a plumbing permit from NB Technical Inspection Services and must be done by a licensed plumber. The work also requires a licensed electrical contractor if you're adding new lighting or ventilation.

Your next step: Get quotes for both options from contractors in our New Brunswick directory, but lean toward refinishing unless you have compelling reasons to replace. Most homeowners are amazed at how beautiful their old cast iron tub looks after professional restoration.

Find a Bathroom Renovations Contractor

New Brunswick Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [Urban Landscaping Ltd ?](#)
- [ERIK GRAVELLE ?](#)
- [Atlantic Post and Beam Construction Ltd. ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

How much value does a bathroom renovation add to a home in Moncton?

A well-executed bathroom renovation in Moncton typically adds 60-80% of the renovation cost back to your home's value, with higher returns for mid-range upgrades compared to luxury overhauls. In Moncton's current market, this translates to real value increases of \$12,000-\$35,000 for most bathroom projects.

The return on investment varies significantly based on the scope and existing condition of your bathroom. **Updating a dated 1970s bathroom with original fixtures** — common in Riverview and older Moncton neighborhoods — delivers the strongest returns because you're addressing functional obsolescence that buyers actively avoid. Replacing a pink or avocado suite, updating electrical to handle modern loads, and improving ventilation addresses real buyer concerns.

Mid-range renovations (\$25,000-\$40,000) typically see the best ROI in Moncton's market. This includes new vanity, toilet, tub/shower, flooring, paint, lighting, and basic electrical updates. Luxury renovations over \$50,000 — heated floors, steam showers, high-end tile — often see diminishing returns unless your home is already in Moncton's premium neighborhoods like Magnetic Hill or certain areas of the west end.

Location within your home matters significantly. The main bathroom renovation adds more value than a powder room update, and creating a second full bathroom where none existed can add \$15,000-\$25,000 in value — particularly valuable in Moncton's post-war bungalows that often have just one bathroom.

For Moncton specifically, focus on practical improvements that address the region's climate challenges. **Proper ventilation is crucial** — many older Moncton homes have inadequate bathroom fans, leading to moisture problems in our humid summers and during freeze-thaw cycles. A quality exhaust fan (minimum 50 CFM for standard bathrooms) prevents mold issues that can be deal-breakers for buyers.

Electrical updates often provide hidden value in Moncton's housing stock. Many homes from the 1960s-1980s have minimal bathroom electrical — adding GFCI protection, adequate lighting, and outlets for modern needs meets current National Building Code requirements and buyer expectations.

The renovation must be properly permitted through the City of Moncton's Planning & Development department (506-856-4375) for plumbing and electrical changes. Any electrical work requires a licensed contractor and NB Power wiring permit (1-800-615-0522), with final inspection by Technical Inspection Services. Unpermitted work can actually hurt your home's value and create issues during sale.

Consider your neighborhood's price ceiling when planning the renovation scope. A \$60,000 bathroom renovation may not be recoverable in areas where most homes sell under \$300,000, but could be worthwhile in established neighborhoods where homes regularly exceed \$400,000.

Start by getting quotes from licensed contractors in our directory to understand realistic costs for your specific space and goals.

Find a Bathroom Renovations Contractor

New Brunswick Construction Network connects you with experienced contractors in the directory:

- [The Garbage Guys Ltd ?](#)
- [Curb Appeal Construction & Landscaping ?](#)
- [Bernard's Lock & Key ?](#)

[Browse all contractors ?](#)

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