

NEW BRUNSWICK CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

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# General Construction

General questions about construction, home improvement, and renovations

23 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

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## What should I know about the Construction Remedies Act before starting a major renovation project in New Brunswick?

**The Construction Remedies Act (SNB 2020, c.29) is New Brunswick's construction lien and prompt payment law that protects both contractors and homeowners — understanding it before your major renovation can prevent payment disputes and legal headaches.**

This legislation replaced the old Mechanics' Lien Act in November 2021 after 45+ years, bringing New Brunswick in line with modern construction law. If contractors or suppliers aren't paid for work on your property, they can place a **construction lien** against your home, potentially preventing you from selling or refinancing until the debt is resolved.

**Key protection for homeowners:** The Act requires **holdback provisions** on construction contracts over certain thresholds. This means you're legally entitled to hold back a percentage of each payment (typically 10%) for a specified period after substantial completion. This holdback protects you if deficiencies emerge or if subcontractors claim they weren't paid by your general contractor.

**Prompt payment rules** work both ways — while contractors must pay their suppliers and subcontractors within specific timeframes, homeowners also have obligations to pay contractors promptly once work is completed satisfactorily. The Act establishes clear timelines and dispute resolution processes, reducing the likelihood of payment conflicts that can stall your project.

**Lien deadlines matter significantly.** Contractors and suppliers have strict time limits to file liens after completing their work or supplying materials. Understanding these timelines helps you know when lien risks have passed. However, don't assume you're in the clear just because time has passed — unpaid contractors can still pursue other legal remedies.

**Documentation becomes crucial** under the Act. Keep detailed records of all payments, change orders, and completion dates. Take photos of work progress and maintain written communication with your contractor. This documentation proves invaluable if disputes arise or if you need to demonstrate compliance with holdback requirements.

**Trust accounts** are another important feature. For larger projects, contractors may be required to maintain separate trust accounts for funds received from homeowners, ensuring money flows properly through the payment chain to subcontractors and suppliers.

**Before signing any major renovation contract**, verify that it complies with the Construction Remedies Act requirements. The contract should clearly outline payment schedules, holdback amounts, lien waiver procedures,

and dispute resolution mechanisms. Many contractors now include specific clauses addressing the Act's requirements.

**Professional guidance recommended:** For renovations over \$50,000, consider having a construction lawyer review your contract to ensure it properly incorporates Construction Remedies Act protections. The upfront legal cost is minimal compared to potential lien complications later.

**Next step:** Discuss lien procedures and holdback requirements with your contractor during the contract negotiation phase. A reputable contractor will be familiar with the Act and willing to structure payments accordingly. If they seem unfamiliar with these requirements, that's a red flag about their experience with larger projects.

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Q2

## What should I know about fireplaces?

**Fireplaces in New Brunswick homes require careful attention to safety codes, proper installation, and regular maintenance** — especially given our harsh winters and the fact that many homes still rely on wood heating as primary or backup heat sources.

**Wood-burning fireplaces and inserts** are extremely popular across New Brunswick, where firewood is readily available and many homeowners appreciate the backup heating during power outages. However, all installations must comply with the National Building Code of Canada 2020 edition (effective May 1, 2025 for new applications in NB). This means proper clearances from combustible materials, approved chimney systems, and adequate air supply. A licensed contractor should handle installation, and you'll need a building permit from your municipality or Regional Service Commission.

**Chimney and venting requirements** are critical in our climate. New Brunswick's heavy snowfall (250-350cm annually) and freeze-thaw cycles put extra stress on chimney systems. Masonry chimneys need proper flashing, caps, and annual inspection for cracks that allow moisture penetration. Prefab metal chimneys must be installed exactly to manufacturer specifications — even small deviations can create fire hazards. Many older NB homes have original masonry chimneys that may need rebuilding or relining before connecting a new appliance.

The **Technical Inspection Services (TIS)** doesn't directly regulate fireplace installations, but any electrical work (like gas fireplace ignition systems or blower fans) requires a licensed electrician and NB Power wiring permit (1-800-615-0522). Gas fireplaces and their venting must be installed by a licensed gas fitter — contact TIS at 1-888-659-3222 to verify licensing.

**Insurance and liability considerations** are significant. Many insurance companies require annual chimney cleaning and inspection certificates, especially for wood-burning systems. Creosote buildup from burning unseasoned wood is a major fire risk. Professional cleaning typically runs \$200-\$400 annually. If you're in a rural area on a volunteer fire department, response times for chimney fires can be lengthy — prevention is crucial.

**Costs vary widely** depending on the system type. A basic wood insert installation runs \$3,000-\$8,000 including chimney work. Gas fireplaces range \$2,500-\$12,000 installed. Full masonry fireplace construction starts around \$15,000 and can exceed \$30,000 for elaborate designs. Factor in annual maintenance costs and higher insurance premiums.

For older homes, especially those built before 1970, have the existing chimney professionally inspected before any fireplace project. Many heritage homes in Saint John, Fredericton, and rural areas have chimneys that appear solid but have hidden structural issues or inadequate clearances by modern standards.

**Your next step** should be contacting your local building permit office — whether that's your municipality or RSC — to discuss permit requirements, then getting quotes from licensed installers who can assess your specific situation and chimney condition.

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Q3

## What's the difference between a renovation and a restoration when it comes to heritage homes in the Fredericton area?

**Renovation updates a heritage home for modern living, while restoration returns it to its original historical appearance** — and in Fredericton's heritage districts, this distinction can determine whether you need special approvals.

**Renovation** involves modernizing systems and spaces while keeping the home's character. You might install new electrical and plumbing, update the kitchen with period-appropriate cabinetry, add insulation to walls, or convert a formal parlor into a family room. The goal is comfortable 21st-century living within the heritage shell. Most interior renovations in heritage homes proceed like any other project — building permit from the City of Fredericton Development Services (506-460-2020) if you're moving walls or updating major systems.

**Restoration** means returning the home to a specific historical period, often using traditional materials and techniques. This might involve stripping modern vinyl siding to reveal original clapboard, restoring multi-pane windows instead of replacing them, removing dropped ceilings to expose original plaster and trim, or recreating missing architectural details based on historical evidence. True restoration prioritizes historical accuracy over modern convenience.

In Fredericton's **heritage conservation areas** — particularly the downtown core, University Avenue area, and parts of the South Side — exterior changes to designated heritage properties require approval from the city's heritage officer before you can get a building permit. The Heritage Conservation Act (SNB 2009, c H-4.05) gives municipalities this authority. Even seemingly minor changes like window replacement, roofing materials, or paint colors may need review.

**Fredericton's Victorian and Loyalist-era homes** (common along University Avenue and in the downtown area) present unique challenges. These often have balloon framing with minimal fire stopping, knob-and-tube electrical, and plaster-and-lathe walls. A renovation approach might involve rewiring through accessible routes and adding modern insulation where possible. A restoration approach would preserve original plaster, restore period lighting fixtures, and maintain historical room layouts even if less practical.

**Practical considerations** matter significantly. Restoration typically costs 30-50% more than renovation due to specialized materials, craftspeople familiar with heritage techniques, and longer timelines. Many Fredericton heritage homeowners choose a hybrid approach — restoring key character-defining elements like front facades and main floor rooms while renovating less visible areas like kitchens and bathrooms for modern functionality.

**Your next step:** Contact the City of Fredericton's heritage officer early in your planning process to understand what restrictions apply to your specific property. Even if your home isn't formally designated, it may sit within a heritage conservation area with special requirements. They can clarify whether your planned changes constitute renovation or restoration and what approvals you'll need before starting work.

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## How do New Brunswick property taxes change after a renovation — does finishing my basement trigger a reassessment in SNB?

**Finishing your basement will likely trigger a property reassessment in New Brunswick, but the timing and impact depend on several factors specific to our province's assessment system.**

Service New Brunswick (SNB) conducts property assessments to determine taxable value, and **any structural improvements or additions that increase your home's market value can trigger a reassessment**. A finished basement definitely falls into this category since you're converting unfinished space into livable area with electrical, possibly plumbing, insulation, and flooring.

### How SNB Discovers Renovations

SNB typically learns about basement finishing through building permit applications. Since basement finishing often requires electrical work (new outlets, lighting), you'll need permits from your municipality or Regional Service Commission, plus an electrical wiring permit from NB Power (1-800-615-0522). When these permits are issued, SNB receives notification and may flag your property for reassessment.

**The reassessment isn't automatic or immediate** — SNB may reassess during their regular four-year cycle or conduct a specific reassessment if the improvement significantly changes your home's value. For a typical basement finish adding 600-800 square feet of living space, expect your assessed value to increase by \$15,000-\$40,000 depending on the quality of finishes and your area's market values.

### Financial Impact Varies by Municipality

Your actual tax increase depends on your municipal tax rate, which varies significantly across New Brunswick. In Moncton (2024 rate: \$1.4485 per \$100 assessed value), a \$25,000 assessment increase would add roughly \$362 annually to your tax bill. Fredericton's rate is typically lower, while some rural areas served by Regional Service Commissions may have different rate structures.

**The good news is that reassessments in New Brunswick are generally more conservative than other provinces** — SNB tends to assess finished basements at a lower per-square-foot value than main floor living space, recognizing the inherent limitations of below-grade areas.

### Timing and Appeals

If SNB reassesses your property, you'll receive a **Property Assessment Notice** showing the new value. You have **30 days from the notice date** to file an appeal with the Assessment and Planning Appeal Board if you believe the

assessment is incorrect. The appeal process is relatively straightforward and costs \$25 for residential properties.

**Practical next step:** Contact your local building permit office (municipality or RSC) to understand what permits you'll need for your basement finishing project. This will help you budget not just for the renovation costs (\$25,000-\$60,000 for a typical basement finish in New Brunswick), but also plan for the eventual property tax increase. Many homeowners find the added living space and increased home value worth the modest tax bump.

Remember that a properly finished basement also increases your home's resale value significantly — often by more than the renovation cost — making it one of the better return-on-investment projects for New Brunswick homeowners.

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Q5

## What's the realistic timeline to complete a renovation in northern NB when contractors are scarce in Edmundston and Campbellton?

**Renovation timelines in northern New Brunswick can stretch 50-100% longer than southern NB due to the skilled trades shortage, particularly in Edmundston and Campbellton.** What might take 8-12 weeks in Moncton or Fredericton often requires 4-6 months in these communities.

The contractor scarcity in northern NB creates a domino effect on scheduling. Many homeowners are competing for the same small pool of licensed professionals, and established contractors often have waiting lists extending 6-12 months for major projects. **Electrical and plumbing work face the biggest bottlenecks** since these trades require provincial licensing through TIS (1-888-659-3222) and many northern contractors are already booked solid.

**Realistic timeline expectations for northern NB renovations:**

- **Kitchen renovation:** 4-6 months (vs 2-3 months elsewhere)

- **Bathroom renovation:** 3-4 months (vs 6-8 weeks elsewhere)
- **Basement finishing:** 5-7 months (vs 3-4 months elsewhere)
- **Full home renovation:** 8-15 months (vs 6-10 months elsewhere)

The predominantly French-speaking market adds another layer — while bilingual services are widely available, the contractor pool becomes even smaller when language preferences are factored in. Many established contractors in Edmundston and Campbellton operate primarily in French, which can actually be an advantage for Francophone homeowners but may limit options for others.

**Supply chain logistics compound the delays.** Materials often require an extra week for delivery to northern NB, and specialty items may need to come from Moncton or even Halifax. Winter weather (November through March) can halt exterior work entirely and complicate deliveries on rural roads.

**Your best strategy is starting early and being flexible.** Contact contractors in late fall for spring projects, and consider expanding your search radius — some Fredericton or Miramichi contractors will travel north for larger projects. For permits, Edmundston handles their own building permits ((506) 739-2101), while rural areas fall under RSC 1. All electrical permits still go through NB Power (1-800-615-0522) and inspections through TIS.

The trade-off for longer timelines is often more personalized service and competitive pricing — northern NB contractors typically charge 15-25% less than their Moncton counterparts, reflecting the region's lower cost of living.

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## Find a General Contractors Contractor

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Q6

**Should i get a pre-renovation home energy audit through NB Power before starting a major reno on my Fredericton home?**

**Yes, absolutely — a pre-renovation energy audit is one of the smartest investments you can make before starting major work on your Fredericton home.** NB Power's Total Home Energy Savings Program offers comprehensive energy assessments that will identify exactly where your home is losing energy and money, giving you a roadmap for the most cost-effective improvements.

The audit typically costs around \$300-\$400 but often pays for itself through the rebates you'll qualify for. An NB Power-approved energy advisor will conduct a blower door test to measure air leakage, use thermal imaging to spot insulation gaps, and assess your heating system, windows, and overall building envelope. You'll receive a detailed report ranking improvements by cost-effectiveness — crucial information when planning your renovation budget.

**Here's why the timing matters for your Fredericton project:** If you're opening up walls, upgrading electrical, or touching the building envelope anyway, you can address multiple energy efficiency measures simultaneously. Adding proper insulation, air sealing, and upgrading to cold-climate heat pumps becomes much more affordable when it's part of your existing renovation scope rather than separate projects later.

NB Power offers significant rebates for qualifying improvements — up to \$7,000 for heat pump installations, insulation upgrades, and air sealing work. The audit identifies exactly which measures your home qualifies for, so you can factor these rebates into your renovation financing. Many Fredericton homeowners are surprised to learn their 1970s-1990s homes have substantial energy upgrade potential.

**Consider your home's likely profile:** If your Fredericton home was built before 2000, it probably has minimal insulation, original windows, and an oil furnace or older heat pump. The audit will quantify exactly how much you're losing through the building envelope and what improvements will deliver the biggest bang for your buck. This is especially valuable in Fredericton's climate, where heating costs represent a major portion of your annual energy bills.

Since you're planning major renovation work anyway, contact NB Power at 1-800-663-6272 to schedule your pre-renovation audit. You'll also need to coordinate with the City of Fredericton's Development Services (506-460-2020) for building permits, but having the energy assessment completed first ensures your renovation plans can incorporate the most cost-effective efficiency measures from day one.

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## What impact does the Bay of Fundy tidal zone have on building requirements for waterfront properties in Saint John?

**Waterfront construction in Saint John faces unique challenges due to the Bay of Fundy's extreme tidal range — the highest in the world at up to 28 feet (8.5 meters).** This dramatic tidal variation creates specific building requirements that go far beyond typical coastal construction standards.

The **flood construction level** is the critical starting point for any waterfront project in Saint John. The City of Saint John requires all habitable spaces to be built above the designated flood construction level, which accounts for both extreme high tides and storm surge potential. This typically means elevating structures significantly above the high water mark — often requiring pile foundations, elevated construction, or substantial fill. The city's Planning and Development department (506-658-2835) maintains detailed flood risk maps showing these elevation requirements for different waterfront zones.

**Foundation design** becomes particularly complex in the tidal zone. The constant saturation and dewatering of soils during tidal cycles creates challenging geotechnical conditions. Most waterfront properties require deep pile foundations driven to bedrock or stable soil layers well below the tidal influence zone. Shallow foundations simply cannot handle the constant moisture changes and potential scour from tidal action. A geotechnical assessment is mandatory for any significant waterfront construction — expect costs of \$3,000-\$8,000 for soil analysis and foundation recommendations.

**Saltwater exposure** accelerates corrosion of all building materials. The NBC 2020 requires specific material choices for marine environments, including stainless steel or hot-dip galvanized fasteners, pressure-treated lumber rated for saltwater contact, and corrosion-resistant mechanical systems. HVAC equipment, electrical panels, and water heaters must be elevated well above potential flood levels. Many waterfront properties install backup generators on upper floors since flooding can knock out electrical service.

The **storm surge risk** adds another layer of complexity. Saint John's funnel-shaped harbor amplifies storm effects, and the combination of high tides with storm surge can push water levels even higher than normal extreme tides. The city requires breakaway walls or flood vents in any enclosed areas below the flood construction level to prevent structural damage from trapped water pressure.

**Septic systems** face particular challenges in tidal areas. Standard on-site sewage disposal often isn't feasible due to saltwater intrusion and high groundwater. Many waterfront properties require connection to municipal sewer systems or specialized elevated septic designs. Contact TIS sewage permits (1-844-249-6533) early in planning — approval can take several months for complex waterfront sites.

For renovation projects on existing waterfront properties, the **50% rule** often applies — if renovations exceed 50% of the structure's value, the entire building may need to be brought up to current flood construction standards. This can turn a simple renovation into a major reconstruction project.

**Timing construction** around tidal cycles becomes operationally critical. Concrete pours, foundation work, and material deliveries must be scheduled around high tide access restrictions. Many waterfront sites are only accessible by water during certain tidal windows, significantly impacting construction logistics and costs.

Before starting any waterfront project in Saint John, obtain a **flood risk assessment** from the city and consult with contractors experienced in marine construction. The unique combination of extreme tides, saltwater exposure, and flood risk makes this specialized work that requires both proper permitting and expert execution.

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Q8

## What is the best renovations company in New Brunswick?

I can't recommend a single "best" renovation company because the right choice depends entirely on your **specific project, location, budget, and timeline**. What works perfectly for a heritage home restoration in Saint John's Uptown might not be the right fit for a modern kitchen renovation in Dieppe or a cottage conversion in rural Kings County.

**Finding the right contractor requires evaluating several key factors.** Start by confirming they hold proper licensing through NB's Technical Inspection Services (TIS) for any electrical, plumbing, or gas work. Verify their WorkSafeNB coverage at [worksafenb.ca](https://worksafenb.ca) or by calling 1-800-999-9775 — this is mandatory for any contractor with 3 or more workers and protects you from liability.

**Location matters significantly in New Brunswick's renovation market.** A contractor who excels at coastal renovations in Saint John (dealing with salt air, heritage properties, and flood-prone areas) brings different expertise than one specializing in energy efficiency upgrades for 1970s bungalows in Fredericton's suburbs. Northern New Brunswick contractors often work primarily in French, which can be an advantage if you're more comfortable in that language.

**Project scope determines the right fit.** Some companies excel at high-end custom work, others focus on insurance restoration, and still others specialize in energy efficiency retrofits taking advantage of NB Power rebates. A basement finishing specialist might not be your best choice for a complex kitchen renovation involving structural changes that require building permits from your municipality or Regional Service Commission.

**Get multiple quotes and check recent references.** Ask specifically about projects similar to yours completed within the past two years. New Brunswick's construction costs run 20-30% below major urban centers, but skilled labour shortages in some trades can affect both pricing and timelines, especially in rural areas.

**Consider the permit requirements for your project.** If you're in an incorporated area like Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John, building permits come from the municipality. In rural areas, your Regional Service Commission handles permits. The right contractor will be familiar with your local authority's requirements and help navigate the process.

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Q9

**What should i look for when buying a fixer-upper in rural New Brunswick where there's no municipal building inspection?**

**Buying a fixer-upper in rural New Brunswick requires extra diligence since you won't have municipal building inspectors catching issues during your renovation.** In unincorporated areas, your Regional Service Commission (RSC) handles building permits, but the inspection process is often less frequent than in cities like Moncton or Fredericton.

**Foundation and structural concerns** should be your first priority. Many rural NB homes were built when codes were less stringent, and you'll find everything from fieldstone foundations to concrete block that's seen decades of freeze-thaw cycles. Look for bowing walls, major cracks, or settlement issues. The frost line in New Brunswick runs 4+ feet deep, so any additions or outbuildings may have shallow foundations that will cause problems. Walk the entire perimeter and check for proper grading away from the house.

**Electrical systems in older rural properties** often tell a story of decades of DIY additions. You might encounter knob-and-tube wiring, federal panels (fire hazard), or a mix of electrical work done over the years. Remember that all electrical work in New Brunswick must be done by licensed electricians with proper NB Power wiring permits (1-800-615-0522) and TIS inspections. Budget \$8,000-\$15,000+ for a complete electrical upgrade in a typical rural home.

**Well and septic systems** are critical since you won't have municipal water and sewer. Have the well tested for bacteria and heavy metals — rural NB wells can have issues with iron, sulfur, or even arsenic in some geological areas. The septic system should be pumped and inspected; replacement costs \$15,000-\$25,000+ depending on soil conditions and lot size. You'll need TIS permits (1-844-249-6533) for any septic work, and the system must meet current NB Reg 2009-137 standards.

**Heating systems** in rural properties are often oil-fired, and many tanks are nearing end of life. Underground oil tank removal can cost \$5,000-\$8,000+ if contamination is present. Factor in \$12,000-\$18,000 for a cold-climate heat pump conversion with backup heating. Many rural homes also rely on wood heating — inspect chimneys carefully and budget for cleaning/repairs.

**Insulation and air sealing** in older rural homes is typically minimal. You'll likely find little to no insulation in walls, and what's there might be vermiculite (potential asbestos). Budget \$8,000-\$15,000+ to bring insulation up to modern standards. Have the home tested for radon too — New Brunswick has some of Canada's highest radon levels, and rural homes on wells face even higher risk.

**Water damage and moisture issues** are common in rural properties, especially those that have sat vacant. Check for ice dam damage, basement flooding, or plumbing freeze-ups. Clay soils throughout much of rural NB create drainage challenges, so exterior waterproofing might be needed.

Before you buy, contact your local RSC to understand what permits you'll need for your planned renovations. Your RSC will depend on the specific rural area — for example, RSC 11 covers rural Fredericton area, while RSC 7

handles rural Moncton/Shediac areas. Get quotes from licensed contractors early in your planning since rural areas can face longer wait times for skilled trades.

The key advantage of rural fixer-uppers is typically lower purchase prices and more flexibility with additions or outbuildings, but factor in the higher renovation costs and longer timelines when rural contractors are booked solid.

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## Should I renovate my house before putting it on the market in Fredericton?

**Whether to renovate before selling your Fredericton home depends on your property's condition, the local market, and your timeline — but strategic updates often pay off in New Brunswick's competitive capital region market.**

The Fredericton real estate market has remained relatively strong, with buyers often willing to pay premiums for move-in-ready homes. However, not all renovations deliver equal returns, and over-improving for your neighborhood can actually hurt your bottom line.

### High-Impact Updates That Typically Pay Off

Fresh paint throughout the home is your best investment — it's inexpensive (\$3,000-\$8,000 for a full house) but dramatically improves first impressions. In Fredericton's older neighborhoods like the Southside or University Avenue area, many homes still have dated color schemes that immediately signal "needs work" to buyers.

Kitchen and bathroom updates offer strong returns, but focus on refreshing rather than gutting. New countertops, cabinet hardware, and modern fixtures can transform a space for \$8,000-\$15,000 per room rather than the \$30,000-\$60,000 full renovation route. Given that many Fredericton homes were built in the 1970s-1990s, updating harvest gold or avocado fixtures makes an immediate impact.

### Energy Efficiency Improvements

Fredericton buyers are increasingly energy-conscious, especially with heating costs. If your home still relies on an old oil furnace, consider a cold-climate heat pump installation (\$8,000-\$15,000 after NB Power rebates). This upgrade often pays for itself through increased sale price and faster selling time.

Window replacement can be worthwhile if your home has original single-pane windows from the 1980s or earlier. New windows (\$600-\$1,200 each) improve both appearance and energy efficiency — crucial selling points during Fredericton's harsh winters.

### What to Skip

Avoid major structural changes, luxury finishes that exceed your neighborhood's standards, or any work requiring permits from the City of Fredericton unless absolutely necessary. Permit timelines can delay your listing, and buyers may worry about incomplete inspections.

Don't renovate if your home needs significant repairs — address foundation issues, roof problems, or electrical/plumbing concerns first. Buyers will notice these problems regardless of how beautiful your new kitchen looks.

## Get Professional Guidance

Contact a local real estate agent familiar with your Fredericton neighborhood for a comparative market analysis. They can identify which improvements will actually increase your sale price versus which ones simply help your home sell faster. Sometimes a quick sale at current market value beats waiting months for a renovated home to recoup improvement costs.

If you do decide to renovate, browse verified contractors in our New Brunswick directory to ensure quality work that won't raise red flags during buyer inspections.

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Q11

## What should I expect to pay for a heat pump installation in New Brunswick?

Heat pump installations in New Brunswick typically range from **\$4,500-\$8,000 for a single-zone mini-split system**, **\$8,000-\$15,000 for a multi-zone system**, and **\$12,000-\$25,000 for a central ducted heat pump system**. The wide range depends on your home's size, existing ductwork, electrical upgrades needed, and whether you're keeping your oil furnace as backup.

**Cold-climate considerations are crucial** in New Brunswick's harsh winters. You'll want a system rated to at least -25°C, with many contractors recommending -30°C rated units for northern areas like Edmundston or Campbellton. Popular brands performing well in NB include Mitsubishi's Hyper-Heat series, Daikin's Aurora line, and Fujitsu's Halcyon systems.

Most New Brunswick homes still rely on oil heating, making heat pump conversions extremely popular. **The typical approach is keeping your existing oil furnace as backup** rather than complete removal — this ensures comfort during extreme cold snaps and power outages. A licensed HVAC contractor can integrate the systems so the oil

furnace only kicks in when outdoor temperatures drop below the heat pump's effective range.

**Electrical upgrades often add \$1,500-\$4,000** to the project cost. Many older NB homes need panel upgrades or dedicated circuits for heat pump installations. All electrical work requires a licensed electrician (licensed through NB Technical Inspection Services), an NB Power wiring permit (1-800-615-0522), and final inspection by TIS.

**NB Power's Total Home Energy Savings Program** offers rebates for qualifying heat pump installations — typically \$500-\$1,500 depending on the system efficiency. These rebates help offset the higher upfront cost compared to simply replacing an oil furnace.

Installation complexity varies significantly with your home's age and location. **Rural properties often face higher costs** due to travel time and potential electrical service upgrades. Coastal areas require corrosion-resistant components due to salt air exposure.

**Timeline expectations:** 2-4 weeks from contract signing to installation during peak season (spring/fall), potentially longer in winter. Most contractors book heat pump installations heavily in September-November as homeowners prepare for heating season.

Your next step should be getting quotes from at least three licensed HVAC contractors who can assess your home's specific needs, existing electrical capacity, and integration requirements with your current heating system.

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- Yeet it! Junk Removal and Demolition ?
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Q12

## What kind of vapor barrier do I need in my walls for New Brunswick's climate?

For New Brunswick's climate, you need a **Class I vapor barrier (polyethylene sheeting)** on the warm side of your insulation, which means on the interior face of your wall assembly before drywall installation.

The **National Building Code of Canada 2020** (adopted by New Brunswick, effective May 1, 2025 for new applications) requires a vapor barrier with a permeance rating of 60 ng/(Pa·s·m<sup>2</sup>) or less. The most common and code-compliant option is **6-mil polyethylene sheeting**, which provides excellent vapor control for our cold climate conditions.

## Why New Brunswick Needs Interior Vapor Barriers

New Brunswick's harsh winters create significant temperature differentials between heated indoor air and frigid exterior conditions. Without proper vapor control, warm, humid indoor air can migrate through wall cavities and condense when it hits cold surfaces, leading to moisture damage, mold growth, and structural deterioration. Our climate zone requires vapor barriers on the warm (interior) side to prevent this moisture migration.

**Installation requirements** are critical for effectiveness. The polyethylene must be continuous with all seams overlapped by at least 150mm (6 inches) and sealed with acoustical sealant or vapor barrier tape. Penetrations for electrical boxes, plumbing, and other services must be carefully sealed. Many contractors use vapor barrier boxes around electrical outlets or apply expanding foam around penetrations.

For **heritage homes** built before 1950 (common in Saint John's Uptown, Fredericton's downtown, and rural Loyalist-era properties), retrofitting vapor barriers can be tricky since these homes were designed to "breathe." Adding vapor barriers without addressing air leakage can sometimes trap moisture. A building envelope specialist should assess older homes before major vapor barrier work.

**Modern alternatives** include vapor barrier paint for minor renovations where installing poly sheeting isn't practical. However, these paints typically don't achieve the same low permeance ratings as 6-mil poly and aren't suitable for new construction or major renovations.

If you're planning new construction or a major renovation requiring building permits, contact your local authority - municipalities like Moncton (856-4375) or Fredericton (460-2020) in incorporated areas, or your Regional Service Commission in rural areas. The vapor barrier installation will be inspected before drywall installation, and proper installation is essential for passing inspection and maintaining your home warranty coverage.

For complex wall assemblies or heritage retrofits, consult with a building envelope specialist who understands New Brunswick's specific climate challenges and code requirements.

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## Find a General Contractors Contractor

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## What type of exterior paint handles New Brunswick's salt air and temperature swings?

**Acrylic latex paint with high-quality resin is your best defense against New Brunswick's harsh coastal conditions and extreme temperature swings.** Look for 100% acrylic formulations specifically rated for coastal environments — these maintain flexibility through freeze-thaw cycles while resisting salt corrosion.

**Premium acrylic latex paints** like Benjamin Moore Aura, Sherwin-Williams Duration, or PPG Timeless offer superior adhesion and durability in maritime climates. These paints contain advanced resins that expand and contract with your siding through temperature swings from -25°C winters to +30°C summers. The salt air along the Bay of Fundy, Saint John harbour, and Northumberland Strait coast is particularly aggressive — cheaper paints will chalk, fade, and peel within 2-3 years.

For **coastal properties** in Saint John, Shediac, Bathurst, or anywhere within 10km of saltwater, choose paints with built-in mildew resistance and UV blockers. The constant moisture and salt spray create ideal conditions for algae and mold growth. Many contractors in these areas recommend adding a mildewcide booster to the paint for extra protection.

**Surface preparation is critical** — more important than the paint itself. Power wash to remove salt buildup, scrape loose paint, sand glossy surfaces, and prime any bare wood with a high-quality oil-based or shellac primer. Skip this step and even premium paint will fail. On older homes (pre-1978), test for lead paint before disturbing — licensed abatement may be required.

**Timing matters significantly** in New Brunswick's short painting season. Plan exterior work between late May and early September when nighttime temperatures stay above 10°C. Coastal fog can extend drying times, so avoid painting when humidity exceeds 85% or when morning dew is heavy.

Expect to pay **\$4,500-\$12,000** for a full exterior paint job on a typical bungalow, with coastal properties at the higher end due to extra prep work and premium materials. Quality paint costs \$80-\$120 per gallon but lasts 8-12 years versus 4-5 years for builder-grade paint.

**Professional application** is worth considering for multi-story homes or complex trim work. Licensed painters carry WorkSafeNB coverage (verify at [worksafenb.ca](https://worksafenb.ca)) and understand local weather patterns that affect paint performance.

Find experienced exterior painting contractors familiar with coastal conditions in our New Brunswick Construction Network directory — they'll know which products perform best in your specific microclimate.

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## Find a Painting Contractor

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Q14

## Should I go with a cold climate heat pump or stick with oil heat in NB?

**Cold climate heat pumps are the clear winner for most New Brunswick homes**, offering significant savings and environmental benefits over oil heating. With NB's push toward electrification and rising oil costs, heat pumps represent the future of home heating in the province.

**Heat pumps rated to -25°C or colder** will handle the vast majority of New Brunswick's winter weather while providing efficient heating and cooling. During extreme cold snaps that drop below -25°C (which happen but aren't sustained), you'll need backup heating — many homeowners keep their existing oil furnace as backup or install electric baseboard for the few coldest days.

The **financial case is compelling**. Oil heating costs have become increasingly volatile, often running \$3,000-\$5,000+ annually for a typical NB home. A properly sized cold climate heat pump can cut your heating costs by 40-60%, with the added bonus of air conditioning during our increasingly warm summers. Installation typically runs \$8,000-\$15,000 for a ducted system or \$12,000-\$20,000 for a multi-zone mini-split setup.

**NB Power's Total Home Energy Savings Program** offers rebates for qualifying heat pump installations, helping offset the upfront cost. The payback period is typically 5-8 years, and heat pumps generally last 15-20 years with proper maintenance.

From a **practical standpoint**, heat pumps require less maintenance than oil systems — no annual tank inspections, no fuel deliveries to schedule, and no risk of running out of heating fuel during a winter storm. If you're keeping oil as backup, you can significantly reduce your annual oil consumption and tank maintenance concerns.

**Consider your home's characteristics** when deciding. Well-insulated homes built after 1990 are ideal candidates. Older homes may benefit from some weatherization first — air sealing and insulation upgrades will improve heat pump performance and reduce the size (and cost) of the system you need.

**For rural properties**, heat pumps eliminate the logistics of oil delivery, which can be challenging during winter road conditions. If your oil tank is aging (20+ years), replacement costs (\$3,000-\$8,000+ for underground tanks) make the switch even more attractive.

Your next step is getting a **proper heat load calculation** from a licensed HVAC contractor. They'll assess your home's insulation, windows, and heating requirements to size the system correctly. An oversized heat pump won't operate efficiently, while an undersized unit will struggle during cold weather. Look for contractors certified in cold climate heat pump installation — the technology and installation requirements differ significantly from standard heat pumps.

Find qualified HVAC contractors familiar with NB's climate requirements in our New Brunswick Construction Network directory.

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## Find a General Contractors Contractor

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Q15

## Are there any grants for building rental housing in New Brunswick?

**Yes, New Brunswick offers several grant and financing programs specifically for rental housing development**, though availability and funding levels change regularly as programs are updated or reach capacity.

The **New Brunswick Housing Corporation (NBHC)** administers the primary rental housing incentives. Their **Rental Development Program** provides forgivable loans and grants to developers who commit to affordable rental units for specified periods. This program typically targets projects with 20% or more units at below-market rents,

with funding amounts varying based on the number of affordable units included.

**CMHC's National Housing Co-Investment Fund** remains active for larger rental projects (10+ units) that meet affordability and accessibility criteria. This federal program offers low-interest loans and forgivable loans up to \$47.8 million per project, though the application process is competitive and requires detailed financial projections.

For smaller-scale rental development, some New Brunswick municipalities offer **property tax incentives** or **development fee reductions** for purpose-built rental housing. Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John have all implemented various incentive programs, though these vary significantly by location and project type.

**Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot communities** in New Brunswick may have additional housing development incentives tied to population retention efforts. Communities like Fredericton and Moncton participate in programs that can include housing development support.

The **Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)** occasionally funds rental housing projects that demonstrate economic development benefits, particularly in rural areas experiencing population growth from immigration or resource development.

**Important considerations for any rental housing grant application:** Most programs require long-term affordability commitments (10-20 years), detailed market studies, and compliance with accessibility standards. Projects must meet National Building Code 2020 requirements (Tier 2 energy efficiency mandatory as of May 1, 2025) and obtain proper building permits from your municipality or Regional Service Commission.

**Next step:** Contact NBHC directly at (506) 453-2300 or visit [gnb.ca/housing](http://gnb.ca/housing) for current program availability and application deadlines. Grant programs often have limited funding windows and specific application periods, so timing is critical for securing funding.

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## Why do my floors creak more after my renovation than before?

**Creaky floors after renovation are actually quite common and usually indicate that something shifted during the work or new materials are settling into place.** The good news is that most post-renovation floor squeaks can be identified and fixed with the right approach.

**Movement and settling** are the most likely culprits. If your renovation involved any structural work, plumbing changes, or even heavy equipment moving through the house, the subfloor may have shifted slightly. New Brunswick's older homes — especially those Victorian and post-war bungalows common in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John — often have subfloors that weren't originally glued down, just nailed. Over time, nails can work loose, and renovation activity can accelerate this process.

**Temperature and humidity changes** during construction also play a role. If your renovation happened during our heating season (October through April), the dramatic indoor climate changes from having doors open, dust barriers up, or heating systems temporarily shut down can cause wood subfloors and joists to expand and contract more than usual. This movement can create new gaps between the subfloor and joists.

The type of renovation work matters too. **Bathroom or kitchen renovations** often involve cutting into subfloors for new plumbing or electrical runs. Even small cuts can weaken the subfloor's connection to the joists. If workers had to remove and reinstall sections of subfloor, these areas are prime candidates for squeaks if they weren't properly re-secured.

**What you can do depends on your floor type and access.** If you have basement access below the squeaky areas, you can often spot the problem from underneath — look for gaps between the subfloor and joists, or subfloor sections that move when someone walks above. Construction adhesive applied to these gaps, or screws driven up through the joists into the subfloor, typically solve the issue.

For hardwood floors over a basement, the fix might be as simple as driving finish screws through the hardwood into the subfloor at squeak points. **However, if you have in-floor heating, tile, or engineered flooring, this becomes more complex** and you'll want a flooring contractor to assess the situation.

**Professional help is recommended** if the squeaking is widespread, if you're hearing new sounds from multiple rooms, or if you notice any floor sagging or soft spots. A qualified contractor can determine whether the issue is simple settling or indicates a structural concern that needs addressing. They can also access areas that might be difficult for homeowners to reach safely.

Most post-renovation floor squeaks resolve themselves within 6-12 months as materials fully settle, but addressing obvious problems early prevents them from worsening.

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## Find a Flooring Contractor

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

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- Thomson Plumbing ?
- Arctic Fox Construction Inc. ?

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Q17

## What's the best way to plan renovations for a heritage home in Saint John?

**Heritage homes in Saint John require careful planning that balances preservation with modern functionality.** Start by determining if your property is designated under New Brunswick's Heritage Conservation Act (SNB 2009, c H-4.05) — many Uptown Saint John homes from the Loyalist era (1780s-1840s) and Victorian period (1870s-1920s) carry heritage protection that requires municipal approval for exterior changes.

**Contact the City of Saint John's heritage officer first** before making any exterior modifications. Even non-designated heritage properties in established neighborhoods may face design guidelines. The city's Growth & Community Services department (506-658-2835) can clarify what approvals you'll need and connect you with the heritage planning team.

For **structural assessment**, these older homes often feature hand-hewn timber frames or balloon framing that requires specialized knowledge. Post-and-beam construction from the Loyalist era can be remarkably sound after 200+ years, but moisture infiltration around stone foundations is common. Victorian-era balloon framing may lack proper fire stopping between floors — a critical safety upgrade during renovation.

**Electrical and mechanical systems** in heritage homes typically need complete replacement. Knob-and-tube wiring was common through the 1940s and must be updated to current standards. All electrical work requires a licensed contractor and NB Power wiring permit (1-800-615-0522), followed by Technical Inspection Services inspection (1-888-659-3222). Original plaster-and-lathe walls make rewiring challenging — budget 30-40% more than standard drywall homes.

**Lead paint and asbestos** are virtually guaranteed in pre-1950 homes. Test before disturbing any surfaces. Professional abatement for lead paint runs \$8-15 per square foot; asbestos removal varies widely based on location

and type. Never attempt DIY removal of either material.

**Insulation upgrades** require careful moisture management. These homes were designed to "breathe" — adding modern vapor barriers without proper ventilation can trap moisture and cause rot. Dense-pack cellulose in walls and spray foam in rim joists often work better than batt insulation. Basement insulation is particularly tricky with stone or rubble foundations.

**Window restoration vs replacement** is a common dilemma. Original windows often have heritage value but terrible energy performance. Professional restoration with storm windows can achieve decent efficiency while preserving character. Budget \$800-1,500 per window for quality restoration, or \$600-1,200 for heritage-appropriate replacements.

**Heating system upgrades** are essential — many heritage homes still rely on oil furnaces or outdated systems. Cold-climate heat pumps work well but require backup heating for New Brunswick's -25°C winters. Ductwork installation in timber-frame construction needs careful fire separation planning.

**Plan your timeline around Saint John's coastal climate** — exterior work is best May through September. Winter moisture from Bay of Fundy fog can complicate interior work if the building envelope isn't sealed properly.

**Budget 20-30% more than standard renovations** for heritage-specific challenges: custom millwork, specialized trades, unexpected structural issues, and longer timelines for heritage approvals. A full heritage home renovation typically runs \$150-300 per square foot depending on the scope.

Start with a comprehensive assessment by contractors experienced in heritage work — find verified professionals familiar with Saint John's historic housing stock in our New Brunswick directory.

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## Find a General Contractors Contractor

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- [Larmondin Carpentry ?](#)
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Q18

# What's the best way to plan a renovation around New Brunswick's harsh winters?

**Winter planning is absolutely critical for New Brunswick renovations** — our 5-month construction window (May through September) means timing decisions can make or break your project timeline and budget.

**Start planning in January for spring construction.** Popular contractors book their schedules 3-4 months ahead, especially for exterior work. Get your building permits sorted early — whether through your municipality (like Moncton, Saint John, or Fredericton) or your Regional Service Commission for rural areas. Permit processing can take 2-6 weeks depending on project complexity.

The **frost line depth of 4+ feet** across New Brunswick creates hard deadlines for foundation work. Any concrete pours, footings, or excavation must be completed before ground freeze-up in November. Once temperatures consistently drop below -10°C, concrete work requires expensive heated enclosures that can double your costs.

**Interior renovations are your winter lifeline.** Kitchens, bathrooms, basement finishing, and electrical upgrades can proceed year-round. This is actually the perfect time to tackle projects requiring TIS inspections (electrical, plumbing, gas work) since you're not competing with the spring rush. Licensed contractors often offer better winter rates for interior work when their exterior schedules are lighter.

**Material delivery logistics become crucial** in rural New Brunswick. Plan for potential road closures and difficult access during ice storms and heavy snow. Order materials early and ensure proper indoor storage — lumber needs to acclimate to interior temperatures before installation to prevent warping and gaps.

For **multi-phase projects**, sequence exterior work first (roofing, siding, windows) during the warm months, then move interior work to winter. This protects your investment and keeps the project moving year-round. Heat pump installations are popular winter projects since you're already dealing with heating challenges.

**Your next step:** Contact contractors now for spring quotes, secure your building permits, and book any structural or exterior work for the May-September window. Use winter months for planning, material selection, and interior phases.

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## Find a General Contractors Contractor

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

- Bernard's Lock & Key ?
- Drisdelle Homes ?
- Arctic Fox Construction Inc. ?

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## What are typical plumber rates per hour in Greater Moncton?

**Plumbing rates in Greater Moncton typically range from \$85-\$120 per hour for licensed journeyman plumbers, with master plumbers charging \$100-\$140 per hour.** Emergency calls, evenings, and weekends often carry a 1.5x to 2x premium, pushing rates to \$130-\$200+ per hour.

Several factors influence pricing in the Greater Moncton area. **Service call minimums** are standard — most plumbers charge for at least one hour even for quick fixes, with many adding a \$50-\$100 trip charge. **Apprentice rates** run \$60-\$85 per hour when working under supervision, though the licensed plumber must still oversee and sign off on all work.

**Project complexity significantly affects pricing.** Simple repairs like replacing a faucet or unclogging a drain might stay at the base hourly rate, while rough-in plumbing for new bathrooms, gas line installation, or tricky access situations (crawl spaces, finished basements) command premium rates. Many plumbers quote flat rates for common jobs — toilet installation (\$200-\$400), water heater replacement (\$800-\$1,500 plus equipment), or bathroom rough-in (\$1,200-\$2,500).

The **licensing requirement** in New Brunswick keeps rates relatively stable. All plumbing work must be performed by someone holding a valid plumber's licence from NB Technical Inspection Services (TIS), and permits are required for new installations or major repairs. This regulatory framework means you're paying for verified expertise — unlicensed "handyman" plumbing simply isn't legal for anything beyond the most basic maintenance.

**Seasonal demand** affects availability more than pricing. Spring brings basement flooding calls and sump pump installations, while winter sees frozen pipe emergencies. Summer renovation season keeps most plumbers booked solid, so expect longer wait times for non-urgent work.

**Geographic considerations** within Greater Moncton can add costs. Plumbers serving rural Westmorland County areas (covered by RSC 7) may charge travel time for jobs outside the main urban core, while those focused on Moncton, Dieppe, and Riverview typically don't.

When hiring, always verify the plumber's TIS licence and ask for proof of WorkSafeNB coverage — mandatory for any contractor with three or more employees. Get written quotes for larger projects, and remember that permit costs (\$100-\$300 depending on scope) are typically separate from labour rates.

For urgent repairs or new installations, browse verified licensed plumbers in our New Brunswick Construction Network directory to compare local professionals serving the Greater Moncton area.

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## Find a Plumbing Contractor

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Q20

## What does a proper renovation contract look like in New Brunswick?

**A proper renovation contract in New Brunswick should be a detailed, written agreement that protects both you and your contractor while ensuring compliance with provincial laws.** Under New Brunswick's Construction Remedies Act (which replaced the old Mechanics' Lien Act in 2021), written contracts are essential for protecting your property from potential liens and ensuring clear payment terms.

### Essential Contract Elements

Your contract must include complete contact information for both parties, including the contractor's business registration number and WorkSafeNB account number. In New Brunswick, any contractor with 3 or more workers must carry WorkSafeNB coverage - verify this before signing anything. The scope of work should be detailed enough that another contractor could complete the project using your contract as a guide.

Include specific material specifications, not just "standard grade" or "contractor's choice." For example, specify "Owens Corning R-20 batt insulation" rather than just "insulation." This prevents disputes and ensures you get what you're paying for. Timeline details should include start date, substantial completion date, and any milestone dates for key phases like rough-in inspections.

### Payment Structure and Lien Protection

Never pay large amounts upfront - New Brunswick's Construction Remedies Act allows contractors to place liens on your property for unpaid work. Structure payments tied to completion milestones: typically 10% down, progress payments at 25%, 50%, and 75% completion, with 10-15% held back until final completion and lien period expiry (45 days after substantial completion).

The contract should specify who obtains permits and pays permit fees. For major renovations requiring building permits from your municipality or Regional Service Commission, ensure the contractor will pull permits in their

name and provide copies. Remember that electrical work requires both a building permit AND a separate wiring permit from NB Power (1-800-615-0522), plus final inspection by Technical Inspection Services.

### **Change Orders and Code Compliance**

Include a detailed change order process - any modifications to the original scope must be in writing with adjusted pricing and timeline impacts. This is crucial because renovation projects often uncover unexpected issues like outdated wiring or structural problems requiring additional work.

Your contract should explicitly state that all work will comply with the National Building Code of Canada 2020 edition (New Brunswick's adopted code, effective May 1, 2025 for new applications). For energy efficiency upgrades, specify whether work will meet current code minimums or higher performance standards like those required for NB Power rebates.

### **Insurance and Warranty Terms**

Verify the contractor carries adequate liability insurance (\$2 million minimum recommended) and provide a certificate of insurance. Include warranty terms - typically one year for workmanship, with manufacturer warranties on materials passing through to you. For specialized work like roofing or HVAC, longer warranties (5-10 years) are common.

### **Dispute Resolution**

Include a dispute resolution clause specifying mediation before litigation. New Brunswick's Court of King's Bench handles major construction disputes, while Small Claims Court covers disputes up to \$20,000 (filing fees: \$50 for claims under \$3,000, \$100 for \$3,000-\$20,000).

### **Red Flags to Avoid**

Never sign contracts requiring full payment upfront, lacking specific material details, or missing permit responsibilities. Door-to-door contractors demanding immediate signatures should be avoided entirely. Legitimate contractors will encourage you to take time reviewing contracts and won't pressure immediate decisions.

For complex projects over \$50,000, consider having a lawyer review the contract before signing. Browse verified contractors who understand proper contracting practices in our New Brunswick Construction Network directory.

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### **Find a General Contractors Contractor**

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- Lawrence Landscaping ?
- Sussex Rental ?

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Q21

## What should I know about vermiculite insulation before renovating an older New Brunswick home?

**Vermiculite insulation in older New Brunswick homes requires extreme caution — it may contain asbestos and should never be disturbed without professional assessment.** If your home was built between 1920-1990, there's a significant chance any vermiculite insulation contains asbestos fibers.

### What Is Vermiculite Insulation?

Vermiculite appears as small, lightweight, accordion-like pellets that are silver-gold or gray in color. It was commonly blown into attics and wall cavities across New Brunswick from the 1920s through the 1990s. Much of the vermiculite used in Canada came from the Libby, Montana mine, which was contaminated with naturally occurring asbestos.

**The biggest risk comes from the Zonolite brand**, manufactured by W.R. Grace using Libby vermiculite. However, any vermiculite insulation should be treated as potentially hazardous until proven otherwise through professional testing.

### New Brunswick Housing Context

Post-war bungalows built between 1945-1970 are particularly common across Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and Oromocto (especially around CFB Gagetown). Many of these homes used vermiculite as an affordable insulation solution. Victorian and Edwardian homes in older neighborhoods like Fredericton's University Avenue area or Saint John's South End may also contain vermiculite if they were re-insulated during the mid-20th century.

### Health Risks and Safety Protocols

Asbestos fibers in vermiculite become dangerous when airborne. **Never attempt to remove, sample, or disturb vermiculite yourself.** Even walking in an attic with vermiculite can release fibers. The microscopic asbestos fibers can cause mesothelioma, lung cancer, and asbestosis decades after exposure.

Before any renovation affecting areas with suspected vermiculite, hire a certified asbestos inspector. In New Brunswick, look for professionals certified by the Canadian Association of Environmental Analytical Laboratories (CAEAL) or equivalent. Testing typically costs \$300-\$800 and involves collecting samples under controlled conditions.

## Renovation Implications

If vermiculite is confirmed to contain asbestos, your renovation costs will increase significantly. **Professional asbestos abatement in New Brunswick ranges from \$15-\$25 per square foot**, with minimum project costs often \$3,000-\$5,000. This includes containment, removal by licensed contractors, air monitoring, and proper disposal at approved facilities.

For major renovations like kitchen expansions, bathroom additions, or basement finishing, you may need to address vermiculite in adjacent areas even if you're not directly disturbing it. The National Building Code of Canada 2020 (effective May 1, 2025 for new applications in NB) requires proper handling of hazardous materials during construction.

## What You Can Do Safely

If vermiculite is present but undisturbed, it may be safer to leave it in place and work around it. You can seal access points to prevent fiber migration and ensure your HVAC system doesn't draw air from contaminated areas. **Never use leaf blowers, shop vacuums, or compressed air near vermiculite** — these can disperse fibers throughout your home.

For attic work, professional contractors can install new insulation over existing vermiculite using proper containment methods. This approach costs \$3-\$6 per square foot compared to \$15-\$25 for full removal.

## Next Steps

Before planning any renovation, have a qualified inspector assess your home's insulation. If vermiculite is found, get quotes from certified asbestos abatement contractors who are licensed in New Brunswick. The province's Technical Inspection Services (TIS) at 1-888-659-3222 can provide guidance on regulatory requirements, and WorkSafeNB (1-800-999-9775) has specific protocols for protecting workers during asbestos-related construction.

Remember that proper handling protects not just your family, but also the contractors working in your home — WorkSafeNB requires specific safety measures when asbestos is present on job sites.

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## Find a Insulation Contractor

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- [East Coast Air HVAC Inc ?](#)
- [PERMA-DRY ?](#)
- [Brunswick insulation & roofing ?](#)

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## What type of concrete sealer works best for driveways that get road salt in New Brunswick?

**For New Brunswick driveways exposed to road salt, penetrating silane/siloxane sealers are your best defense against freeze-thaw damage and salt penetration.** These sealers chemically bond with the concrete to repel water and chlorides while allowing the surface to breathe.

**Penetrating sealers** like Prosoco CONSOLIDECK LS, Foundation Armor SX5000, or Euclid Chemical E-Con are specifically formulated to resist chloride intrusion from road salt. Unlike topical sealers that sit on the surface, these penetrate 2-4mm deep and won't peel or wear away from snow plowing. They typically last 7-10 years versus 2-3 years for surface sealers.

New Brunswick's brutal freeze-thaw cycles make this choice critical. With temperatures swinging from -25°C to +5°C repeatedly through winter, any water that penetrates your concrete will expand when frozen, creating cracks and spalling. Road salt accelerates this process by allowing water to remain liquid at lower temperatures, giving it more opportunities to penetrate before freezing.

**Application timing matters significantly** in our climate. Apply when daytime temperatures are consistently above 10°C and no rain is forecast for 24 hours. Late spring (May) or early fall (September) are ideal windows. The concrete should be at least 28 days old and completely dry.

For **existing damaged driveways**, repair all cracks and spalled areas first using a polymer-modified concrete repair compound rated for freeze-thaw resistance. Clean the surface thoroughly with a concrete degreaser to remove oil stains and winter salt residue before sealing.

**Cost expectations** for a typical two-car driveway: \$300-600 for professional-grade penetrating sealer and application, or \$150-300 for quality DIY products like Foundation Armor or RadonSeal. While more expensive upfront than basic acrylic sealers, penetrating sealers provide far superior protection against our harsh maritime winters.

Consider having the work done by a contractor experienced with New Brunswick conditions - improper application can trap moisture and cause more damage than no sealer at all. Look for contractors familiar with silane/siloxane products and who understand our province's unique combination of salt exposure, freeze-thaw cycles, and coastal moisture.

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**Find a Masonry Contractor**

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- Leading Edge Homes Saint John ?
- alka masonry ?

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Q23

## How much do electricians charge in New Brunswick compared to Ontario?

**Electricians in New Brunswick typically charge 15-25% less than Ontario rates**, reflecting the province's lower cost of living and different market conditions.

### New Brunswick Electrical Rates (2025-2026):

- **Residential service calls:** \$125-\$175 (vs \$150-\$225 in Ontario)
- **Hourly rates:** \$85-\$125 for licensed electricians (vs \$100-\$150+ in Ontario)
- **Panel upgrades:** \$2,200-\$4,500 for 100-200 amp service (vs \$2,800-\$5,500 in Ontario)
- **Outlet installation:** \$150-\$250 per outlet (vs \$180-\$300 in Ontario)
- **Whole-home rewiring:** \$8,000-\$18,000 depending on size (vs \$12,000-\$25,000+ in Ontario)

The savings become more pronounced in **northern New Brunswick** communities like Edmundston, Campbellton, and the Acadian Peninsula, where rates can be 20-30% below Ontario levels. However, **skilled electrician shortages** in some rural areas can affect availability and may push rates higher for emergency or rush work.

### What affects pricing in New Brunswick:

- **Location within the province** — Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton command higher rates than rural areas
- **Project complexity** — older homes with knob-and-tube wiring or heritage properties require specialized expertise
- **Permit requirements** — all electrical work requires a wiring permit from NB Power (1-800-615-0522) plus TIS inspection, adding \$200-\$500 to project costs
- **Seasonal demand** — rates may increase during peak construction season (May-September)

**Important licensing difference:** In New Brunswick, ALL electrical work must be performed by a TIS-licensed electrician — homeowners cannot do their own electrical work unless they hold a valid electrician's licence. This is stricter than Ontario's rules allowing some homeowner electrical work.

When comparing quotes, verify the electrician holds a valid New Brunswick licence through TIS (1-888-659-3222) and carries WorkSafeNB coverage. The lower rates make New Brunswick an attractive market, but always prioritize proper licensing and insurance over the lowest bid.

Find licensed electrical contractors in your area through our verified New Brunswick directory to compare local rates and availability.

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## Find a Electrical Contractor

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

- [Chim Chimney Stoves & Services Inc. ?](#)
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