

NEW BRUNSWICK CONSTRUCTION NETWORK

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# Timelines & Process

Questions about project duration, scheduling, and renovation process

10 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

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# Table of Contents

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1. How long does it take NB Power to come inspect and approve a new electrical panel in the Greater Moncton area?
2. How many weeks should i allow for a basement finishing project in Riverview including permits and inspections?
3. What's the typical turnaround for a TIS plumbing inspection in New Brunswick once i request one?
4. How long does it take to get a building permit for a home addition in Saint John right now?
5. What's a realistic timeline for a whole home renovation in Moncton?
6. How long does a roof replacement take in New Brunswick?
7. Why is my heat pump not keeping up when it drops below minus 20?
8. When is the best time of year to start an exterior renovation in New Brunswick?
9. Are heat pumps actually effective in New Brunswick when it hits minus thirty?
10. Should I use PEX or copper pipe when re-plumbing my house?

Q1

## How long does it take NB Power to come inspect and approve a new electrical panel in the Greater Moncton area?

**NB Power doesn't actually do the electrical inspections** — that's handled by the province's Technical Inspection Services (TIS). Here's how the process works for a new electrical panel in Greater Moncton:

Your licensed electrical contractor will first obtain an electrical wiring permit from NB Power (1-800-615-0522) before starting any work. For a panel upgrade, this permit is mandatory since it exceeds the 10-outlet threshold. Once the electrical work is complete, your contractor contacts TIS at 1-888-659-3222 to schedule the final inspection.

**TIS inspection scheduling in the Moncton area typically runs 3-5 business days** from when your contractor calls to book. During busy periods (spring/summer construction season), it can stretch to 7-10 business days. The actual inspection takes 30-60 minutes, and you'll receive approval on the spot if everything meets code requirements.

The inspector will verify proper grounding, bonding, circuit labeling, clearances around the panel, and that all connections are secure. They'll also check that the installation matches what was described on the permit application. If any deficiencies are found, you'll get a list of corrections needed before re-inspection.

**Total timeline for panel replacement:** Expect 1-2 weeks from permit application to final approval, assuming no complications. The electrical work itself usually takes 1-2 days, but you'll need to factor in permit processing time (2-3 business days) and inspection scheduling.

One important note: **your power will be temporarily disconnected** during the panel swap. NB Power needs to disconnect service at the meter, and they won't reconnect until TIS provides the inspection approval. Coordinate this carefully if you have medical equipment, sump pumps, or other critical electrical needs.

Make sure your contractor is properly licensed through TIS — unlicensed electrical work will fail inspection and create insurance headaches. The Moncton TIS office serves the entire Greater Moncton area including Dieppe and Riverview.

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Q2

## How many weeks should i allow for a basement finishing project in Riverview including permits and inspections?

**Plan for 8-12 weeks total for a basement finishing project in Riverview**, including permits and inspections. This breaks down to roughly 2-3 weeks for permits and approvals, followed by 6-9 weeks of actual construction work.

The **Town of Riverview's Development Services department** typically processes building permits within 10-15 business days for straightforward basement finishing projects. However, if your project involves structural changes, additional bedrooms (requiring egress windows), or a secondary suite, expect closer to 3-4 weeks for permit approval as these trigger more detailed plan review.

**Key inspection checkpoints** will add time to your schedule. You'll need inspections from the Town of Riverview for framing, insulation, and final occupancy. If you're adding electrical work (new outlets, lighting circuits, or a panel upgrade), your contractor must obtain a wiring permit from **NB Power (1-800-615-0522)** before starting, then arrange final electrical inspection through **Technical Inspection Services at 1-888-659-3222**. Any plumbing additions also require TIS permits and inspections.

**Seasonal factors significantly impact timelines in New Brunswick.** November through March can extend projects by 1-2 weeks due to material delivery delays from winter road conditions and potential utility connection delays. Spring scheduling (April-May) often faces contractor availability issues as everyone rushes to start exterior work.

**Project complexity drives the timeline.** A basic rec room with drywall, flooring, and paint might finish in 6 weeks, while a full basement with bathroom, bedroom, and wet bar could stretch to 10-12 weeks. Adding a bathroom typically adds 2-3 weeks due to plumbing rough-in, waterproofing requirements, and additional inspections.

**Smart scheduling tip:** Start your permit application in late winter (February-March) for spring construction. This avoids the summer permit rush and positions you for completion before the busy fall season. Always verify your contractor carries current WorkSafeNB coverage before starting - you can check this at [worksafenb.ca](http://worksafenb.ca) or by calling 1-800-999-9775.

Given Riverview's proximity to Moncton's skilled trades, contractor availability is generally good, but book quality contractors 4-6 weeks in advance during peak season (May through September).

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Q3

## **What's the typical turnaround for a TIS plumbing inspection in New Brunswick once i request one?**

**TIS typically schedules plumbing inspections within 2-3 business days of your request**, though this can stretch to 5-7 business days during peak construction season (May through September) or in remote areas of the

province.

**The inspection process works like this:** Once your licensed plumber completes the rough-in work, they'll contact TIS at 1-888-659-3222 to request the inspection. TIS will schedule a time and provide you with an inspection reference number. The inspector will verify that all plumbing work meets the National Building Code requirements and issue either a pass or a list of deficiencies that need correction.

**Timing varies by region** — urban areas like Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton generally see faster response times since inspectors are based locally. Rural areas served by TIS offices in Miramichi, Bathurst, Campbellton, Edmundston, and Woodstock may take longer, especially if the inspector needs to travel significant distances. Northern New Brunswick can sometimes experience longer delays due to inspector availability.

**Peak season delays** are common from May through September when construction activity ramps up province-wide. If you're planning a bathroom renovation or plumbing upgrade, consider scheduling the work for fall or winter when inspectors have more availability. Emergency inspections (like for a failed septic system) typically get priority scheduling.

**Pro tip:** Have your plumber call TIS first thing Monday morning if possible — inspections requested late in the week often get pushed to the following week. Also, make sure all work is completely ready for inspection when you call. Failed inspections due to incomplete work mean starting the scheduling process over again, which can add another week to your timeline.

The inspection itself usually takes 30-60 minutes depending on the scope of work. Once you pass, you can proceed with covering up the plumbing and continuing your project.

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## How long does it take to get a building permit for a home addition in Saint John right now?

**Building permit processing in Saint John typically takes 4-6 weeks for a straightforward home addition,** though more complex projects can extend to 8-10 weeks depending on the scope and completeness of your application.

The City of Saint John's Growth & Community Services department handles all building permits within city limits. Current processing times have been fairly consistent, but they can fluctuate based on seasonal application volumes — spring and early summer see the heaviest loads as homeowners gear up for construction season.

**What affects your timeline:** A complete application with detailed drawings, structural calculations (if required), and all supporting documents will move through much faster than incomplete submissions. Single-story additions under 600 square feet with straightforward structural requirements typically process on the shorter end. Two-story additions, complex rooflines, or projects requiring variances will take longer and may need committee review.

**Required documents** include site plan showing setbacks, detailed construction drawings, structural details for foundation and framing connections, and energy efficiency compliance (NBC 2020 Tier 2 for new applications after May 1, 2025). If your addition affects drainage or requires a variance from zoning requirements, expect additional review time.

**Professional tip:** Have your designer or contractor pre-check the plans against Saint John's zoning bylaw before submission. Common issues that cause delays include insufficient setbacks from property lines, lot coverage calculations, and missing details on how the new structure ties into existing systems.

**Next step:** Contact Saint John's Growth & Community Services at (506) 658-2835 or visit [saintjohn.ca](http://saintjohn.ca) to confirm current processing times and get the complete application checklist. They can also tell you upfront if your project might need additional approvals that could extend the timeline.

Remember that once you have your building permit, you'll also need electrical wiring permits from NB Power (1-800-615-0522) and any plumbing permits from TIS (1-888-659-3222) before those trades can begin work.

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Q5

## What's a realistic timeline for a whole home renovation in Moncton?

**A whole home renovation in Moncton typically takes 4-8 months for a complete gut and rebuild, though the timeline depends heavily on your project scope, permit complexity, and seasonal timing.**

The **design and permitting phase** usually consumes 6-12 weeks upfront. For major renovations, you'll need building permits from the City of Moncton's Planning & Development department (506-856-4375), plus separate permits from NB Power for electrical work (1-800-615-0522) and TIS for plumbing and gas systems (1-888-659-3222). If you're doing structural changes, plan extra time for engineered drawings and plan review.

**Construction phases** break down roughly like this: demolition and structural work (2-4 weeks), rough mechanical installations - electrical, plumbing, HVAC (3-4 weeks), insulation and drywall (2-3 weeks), flooring and interior finishes (4-6 weeks), kitchen and bathroom installations (2-4 weeks), and final inspections and touch-ups (1-2 weeks). These phases often overlap, but weather delays, permit inspections, and material deliveries can extend timelines.

**Seasonal considerations** significantly impact Moncton projects. Starting in spring gives you the full construction season through fall - ideal for any exterior work, roofing, or foundation repairs. Winter projects focus on interiors but face potential delivery delays during Maritime storms. Many contractors book 2-3 months ahead during peak season (May through September).

**What affects your timeline most:** Structural changes requiring engineering, custom millwork or special-order materials (8-16 week lead times common), heritage home complications if you're in older Moncton neighborhoods, and availability of specialized trades. Moncton has good contractor availability compared to rural NB, but skilled finish carpenters and tile installers often have 4-6 week wait times.

**Realistic expectations:** A modest whole-home refresh (new flooring, paint, updated bathrooms, kitchen refresh) might finish in 3-4 months. A complete gut renovation with structural changes, new mechanical systems, and high-end finishes typically runs 6-8 months. Adding square footage or dealing with unexpected issues (common in Moncton's post-war bungalows) can push timelines to 10-12 months.

**Smart next step:** Get 3-4 detailed quotes from established Moncton contractors that include realistic timelines for each phase. Ask specifically about their current booking schedule and how they handle Maritime weather delays. Most experienced contractors will build 10-15% buffer time into their estimates for unforeseen complications.

Find verified whole-home renovation contractors in our New Brunswick directory to start gathering those detailed timeline estimates.

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Q6

## How long does a roof replacement take in New Brunswick?

**A typical roof replacement in New Brunswick takes 2-5 days for most residential homes**, depending on size, complexity, and weather conditions. However, the Maritime climate adds unique timing considerations that can extend your project timeline.

**Weather is your biggest variable** in New Brunswick. Even a straightforward 3-day roof job can stretch to 2-3 weeks if you hit a stretch of rain, high winds, or early winter weather. Smart contractors build weather delays into their scheduling, especially during shoulder seasons. The optimal window for roofing is May through September, when you have the most predictable weather patterns.

For a standard 1,500-2,000 square foot bungalow or split-level (very common in areas like Riverview, Quispamsis, or suburban Fredericton), expect 2-3 days with a full crew. Larger homes, complex rooflines with multiple dormers, or heritage properties in older neighborhoods like Saint John's South End or Fredericton's University Avenue area can push this to 4-5 days of actual work time.

**Material delivery timing** affects your schedule significantly. Shingles and underlayment are readily available through suppliers like Kent Building Supplies or Home Depot, but specialty materials for heritage homes or

premium products may require ordering 1-2 weeks ahead. Clay tiles or slate for heritage properties can take 4-6 weeks to source.

The **permit process** varies by location. In Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John, building permits for roof replacement typically take 2-3 weeks to process and cost \$200-800 depending on project value. Rural homeowners dealing with Regional Service Commissions may see slightly longer permit timelines. Some municipalities allow roof replacement without permits if you're using the same materials and not changing the structure.

**Seasonal scheduling challenges** are real in New Brunswick. Book your roofing contractor in early spring for summer work - good roofers are often booked 6-8 weeks out during peak season. If you're dealing with emergency repairs after winter damage, temporary tarping can buy you time until proper replacement weather arrives.

Your next step is getting quotes from 2-3 licensed contractors who can assess your specific roof complexity and provide realistic timelines. Ask specifically about their weather delay policies and whether they'll provide temporary protection if weather interrupts the job mid-stream.

Find verified roofing contractors in our New Brunswick directory who understand local weather patterns and building requirements.

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## Find a Roofing Contractor

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

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## Why is my heat pump not keeping up when it drops below minus 20?

**Most heat pumps lose significant heating capacity at extreme cold temperatures, and -20°C is right at the threshold where many standard units start struggling.** This is a common issue across New Brunswick, especially during those brutal January and February cold snaps that regularly hit -25°C to -35°C in areas like Fredericton, Woodstock, and northern communities.

### Heat Pump Performance Drop-Off

The physics of heat pump operation means they extract less heat from outdoor air as temperatures plummet. A typical heat pump that delivers 100% of its rated capacity at 8°C might only produce 60-70% capacity at -20°C, and some older or standard-efficiency units drop even further. When your home's heat loss increases dramatically in extreme cold (due to greater temperature differential), but your heat pump's output is decreasing, you get that uncomfortable gap.

### Cold Climate vs Standard Units

If your heat pump isn't specifically rated as "cold climate" or doesn't have a heating capacity rating down to -25°C or -30°C, it's likely not designed for New Brunswick's winter extremes. Many heat pumps installed in the province over the past decade were sized for milder climates and struggle with our harsh winters. Cold-climate heat pumps use enhanced vapor injection, variable-speed compressors, and specialized refrigerants to maintain capacity at low temperatures.

### Backup Heating Systems

Most New Brunswick heat pump installations should include backup heating for exactly this scenario. This might be electric baseboard heaters, your existing oil furnace (if you converted from oil), or electric resistance coils built into the heat pump's air handler. When outdoor temperatures drop below your heat pump's effective range, the backup system should automatically kick in. If you don't have backup heat or it's not working properly, that explains why you're getting cold.

### Sizing and Installation Issues

Heat pumps need to be properly sized for both your home's heat loss and New Brunswick's climate. An undersized unit will struggle even in moderate cold. Additionally, outdoor units need adequate airflow and should be elevated above expected snow levels - something particularly important given our 250-350cm annual snowfall. If the outdoor unit is blocked by snow or ice buildup on the coils, performance drops significantly.

### What You Can Do Right Now

Check that your outdoor unit isn't blocked by snow or ice, and ensure your backup heating system is functioning. If you have electric baseboard heaters or an oil furnace as backup, make sure they're operational. Contact a licensed HVAC contractor through our New Brunswick directory to assess whether your system is properly sized and configured for our climate - you may need a cold-climate upgrade or additional backup capacity to handle those -20°C and below nights that are simply part of winter life in New Brunswick.

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Q8

## When is the best time of year to start an exterior renovation in New Brunswick?

**The optimal window for exterior renovations in New Brunswick runs from May through September**, giving you a solid 5-month construction season before winter weather shuts down most outdoor work.

**May is often the sweet spot for getting started.** The ground has thawed, frost risk has passed, and you'll have the full construction season ahead of you. Contractors' schedules also tend to open up after the spring rush of emergency repairs from winter damage. Starting in May means you can complete most projects well before the first frost, which typically arrives in late September to early October across the province.

**Summer months (June-August) offer the most predictable weather** for exterior work, but this is also peak season when contractors are busiest and material costs may be higher. If you're planning a major project like roofing, siding, or foundation work, booking your contractor in late winter or early spring for a May start gives you the best selection and often better pricing.

**September can work for smaller projects**, but you're racing against the weather. New Brunswick's construction season effectively ends in October when temperatures drop below the concrete pouring threshold (5°C consistently) and the risk of early snow increases, especially in northern areas like Edmundston and Campbellton.

**Winter considerations are crucial in New Brunswick.** Our frost line extends 4+ feet deep, and we regularly see temperatures hit -25°C to -35°C. Concrete work becomes impossible without heated enclosures, and exterior finishes like staining, painting, and caulking simply won't cure properly in cold temperatures. The province receives 250-350cm of snow annually, with northern regions getting even more.

**Coastal areas face additional challenges** from Bay of Fundy storms and salt air, particularly around Saint John, Shediac, and Bathurst. These areas may have slightly extended seasons due to moderating ocean temperatures, but storm risk increases in fall and winter.

For major renovations requiring building permits, contact your local authority early - whether that's your municipality (like Moncton at 856-4375 or Fredericton at 460-2020) or your Regional Service Commission for rural areas. Permit processing can take 4-6 weeks, so factor that into your timeline.

**Start planning your exterior renovation in February or March** to secure contractors and permits for an optimal May start date.

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Q9

## Are heat pumps actually effective in New Brunswick when it hits minus thirty?

**Yes, modern cold-climate heat pumps are absolutely effective in New Brunswick's harsh winters, even at -30°C** — but you need the right equipment and a proper backup heating strategy.

The key is choosing a **cold-climate heat pump rated to at least -25°C to -30°C**. Units from manufacturers like Mitsubishi, Daikin, and Fujitsu maintain heating capacity down to these extreme temperatures, though their efficiency does drop as it gets colder. At -30°C, a quality cold-climate heat pump will still deliver about 60-70% of its rated heating capacity.

**Here's what works in New Brunswick's climate:** Most successful installations pair the heat pump with backup heating — either electric baseboard, your existing oil furnace, or a dual-fuel setup. The heat pump handles the majority of your heating needs (temperatures above -15°C to -20°C), then the backup system kicks in during those bitter cold snaps we get in January and February. This gives you the best of both worlds: efficient heating most of the winter, plus reliable warmth when temperatures plummet.

**Real-world performance across the province** shows heat pumps working well from coastal Saint John (where -30°C is rare) to inland Fredericton and even northern communities like Edmundston and Campbellton (where -30°C happens regularly). The difference is in sizing and backup planning. Northern NB installations typically need larger capacity units and more robust backup systems.

**Cost considerations for New Brunswick:** A quality cold-climate heat pump system runs \$8,000-\$15,000 installed, depending on your home size and whether you're keeping existing ductwork. NB Power offers rebates through their Total Home Energy Savings Program that can offset some costs. Many homeowners converting from oil see payback in 5-8 years, especially with oil prices remaining volatile.

**Professional installation is critical** — improper sizing or refrigerant line installation will kill performance in extreme cold. The installer needs to calculate your actual heat load and account for New Brunswick's temperature extremes, not just use generic sizing charts.

If you're considering the switch from oil, have a licensed HVAC contractor assess your home's insulation, air sealing, and heating load first. A poorly insulated 1970s bungalow will struggle with any heating system at -30°C.

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## Should I use PEX or copper pipe when re-plumbing my house?

**For most New Brunswick homes, PEX is the better choice for re-plumbing projects** — it's more affordable, faster to install, and handles our freeze-thaw cycles better than copper.

**PEX offers significant advantages in our climate.** Unlike copper, PEX can expand slightly when water freezes, making it much less likely to burst during those brutal -30°C snaps we get in Fredericton or Edmundston. It's also unaffected by our acidic well water, which is common in rural New Brunswick and can cause copper to develop pinhole leaks over time. Installation costs are typically 30-40% lower than copper since PEX uses fewer fittings and can be run in longer continuous lengths.

**Copper still has its place in certain situations.** If you're renovating a heritage home in Saint John's Uptown or Fredericton's historic district, copper maintains the traditional aesthetic and may be preferred for exposed runs. Copper also handles extreme heat better, making it the right choice immediately around boilers or near wood stoves. Some homeowners simply prefer copper's proven 50+ year track record.

**Consider your water source when deciding.** If you're on a private well (common throughout rural New Brunswick), have your water tested first. High acidity or mineral content can affect both materials differently. PEX is generally more forgiving with water quality issues, while copper can develop green staining or corrosion with certain water chemistry.

**This work requires a licensed plumber in New Brunswick.** The Department of Justice and Public Safety — Technical Inspection Services (TIS) requires all plumbing installations be done by someone holding a valid New Brunswick plumber's licence. Your plumber will need to obtain a plumbing permit from TIS before starting work, and the installation must pass inspection before you can use the system.

**Expect to pay \$8-15 per linear foot for PEX installation versus \$12-20 for copper** in the current New Brunswick market. A typical 1,500 sq ft home re-plumb runs \$6,000-12,000 with PEX, compared to \$9,000-18,000 with copper. These ranges include materials, labour, permits, and basic fixture connections.

Your next step is getting quotes from licensed plumbers who can assess your specific situation — they'll factor in your home's age, water source, and layout to recommend the best approach for your project.

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