

NEW BRUNSWICK DECKS

Deck Design & Planning

Questions about deck layout, sizing, style choices, 3D design, and planning your deck project in New Brunswick.

16 Expert Answers from Deck IQ

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Table of Contents

1. How do I choose the right deck board profile for my New Brunswick home?
2. How do I incorporate privacy screens into my deck design in Campbellton NB?
3. Should I include a separate dining area in my deck design for my Miramichi home?
4. What deck board pattern looks best for a 16x20 foot deck in Fredericton?
5. How do I design a deck around an above-ground pool in Bathurst NB?
6. What is the ideal deck size for entertaining in Moncton NB?
7. How wide should my deck stairs be if my deck is 12 feet off the ground in Sussex NB?
8. Can I add a built-in bench to my deck design without violating NB building code?
9. Should I build a ground-level or elevated deck on my property in Oromocto?
10. What are the trending deck shapes and styles in New Brunswick for 2026?
11. How do I plan a wraparound deck for a Victorian-style home in Rothesay?
12. Can I build an L-shaped deck on my bi-level home in Dieppe NB?
13. What size deck do I need for a hot tub installation in Riverview NB?
14. What is the best deck layout for a small backyard in Saint John?
15. How do I design a multi-level deck for a sloped backyard in Fredericton?
16. What are the most popular deck designs for homes in Moncton NB?

How do I choose the right deck board profile for my New Brunswick home?

The right deck board profile depends on your priorities for drainage, slip resistance, and aesthetics, with New Brunswick's wet climate making drainage the most critical factor. In our Maritime environment with frequent rain and high humidity, choosing a profile that sheds water quickly can add years to your deck's life.

Grooved vs. Smooth Profiles

Grooved decking boards feature shallow channels running lengthwise and are the most popular choice in New Brunswick for good reason. These grooves help water drain off the surface faster, reducing the standing water that leads to mold, mildew, and premature rot in our humid climate. The grooves also provide better traction when wet – a significant safety advantage during our rainy spring and fall seasons. Most pressure-treated lumber and composite brands offer grooved profiles, typically with 3-5 shallow channels per board.

Smooth profiles offer a cleaner, more refined appearance and are easier to clean since debris doesn't collect in grooves. However, smooth boards can become slippery when wet and may hold water longer on the surface. If you choose smooth boards in New Brunswick, ensure your deck has proper slope (1/4" per foot minimum) and good ventilation underneath to promote drying.

Specialty Profiles for New Brunswick Conditions

Ribbed or deeply grooved boards take drainage a step further with more pronounced channels. These work exceptionally well for covered decks or areas that don't get direct sun to dry naturally. The deeper grooves shed water aggressively but can collect leaves and debris, requiring more frequent cleaning.

Reversible composite boards offer the best of both worlds – grooved on one side for high-traffic areas, smooth on the other for a refined look. This flexibility is particularly valuable in New Brunswick where you might want grooved surfaces near pool areas or main walkways, but smooth surfaces for dining areas under cover.

Material-Specific Considerations

For **pressure-treated lumber**, grooved profiles help the wood dry more evenly after our frequent rain, reducing the cupping and warping that's common with smooth PT boards in Maritime humidity. The grooves also help stain penetrate more evenly during your biennial maintenance routine.

Composite decking performs well in both grooved and smooth profiles since it doesn't absorb water like wood. However, grooved composite still offers better slip resistance during New Brunswick's wet seasons and helps prevent the surface from becoming uncomfortably hot during summer sun exposure.

Practical Installation Tips

When installing any profile in New Brunswick, ensure adequate spacing between boards (1/4" minimum) to allow for thermal expansion and water drainage. Install boards crown-side up if using lumber, and always maintain proper ventilation underneath – our high humidity needs airflow to prevent moisture buildup that leads to structural issues.

When to Hire a Professional

While homeowners can handle deck board replacement on existing structures, new deck construction requires professional expertise to ensure proper framing, drainage slope, and structural integrity. Professional deck builders understand how different profiles perform in New Brunswick's challenging climate and can recommend the best option for your specific site conditions, sun exposure, and intended use.

Need help finding a deck builder who understands New Brunswick's unique climate challenges? New Brunswick Decks can match you with experienced local contractors for a free consultation on your project.

Q2

How do I incorporate privacy screens into my deck design in Campbellton NB?

Privacy screens on a Campbellton deck work best when they are integrated into the structural framing from the start, anchored to posts that extend from the deck frame rather than bolted on as afterthoughts. This approach gives you screens that can handle the significant wind loads common in the Restigouche River valley and remain solid through Campbellton's harsh winters where snow accumulation and ice buildup test every exterior structure.

The most durable privacy screen design for Campbellton uses 6x6 posts extending from the deck beam or rim joist up to a height of 6 feet above the deck surface. These posts should be lag-bolted through the rim joist and into the joist behind it, or better yet, anchored directly to the footing posts if your layout allows. In Campbellton, where frost depth reaches 1.5 metres and winter winds regularly exceed 60 kilometres per hour during storms off the Restigouche, a screen that catches wind like a sail needs serious anchorage. A freestanding post bolted only to the deck surface will eventually loosen and rock, no matter how many carriage bolts you use.

For the screen infill between posts, you have several options that each perform differently in Campbellton's Maritime climate. Horizontal slat screens using 1x4 or 1x6 boards with half-inch gaps between them offer roughly 70 percent privacy while allowing wind to pass through, which dramatically reduces the structural load compared to a solid wall. This is the most practical choice for exposed Campbellton locations. The gaps also let Maritime humidity circulate, preventing the moisture trapping that accelerates rot on solid panel screens. Using pressure-treated SPF lumber with MCA treatment for the slats keeps material costs reasonable at roughly \$8 to \$15 per

linear foot of screen, and the slats are easily replaced individually if one takes damage.

Lattice panels are a traditional choice that provides moderate privacy while allowing excellent airflow. Standard diagonal lattice offers about 50 percent privacy, while the heavier privacy lattice with tighter spacing reaches 75 percent. In Campbellton, lattice needs to be framed within a solid border of 2x4 or 2x6 lumber to prevent the thin lattice strips from warping in humidity cycles. Mount the lattice in a dado groove or behind trim strips so it can expand and contract without buckling. Expect to pay \$12 to \$20 per linear foot for a properly framed lattice screen section.

Composite privacy screen systems from manufacturers like Trex and TimberTech are gaining popularity across northern New Brunswick. These are pre-engineered panels or slat kits that integrate with composite railing systems, creating a cohesive look if your decking is already composite. They resist moisture and require no staining, which is appealing in a town where the outdoor maintenance season is short. The drawback is cost, running \$30 to \$50 per linear foot installed, and the colour options, while improving yearly, remain more limited than what you can achieve with stained wood.

Placement Strategy

Think about where privacy actually matters before screening the entire perimeter. In most Campbellton residential areas, you need screening on one or two sides at most, typically the side facing the closest neighbour and perhaps the street-facing side. Screening every side creates a boxed-in feeling and eliminates the river valley views that make Campbellton decks worth building in the first place. A common and effective layout is an L-shaped screen covering two adjacent sides at 6 feet tall, with open railing on the remaining sides. This blocks the primary sightline from neighbours while preserving openness toward your yard and any scenic views.

Plant integration works well alongside built screens in Campbellton. Planter boxes built into the base of your screen posts, filled with hardy ornamental grasses or cedars, soften the look of a solid screen and add a living element that changes with the seasons. Keep planters separated from the deck surface by a waterproof membrane to prevent moisture damage to the framing below.

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Q3

Should I include a separate dining area in my deck design for my Miramichi home?

Yes, including a dedicated dining area in your Miramichi deck design is one of the best layout decisions you can make, particularly given the region's outdoor season that runs reliably from late May through early October. A defined dining zone turns your deck from a simple platform into a functional outdoor room, and in a river city like Miramichi where summer evenings along the waterfront neighbourhoods are genuinely pleasant, you will use it far more than you expect.

The practical minimum for a dining area that seats six people comfortably is 10x12 feet, giving you 120 square feet. This accommodates a standard rectangular table of 36x72 inches with chairs pushed back and room to walk behind seated guests. If you entertain larger groups or want a round table that seats eight, expand to 12x14 feet. In either case, this dining zone should be treated as a distinct section of your deck plan from the very beginning, not an afterthought once the deck is built.

Placement of the dining area on your Miramichi deck should consider two things: proximity to the kitchen door and sun exposure. Ideally, the dining zone sits within 10 to 15 feet of your kitchen access point so carrying food and drinks is convenient. For sun exposure, Miramichi's latitude means summer afternoon sun comes from the southwest, so positioning the dining area on the east or northeast portion of your deck gives you shade during evening meals without needing a permanent overhead structure. If your lot orientation does not allow that, a retractable awning or a pergola with adjustable slats over the dining section solves the problem for roughly \$2,500 to \$6,000 depending on materials.

Structurally, a dining area does not require anything different from the rest of the deck in terms of framing. The standard residential deck load of 40 pounds per square foot for live load and 10 pounds for dead load more than covers a full dining setup with eight people and a heavy table. What does matter is the surface. If you are using composite decking, the dining area benefits from the same 12-inch on-centre joist spacing recommended throughout, and the surface stays level and splinter-free for bare feet during summer meals. If you choose pressure-treated lumber, plan to sand and stain the dining area particularly well since this is where people sit for extended periods and where spills happen regularly.

One design element worth considering in Miramichi is a slight level change to define the dining space. Dropping or raising the dining area by a single step, roughly 7 inches, creates a visual and physical boundary that makes the

space feel intentional. This works especially well on larger decks of 350 square feet or more where a flat, single-level platform can feel undefined. The step does add framing complexity and cost, but the result is a deck that reads as two distinct rooms rather than one open slab.

The Miramichi River valley channels humidity and occasional fog, which means your dining area benefits from some airflow planning. Avoid boxing the dining section in with solid walls on more than two sides. Open railings with picket spacing or cable rail allow breezes to pass through, keeping the dining area comfortable and helping the deck surface dry faster after rain. This also reduces the moisture retention that accelerates wear on any decking material, whether that is \$35 to \$55 per square foot cedar or \$45 to \$75 composite.

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What deck board pattern looks best for a 16x20 foot deck in Fredericton?

A straight horizontal pattern running parallel to the house is the best all-around choice for a 16x20 foot deck in Fredericton, offering clean sightlines, minimal waste, and straightforward installation. That said, several other patterns can elevate the look of this very common deck size, and the right choice depends on your material, budget, and how much visual complexity you want.

The standard parallel pattern works beautifully on a 16x20 because the 20-foot dimension running away from the house creates long, unbroken board lines that make the deck feel spacious. With 16-foot boards running across the width, you can span the full 16 feet with a single board length in most lumber species, eliminating butt joints entirely. This is a significant advantage in Fredericton's climate where Maritime humidity causes wood to expand and contract noticeably across seasons. Fewer joints mean fewer places for moisture to penetrate and fewer spots where boards shift against each other. Material waste on a straight pattern is typically just 5 to 8 percent, the lowest of any layout.

A diagonal pattern at 45 degrees is the most popular upgrade from straight boards and looks particularly striking on a 16x20 footprint. The diagonal lines create visual movement and can make the deck feel larger than its actual dimensions. The trade-off is real, though. Diagonal installation on a 16x20 increases your lumber waste to 15 to 20 percent because every board meeting the perimeter needs an angled cut, and the starting and ending boards at the corners are short offcuts. In Fredericton, where pressure-treated decking lumber runs \$2.50 to \$4.00 per linear foot and cedar pushes \$5.50 to \$8.00, that extra waste adds \$400 to \$900 to your material cost on a deck this size. You also need to ensure your joist layout supports the diagonal load path, which typically means adding blocking between joists.

A herringbone or chevron pattern is striking on a 16x20 but significantly increases both labour and material costs. The centre line of the chevron creates a natural focal point, drawing the eye down the length of the deck. This pattern requires a double joist or beam running down the centreline to support the board ends where they meet, and every single board needs a precise angle cut on at least one end. Expect 20 to 25 percent material waste and roughly double the installation labour compared to a straight layout. On composite decking at \$45 to \$75 per square foot installed, that labour premium is substantial.

A picture frame border is a practical middle ground that adds visual interest to a straight pattern without the waste of a full diagonal. You run a single border board around the entire perimeter at 90 degrees to the interior field boards. On a 16x20, this frames the deck nicely and hides the cut ends of the field boards behind a clean mitered border. The additional material is modest, roughly 72 linear feet of border board plus the extra blocking needed to support the perpendicular direction change.

For Fredericton specifically, consider how the pattern interacts with snow and ice management. Diagonal and herringbone patterns create more seams per square foot where ice melt can pool and refreeze. A straight pattern with boards running away from the house allows meltwater to drain cleanly between boards toward the yard, which matters during those long Fredericton winters where freeze-thaw cycles run from November through April.

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Q5

How do I design a deck around an above-ground pool in Bathurst NB?

A pool surround deck in Bathurst should be designed as a wrap-around platform that sits flush with the pool rim, typically requiring a structure 42 to 54 inches above grade depending on your pool height. This elevated design transforms an above-ground pool from a backyard eyesore into an integrated outdoor living space, and it is one of the most rewarding deck projects you can tackle in the Bathurst area.

The first engineering consideration is frost depth. Bathurst sits in the colder northern zone of New Brunswick where frost penetrates to 1.5 metres, deeper than what builders deal with in Moncton or Saint John. Every footing supporting your pool deck must reach that full depth, no exceptions. Skimping on footing depth around a pool deck is especially dangerous because the structure carries not just furniture and foot traffic but also the lateral forces of people leaning against railings while wet. You will likely need 10 to 14 footings for a full wrap-around design, and each one needs to be sunk to that 1.5 metre mark in Bathurst's clay-heavy soils.

For the deck layout itself, plan a minimum 4-foot-wide walkway on the access sides of the pool. This gives enough room for one person to walk past another safely on wet decking. On the main lounging side, expand to 8 to 12 feet of depth so you can place chairs and a small table without crowding the pool edge. A popular configuration in the Bathurst area is a three-quarter wrap, covering three sides of the pool with the fourth side left open for equipment

access and future maintenance. This typically results in 300 to 450 square feet of decking depending on pool diameter.

Material choice matters enormously for a pool surround. Composite decking is the strong favourite here because it handles Bathurst's intense Maritime humidity and constant water splashing far better than wood. Trex, TimberTech, and Fiberon all perform well, running \$45 to \$75 per square foot installed. The critical installation detail is joist spacing: composite boards around a pool must sit on joists at 12 inches on centre, not the 16-inch spacing you might use on a standard deck. The constant moisture exposure and barefoot traffic demand that tighter support. If you prefer wood, western red cedar at \$35 to \$55 per square foot is viable but requires annual sealing to handle the splash zone, and pressure-treated lumber with MCA treatment rated UC4A is essential for any framing members close to the ground or in contact with pool water runoff.

All fasteners in a pool deck environment must be stainless steel or hot-dipped galvanized with a coating rated for wet exposure. Standard coated screws will corrode within two to three seasons around chlorinated water. Hidden fastener systems work well with composite boards and eliminate the discomfort of screw heads underfoot on a barefoot surface.

Gate placement is a safety requirement, not an option. New Brunswick building code requires a self-closing, self-latching gate on any deck that provides access to a pool, with the latch mounted at least 54 inches from the deck surface. Plan your gate locations during the design phase so the railing layout accommodates them cleanly rather than retrofitting awkward gate openings after construction.

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Q6

What is the ideal deck size for entertaining in Moncton NB?

For entertaining in Moncton, a deck between 350 and 500 square feet gives you the flexibility to host comfortably without overwhelming a typical residential lot. Most Moncton properties, particularly in neighbourhoods like Riverview Heights, Mapleton, and the Hildegard Drive area, sit on lots that range from 50 to 70 feet wide, which means your deck footprint needs to respect both setback requirements and usable yard space.

A 16x24 foot deck at 384 square feet is one of the most popular entertaining sizes built across the Greater Moncton area because it naturally divides into functional zones. You can dedicate roughly 10x16 feet to a dining area that seats six to eight people, with the remaining space working as a lounge or barbecue zone. If you regularly host larger gatherings of 15 or more, pushing toward 20x24 feet at 480 square feet gives breathing room, though you will want to confirm your lot can handle that footprint while maintaining the minimum yard setback your municipality requires.

Moncton's frost depth sits at 1.2 metres, which means your footings need to reach at least that depth to prevent heaving. On a 400-plus square foot entertaining deck, you are typically looking at a minimum of six concrete footings, sometimes eight depending on your beam layout and load calculations. Each footing adds cost, so there is a real financial relationship between deck size and foundation work in this region. Budget roughly \$150 to \$250 per footing installed to proper depth in Moncton soils.

The shape of your deck matters as much as the square footage when entertaining is the goal. A simple rectangle is the most cost-effective to build and the easiest to furnish, but an L-shaped design can create natural separation between cooking and socializing areas. Many Moncton homeowners add a bump-out section of 8x10 feet specifically for a built-in barbecue station, which keeps smoke and heat away from seated guests.

Consider your decking material in relation to size as well. A 400 square foot deck in pressure-treated lumber with MCA treatment runs approximately \$14,000 to \$22,000 fully built in the Moncton market, while the same footprint in composite decking from brands like Trex or TimberTech pushes to \$18,000 to \$30,000. The larger you build, the more the per-square-foot material cost compounds, so getting the size right from the start avoids both wasted money and the frustration of a deck that feels too cramped once furniture is placed.

One factor unique to Moncton entertaining is the wind. The Petitcodiac River corridor channels steady breezes through many residential areas, which is pleasant in summer but can make an exposed deck uncomfortable in spring and fall. If you want to extend your entertaining season from May through October, plan for a windbreak on at least one side, whether that is a solid privacy wall, a glass panel system, or strategic lattice placement. This does not change the ideal deck size, but it changes how usable every square foot actually feels during a gathering.

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How wide should my deck stairs be if my deck is 12 feet off the ground in Sussex NB?

Your stairs should be a minimum of 36 inches wide to meet New Brunswick building code, but at 12 feet of elevation, you should seriously consider building them 48 inches wide for safety and comfort. A 12-foot deck height is significant. That puts you in the range of a full-storey descent, and the stair run will be long enough that it becomes a real architectural element of your deck rather than just a quick step down to the yard.

With a total rise of 12 feet, or 144 inches, and a standard riser height of about 7.5 inches, you are looking at 19 or 20 individual steps. Each step needs a tread depth of at least 10 inches, so the total horizontal run works out to roughly 16 to 17 feet from the deck edge to where the stairs reach the ground. That is a long staircase, and if it runs in a straight line, it projects a considerable distance into your yard.

This is why most builders in Sussex would recommend incorporating at least one landing platform in a 12-foot descent. The National Building Code, which New Brunswick adopts, requires a landing for every 12 feet of vertical rise, so you are right at the threshold. Even if your local inspector does not strictly require a mid-height landing, installing one at the 6-foot mark makes the stairs dramatically safer and more comfortable. The landing should be at least as wide as the stairs and at least 36 inches deep in the direction of travel. It also gives you the opportunity to change direction, running the upper flight one way and the lower flight at 90 or 180 degrees, which reduces the total projection into the yard.

Now, back to width. The 36-inch code minimum is measured between the inside faces of the stair railings, not the outside edges of the stringers. At 12 feet up, you should think about who will use these stairs and what they will be carrying. Two people cannot comfortably pass each other on a 36-inch-wide staircase. If you are carrying a tray of food from the kitchen to a backyard gathering, or hauling patio furniture up and down at the start and end of season, that extra width is not a luxury. Going to 48 inches adds only about \$500 to \$1,000 in additional stringer and tread material, which is modest relative to the total cost of a staircase this size.

The stringers themselves need to be sized properly for a 12-foot descent. You will likely need four stringers for a 48-inch-wide staircase, spaced no more than 16 inches apart, cut from 2x12 lumber. After the stair notches are cut, the remaining throat depth of the stringer, meaning the uncut wood below the notch, must be at least 3.5 inches to maintain structural integrity. With 2x12 material, this is achievable with standard 7.5-inch rise and 10-inch run dimensions.

Railings on the staircase must be continuous and graspable, between 34 and 38 inches high measured vertically from the nose of the stair tread. Balusters follow the same 4-inch maximum spacing rule as the deck railing. At 12 feet of height, you absolutely want the railing to feel solid and confidence-inspiring, especially when the stairs are

covered in frost or light snow during the shoulder months. Sussex gets its full share of New Brunswick's 100-plus freeze-thaw cycles, and a north-facing staircase can stay icy well into April.

For the stair treads at this height and exposure, consider composite treads with molded non-slip surfaces, or if you are building in pressure-treated lumber, apply anti-slip stair tread strips. The bottom of the staircase needs a concrete pad or compacted gravel landing that extends at least 36 inches from the last step so you are not stepping directly onto muddy ground after a long descent.

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Q8

Can I add a built-in bench to my deck design without violating NB building code?

Yes, you can absolutely add built-in benches to your deck, but if the bench is located along an edge where a railing is required, the bench back must function as the railing and meet all the same code requirements.

This is the detail that trips up a lot of DIY builders and even some contractors who do not think through the implications of placing a bench at the perimeter of an elevated deck.

The core rule in New Brunswick is straightforward. Any deck surface more than 24 inches above grade requires a guard that is at least 36 inches high measured from the deck surface, with no openings that allow a 4-inch sphere to pass through. When you place a built-in bench against the railing, the bench seat creates a new surface that people, especially children, can stand on. This effectively raises the floor level at that location by 16 to 18 inches, which is the typical bench seat height.

Here is where it gets important. If someone can stand on the bench seat, the 36-inch guard height should technically be measured from the top of the bench, not from the deck floor. This means the railing behind a

perimeter bench needs to extend to at least 36 inches above the bench seat surface, which puts the total height from the deck floor at 52 to 54 inches. That is considerably taller than a standard railing and changes the look significantly. Some inspectors in New Brunswick will accept 36 inches from the deck surface if the bench design discourages standing, such as having a sloped seat or a backrest that begins immediately at the seat level. However, you should not count on that interpretation. Discuss it with your local building inspector before construction.

The safest approach is to position built-in benches away from the deck perimeter. A bench placed in the interior of the deck, against the house wall, or along an edge that does not require a guard because it is close to grade, has no railing implications at all. You can build it at whatever height is comfortable, typically 16 to 18 inches from the deck surface with a seat depth of 15 to 18 inches, and the standard perimeter railing stands independently beside it.

If you specifically want the bench along a railing edge, there are design strategies that satisfy code. One approach is to build a solid bench back that extends the full 36 inches above the seat, with vertical slats spaced no more than 4 inches apart. This bench back IS the railing, and it meets all guard requirements. Some builders angle the upper portion outward slightly to make it more comfortable to lean against.

Another approach is to set the bench 12 to 16 inches in from the railing, leaving the standard 36-inch guard in place behind the bench. People sitting lean back against the railing, which serves as a backrest. This eliminates the height question entirely because no one can stand on the bench and reach over the railing without it still being at their waist height. The trade-off is losing that 12 to 16 inches of deck space.

Structurally, built-in benches need to be properly supported. The seat should be framed with 2x4 supports bolted or lag-screwed to the deck framing or posts, not just screwed into the deck boards. Surface-mounted connections to decking boards alone will eventually pull loose under the concentrated load of several adults. If the bench is longer than 8 feet, add a center support leg to prevent sagging. For materials, match the bench to your deck surface so everything weathers at the same rate.

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Q9

Should I build a ground-level or elevated deck on my property in Oromocto?

The right choice depends almost entirely on your home's floor height relative to grade and how you plan to access the deck, but for most Oromocto homes, a moderately elevated deck between 3 and 5 feet off the ground makes the most practical sense. Oromocto's housing stock is heavily influenced by the military base, with large numbers of PMQ-style bungalows, split-entries, and bi-levels built from the 1960s onward, and each house style points toward a different deck height.

A ground-level deck, meaning the surface sits less than 24 inches above grade, works beautifully when your back door is close to ground level. Some of the bungalows in Oromocto, particularly the ranch-style homes along Restigouche Road and in the older sections of town, have rear entries that step down to within a foot or two of the yard. For these homes, a ground-level platform deck creates a seamless transition between indoors and outdoors. You step out the door and you are essentially at yard level, which feels open and connected. There are meaningful practical advantages too. A deck under 24 inches above grade in New Brunswick does not require a building permit if it is freestanding, and it does not need railings. Eliminating the railing saves \$1,500 to \$4,000 on a typical deck and removes the visual barrier that can make a small deck feel enclosed.

The challenge with ground-level decks in Oromocto is moisture and ventilation. The deck surface sits close to the soil, and with our heavy snowfall of 250 to 300 centimeters annually, snow will pack against and underneath the deck through the winter months. Pressure-treated lumber can handle this, but the boards will stay damp longer than they would on an elevated deck, which accelerates wear and promotes moss and algae growth. You need to ensure at least 6 inches of clearance between the bottom of the joists and the ground, and the area beneath the deck should be graded so water flows away from the house. Laying landscape fabric under the deck and covering it with gravel helps suppress weed growth and improves drainage.

An elevated deck makes more sense for the split-entry and bi-level homes that are common throughout the Oromocto subdivisions. When your back door opens from the upper living level, you could be 6 to 10 feet above the yard. Building at that height requires posts set on footings that extend below the frost line, which is 1.2 meters in the Oromocto area. You will need a building permit from the Village of Oromocto for any deck that is attached to the house or more than 24 inches above grade, and the permit requires a framing plan showing your joist sizes, post spacing, and footing details. Railings are mandatory at this height, built to the 36-inch minimum height with 4-inch maximum baluster spacing.

Cost is a real consideration. A ground-level 12x16 pressure-treated deck on deck blocks might run \$3,500 to \$5,500 because you are skipping deep footings and railings. The same 12x16 footprint elevated 5 feet off the ground with proper footings, posts, beams, railings, and a staircase jumps to \$6,500 to \$10,000 in pressure-treated lumber. In composite, that elevated deck runs \$10,500 to \$16,500.

The elevated deck does give you something valuable that the ground-level version cannot: usable space underneath. At 5 feet of clearance, you have room for storing bikes, lawnmowers, and patio furniture during the winter. Some Oromocto homeowners enclose the space below the deck with lattice panels to keep it tidy and keep animals out while still allowing air circulation.

Oromocto sits along the Saint John River and parts of town are in identified flood-risk zones. If your property is anywhere near the river or Gage Creek, check with the village office about flood plain restrictions before committing to a ground-level build. An elevated deck on a flood-prone lot is not just preferable, it may be required.

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What are the trending deck shapes and styles in New Brunswick for 2026?

The biggest trend across New Brunswick in 2026 is the outdoor living room concept, where decks are designed less as simple platforms and more as fully furnished extensions of the home with defined zones for cooking, dining, and lounging. This shift has been building for a few years, but it has really taken hold this season as homeowners invest more in their outdoor spaces and composite decking products have matured to the point where they genuinely look and feel like premium materials.

Clean-lined, low-profile decks are dominating new builds across the province. The ornate multi-tier designs with octagonal bump-outs and built-in planters at every corner that were popular fifteen years ago have given way to simpler rectangular footprints with crisp edges and minimal visible hardware. Builders in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John are all reporting that clients want sleek, modern aesthetics even on traditional-style homes. The decking boards themselves are driving part of this trend. The latest generation of capped composite and PVC boards come in wide-plank formats, 6 to 8 inches across, with realistic wood-grain textures and muted tones like weathered teak, slate grey, and warm driftwood. PVC decking, which runs \$55 to \$85 per square foot installed, has gained particular traction among homeowners who want the absolute minimum maintenance commitment and are willing to pay the premium.

Integrated lighting has moved from a luxury add-on to a near-standard feature. LED post cap lights, recessed riser lights on stairs, and low-voltage strip lighting under railings or bench edges are showing up on decks at every price point. The electrical work adds \$800 to \$2,500 depending on the scope, but it extends the usable hours of the deck well into the evening, which matters in a province where summer daylight is generous but fall evenings arrive early.

Privacy screens built into the deck structure are another strong 2026 trend, particularly in subdivisions where lot sizes are tight and neighbors are close. These are not the old-fashioned lattice panels. The current style uses horizontal slat screens in cedar or composite, spaced at 1 to 2 inches apart, creating a contemporary look that filters sightlines without blocking airflow. Some builders are incorporating them as one wall of a pergola structure that shades part of the deck.

Speaking of pergolas, the attached pergola has become the most requested deck accessory in New Brunswick. A pergola anchored to the house on one side and supported by posts on the deck creates a semi-sheltered zone that extends the comfortable season on both ends. With retractable shade canopies or fixed polycarbonate panels overhead, you get rain protection that lets you use the deck through the drizzly stretches that are common along the Fundy coast in June and September.

Material mixing is another visible trend. Rather than building the entire deck in one material, designers are combining composite decking on the floor with aluminum railing, cedar privacy screens, and steel cable infill. This

mixed-material approach creates visual layers and allows each component to be the material best suited to its function.

On the structural side, helical piles have become the preferred foundation system for a growing number of New Brunswick deck builders. They screw into the ground past the 1.2 to 1.5-meter frost depth without excavation, which means no sonotube forms, no concrete mixing, and no waiting for concrete to cure. A deck that used to take two days just for the footings can have its foundation installed in a single morning. The cost is comparable to traditional sonotubes, and the installed piles can be loaded with the deck structure immediately.

Ground-level floating decks remain popular for secondary outdoor spaces. A detached platform under 24 inches above grade avoids the permit requirement and the railing obligation, and homeowners are using them as fire pit pads, garden seating areas, or poolside lounges separate from the main deck attached to the house.

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Q11

How do I plan a wraparound deck for a Victorian-style home in Rothesay?

A wraparound deck on a Victorian home should follow the existing roofline and architectural rhythm of the house, typically extending along the front facade and wrapping around one or both sides to create a generous porch-style outdoor living space. Rothesay has some of the most beautiful Victorian-era homes in New Brunswick, particularly along Gondola Point Road and in the older neighborhoods near the Rothesay Common, and a well-designed wraparound deck can enhance that historic character rather than fighting against it.

The first planning step is deciding how far the deck wraps. A full wraparound covering three sides of the house creates a dramatic effect but can easily exceed 600 to 800 square feet, pushing the budget well past \$30,000 even in pressure-treated lumber. Most Rothesay homeowners find that wrapping along the front and one side gives them

the visual impact and the usable space they want at a more manageable scale. A front-and-one-side wraparound on a typical Victorian might cover 350 to 450 square feet, running \$8,700 to \$18,000 in pressure-treated or \$15,750 to \$33,750 in composite.

Victorian homes have distinctive proportions that your deck design needs to respect. The deck width should generally be 8 to 10 feet. Going much deeper than 10 feet starts to look like a platform bolted onto the house rather than an intentional extension of the architecture. At 8 feet deep, the deck is wide enough for a pair of rocking chairs and a small table, which is exactly the relaxed front-porch feeling a Victorian wraparound should evoke.

The corners are the trickiest part of a wraparound design, both visually and structurally. At each outside corner where the deck changes direction, the framing has to transition between two perpendicular joist systems. Your builder will typically use a corner post with a beam running in each direction, and the decking boards are mitered at 45 degrees across the corner for a clean appearance. This miter joint is more prone to opening up with seasonal wood movement, so if you are using pressure-treated lumber, expect to re-fasten the corner boards every few years. Composite handles the corners better because it has minimal expansion across its width.

For a Victorian aesthetic in Rothesay, the railing design is where you can really honor the original architecture. The 36-inch minimum height and 4-inch maximum baluster spacing are set by New Brunswick code, but within those parameters you have tremendous design freedom. Turned wood balusters that echo Victorian millwork details, a shaped top rail, and decorative post caps all contribute to an authentic look. Some homeowners go with composite railing systems that mimic traditional turned profiles, getting the Victorian appearance with modern durability against our harsh winters.

The ledger board attachment on a wraparound requires extra care because you are fastening along multiple walls of the house, each of which may have different siding materials or framing configurations. On a genuine Victorian-era home, the wall structure behind the siding might be quite different from modern construction. You could encounter balloon framing, plank sheathing, or masonry where you expected wood framing. Each wall section needs its own assessment to ensure the lag bolts are hitting solid structure, and every inch of ledger needs proper flashing. With 250 to 300 centimeters of annual snow drifting against multiple walls, there is no margin for error on water management.

Footings around the perimeter need to reach the 1.2-meter frost depth, and on a Victorian lot in Rothesay, you may encounter existing stone foundations, old drainage systems, or mature tree roots that complicate the digging. It is also worth having a surveyor confirm your property lines before building, because Victorian-era lots sometimes have encroachments or irregular boundaries that a modern survey will clarify before you pour concrete too close to the line.

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Q12

Can I build an L-shaped deck on my bi-level home in Dieppe NB?

Absolutely, an L-shaped deck is one of the best configurations for a bi-level home, and Dieppe's relatively flat residential lots make the construction straightforward. Bi-levels are everywhere in Dieppe, from the established neighborhoods near Champlain Place to the newer subdivisions off Amirault and Camelot Streets, and an L-shape takes advantage of the way these homes are laid out far better than a simple rectangle.

The reason an L-shaped deck works so well on a bi-level is the entry situation. Most bi-level homes in Dieppe have the main entrance at a mid-level landing, with the front door about 4 to 5 feet above grade. The back of the house usually has a sliding door or patio door off the upper level that sits 8 to 10 feet above the backyard. An L-shaped deck lets you wrap outdoor living space along two walls of the house, typically the back wall and one side wall, which gives you access from multiple rooms and creates two distinct outdoor areas.

Structurally, the L-shape is really just two rectangular deck sections that share a corner. Each wing has its own beam and joist system, and they connect at the inside corner where the framing overlaps. The ledger board runs along both walls of the house, lag-bolted into the framing with metal flashing tucked behind the siding at each section. That flashing detail is critical in New Brunswick. Our heavy snowfall, 250 to 300 centimeters annually, means snow piles against the house-deck junction for months, and any gap behind the ledger will channel meltwater straight into your wall cavity.

For a typical Dieppe bi-level, you might design one wing at 12x16 feet along the back of the house for dining and entertaining, and a shorter wing at 8x12 feet along the side for a quieter sitting area or a grilling station. The total footprint would be around 288 square feet. In pressure-treated lumber, that build would run roughly \$7,200 to \$11,500, and in composite decking, \$12,900 to \$21,600. The L-shape does cost a bit more per square foot than a straight rectangle because of the additional beam work at the corner and the extra ledger attachment, but the

premium is typically only 10 to 15 percent.

Since the upper-level door on a Dieppe bi-level puts the deck surface well above 24 inches from grade, you will need a building permit from the Town of Dieppe. The permit application requires a site plan showing setbacks from property lines, a framing plan with joist sizes and spacing, and post footing details. Your footings need to reach below the frost line at 1.2 meters minimum in the Dieppe area. Most builders here use sonotubes filled with concrete, poured to a minimum diameter of 10 inches, with post bases set into the wet concrete or attached with after-set brackets.

The inside corner of the L is where you need to pay attention to drainage. Water, leaves, and snow will naturally collect in that interior corner, so make sure the decking boards are oriented to direct water away from the house, and leave proper gapping between boards for drainage. If you are using composite boards, the manufacturer will specify the gap, usually 3/16 to 1/4 inch between boards. Pressure-treated boards are typically installed tight and allowed to shrink as they dry, opening up natural drainage gaps.

Railings are required on the elevated sections and must be at least 36 inches high with baluster spacing no greater than 4 inches. The inside corner of the L is a natural spot to place the staircase down to the yard, since it tucks the stairs out of the way and keeps both wings of the deck fully usable.

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What size deck do I need for a hot tub installation in Riverview NB?

You need a minimum deck area of about 12x14 feet to accommodate a standard hot tub with enough surrounding space to use it comfortably, but 14x16 feet is the sweet spot that most Riverview homeowners end up choosing. The hot tub itself is only part of the equation. What catches people off guard is how much extra room you need around it for safe access, a place to set the cover, and a small area to dry off before heading inside.

A typical 4-to-6-person hot tub measures roughly 7x7 feet and weighs between 3,500 and 5,000 pounds when filled with water and occupants. That weight is the single biggest factor driving the structural requirements of your deck. A standard residential deck framed with 2x8 joists at 16-inch on-center spacing is designed for a live load of about 40 pounds per square foot, which works out to roughly 1,960 pounds over a 7x7 area. Your hot tub will impose closer to 70 to 100 pounds per square foot, so the framing underneath the tub needs to be significantly beefed up.

Most builders in the Riverview area handle this by doubling or tripling the joists directly under the hot tub footprint, reducing the joist spacing to 8 inches on-center in that zone, and adding an extra beam with closely spaced posts underneath. The posts under the hot tub section each need their own footing extending below the 1.2-meter frost depth. Some builders prefer to pour a separate concrete pad at grade level and set the hot tub on the pad with the deck built around it at the same height. This approach takes the load question off the table entirely and is worth considering if you want to keep the deck framing standard throughout.

Beyond the 7x7 footprint of the tub, you want at least 3 feet of clear space on the access side where people climb in and out, and at least 18 inches on the remaining sides for maintenance access to the equipment panel. You also need somewhere to put the cover when the tub is in use. Hot tub covers are bulky, and a cover lifter mechanism needs about 2 feet of clearance behind the tub. Add in a small dry-off area with room for a towel rack or a couple of chairs, and you can see how quickly a 12x14 minimum becomes a 14x16 comfortable layout.

Placement on the deck matters for Riverview's climate. Position the hot tub in the corner closest to the house to minimize the distance you walk in bare feet on a minus-20 January evening. That corner placement also gives you some wind protection from the house walls, which is a real consideration when you are sitting in steaming water with 250 to 300 centimeters of snow piled up around the yard. If your deck is elevated, consider adding a privacy screen or windbreak panel on the exposed sides.

For decking material around a hot tub, composite or PVC boards are the better choice over pressure-treated lumber. The constant splash-out and humidity accelerates wood deterioration, and you will be walking on the surface in bare feet regularly, so the splinter-free surface of composite matters more here than anywhere else on the deck. A 14x16 composite deck with reinforced framing for a hot tub will typically run \$12,000 to \$20,000 in the Riverview area, with the structural upgrades adding \$1,500 to \$3,000 over a standard-framed deck of the same

size.

Most hot tubs require a dedicated 240-volt, 50-amp circuit with a disconnect switch mounted within sight of the tub but at least 5 feet away from the water. You will need a licensed electrician, and the electrical permit is separate from the deck building permit.

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Q14

What is the best deck layout for a small backyard in Saint John?

For a small Saint John backyard, a simple rectangular deck in the 10x12 to 12x14 foot range, positioned tight against the house, gives you the most usable space without swallowing your entire yard. The key with a compact lot is making every square foot count, and that comes down to smart layout choices rather than cramming in as much decking as possible.

Saint John has a lot of older neighborhoods with modest lot sizes, particularly in the South End, the North End, and areas like Milford and East Saint John. Many of these homes sit on lots that are only 30 to 40 feet deep behind the house, so a deck that projects more than 12 feet into the yard starts to feel like it is taking over. A 10x12 deck gives you 120 square feet, which is enough for a small dining set for four and a couple of lounge chairs. A 12x14 bumps that to 168 square feet and opens up room for a small grilling station to one side.

One of the smartest moves for a tight Saint John lot is to run the deck wider along the back of the house rather than projecting it deeper into the yard. A deck that is 16 feet wide but only 10 feet deep covers 160 square feet and preserves most of your yard depth. This layout also works better structurally because the joists span the shorter 10-foot dimension, which means standard 2x8 lumber at 16-inch on-center spacing handles the load without needing to upsize to 2x10s.

Ground-level decks deserve serious consideration on small Saint John lots. If you can keep the deck surface less than 24 inches above grade, you avoid the railing requirement entirely. Eliminating railings on a small deck is transformative. Railings on a 10x12 deck visually shrink the space and create a boxed-in feeling, whereas a low platform that steps directly onto the lawn feels open and connected to the rest of the yard. You also skip the permit process for a detached ground-level deck under 24 inches, which saves time and a few hundred dollars in permit fees.

For materials on a small deck, the cost difference between pressure-treated and composite is less dramatic in absolute dollars because the total square footage is modest. A 10x12 PT deck might cost \$3,000 to \$4,800, while the same footprint in composite runs \$5,400 to \$9,000. Given that Saint John gets hammered with moisture from the Bay of Fundy and those 100-plus freeze-thaw cycles each winter, the composite upgrade on a small deck often makes sense because you are paying a few thousand more to eliminate years of maintenance on a surface that is constantly exposed to harsh conditions.

If your lot slopes, and many Saint John properties do given the city's rocky, hilly geography, consider a bump-out design. Keep the main deck compact against the house and add a small lower platform, maybe 6x8 feet, connected by two or three steps. This gives you a secondary zone for a fire pit or a couple of Adirondack chairs without extending the upper deck further into the yard. The level change also creates visual interest that makes the overall space feel larger than it is.

Built-in seating along one or two edges of a small deck is another space-saver. A bench built into the perimeter takes up less room than individual chairs that need to be pulled out from a table, and it can double as storage if you hinge the seat tops. Just keep in mind that if the bench is on a section of deck that requires railing, the bench back needs to meet the 36-inch minimum railing height measured from the deck surface, with no gaps greater than 4 inches.

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How do I design a multi-level deck for a sloped backyard in Fredericton?

Start by measuring the total grade change from your house foundation to the point in the yard where you want the deck to end, then divide that drop into two or three comfortable tiers connected by short stair runs. Multi-level decks are one of the best solutions for Fredericton's hilly terrain, and the city has plenty of sloped properties, especially in neighborhoods along the Saint John River like Waterloo Row, Skyline Acres, and the streets climbing up from Lincoln Road.

The first step is understanding your slope. Walk out from your back door with a long level or a laser level and figure out how many feet the ground drops over the distance you want to cover. If you have a 4-foot drop over 20 feet of yard, you might split that into two levels with a couple of steps between them. If the drop is 6 to 8 feet, three tiers start to make more sense. Each level change of about 2 to 3 feet keeps the stair runs short and manageable, usually just three or four steps, which feels natural when you are walking between zones.

Foundation work is where sloped lots get serious in Fredericton. Your footings need to extend below the frost line, which runs 1.2 meters in the southern part of the province and deeper as you go north. On a sloped lot, the posts on the downhill side will be significantly longer than those near the house. A post that is only 2 feet tall at the upper level might be 6 or 8 feet tall at the lower level, and those tall posts need proper bracing. Your builder will likely use 6x6 posts on the lower tier and add diagonal bracing to prevent lateral movement, which is especially important given the wind exposure many Fredericton hillside lots get.

Structural Considerations for Each Tier

Each level of the deck is essentially its own structural system with independent beams and joists. The upper tier, closest to the house, usually attaches with a ledger board that must be lag-bolted through the siding into the rim joist, with proper flashing behind it. Water getting behind an improperly flashed ledger is the single most common cause of structural deck failures, and our 250 to 300 centimeters of annual snow load makes the stakes even higher.

For joist sizing, 2x8 lumber handles spans up to about 10 feet at 16-inch on-center spacing, and 2x10 joists extend that to roughly 13 feet. If you are using composite decking on any of the levels, tighten the joist spacing to 12 inches on-center to prevent the boards from feeling bouncy underfoot.

The transitions between levels give you design opportunities. Consider wide steps that double as seating, or angle the lower tier at 45 degrees to the upper tier to create visual interest and better use an irregularly shaped yard. Built-in planters at the level changes are another popular Fredericton touch that softens the transitions.

Budget-wise, multi-level construction adds 20 to 30 percent over a single-level deck of the same total square footage because of the additional footings, posts, beams, and stair framing. A two-tier design totaling around 320 square feet in pressure-treated lumber might run \$7,500 to \$12,000 depending on the height and complexity. In composite, expect \$13,000 to \$22,000 for the same footprint.

Fredericton requires a building permit for any deck that is attached to the house or more than 24 inches above grade, and a multi-level deck on a sloped lot will almost certainly exceed that threshold on at least one tier. You will need engineered drawings for anything with posts over about 8 feet tall, so factor that into your planning timeline and allow two to three weeks for permit approval during the busy spring season.

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What are the most popular deck designs for homes in Moncton NB?

The single-level rectangular deck attached to the back of the house remains the most popular design in Moncton, typically in the 12x16 to 14x20 foot range. That said, Moncton homeowners have been moving toward more interesting configurations over the past few years, and the choices people make here reflect both the local climate and the style of housing stock you find across the Greater Moncton area.

The classic rectangle stays popular for good reason. Most Moncton homes, whether you are in the north end near Wheeler Boulevard or out in the newer subdivisions off Edinburgh Drive, sit on relatively flat lots with modest backyards. A straightforward 12x16 pressure-treated deck runs between \$4,800 and \$7,700 installed, which fits comfortably in most renovation budgets. That size gives you room for a dining table and a few chairs without overwhelming the yard. Builders here typically frame these with 2x8 joists at 16-inch on-center spacing for spans up to 10 feet, stepping up to 2x10 joists for the longer 13-foot spans.

L-shaped decks have gained serious traction in Moncton, especially on split-entry and bi-level homes that are so common throughout Mapleton and Lower Coverdale. The L-shape lets you create two distinct zones, maybe a grilling area off the kitchen door and a lounging space that wraps around the corner of the house. These designs typically add 15 to 20 percent to the cost of a simple rectangle, but homeowners consistently say the extra functionality is worth it.

Multi-level decks are another strong choice, particularly for properties along the Petitcodiac River or on the hillier streets near Magnetic Hill. When your yard drops away from the house, a two-tier design with a short set of stairs connecting the levels looks far more intentional than one massive elevated platform. Expect that multi-level configuration to add 20 to 30 percent over a single-level build of the same total square footage.

Composite decking has been climbing in popularity across Moncton. The 100-plus freeze-thaw cycles we get each winter are brutal on wood surfaces, and homeowners are tired of sanding and restaining every other spring. A 12x16 composite deck runs \$8,600 to \$14,400 installed, which is a significant jump from pressure-treated, but the near-zero maintenance resonates with a lot of people. The newer composite boards with capped polymer shells handle Moncton's moisture and temperature swings without the cupping and splitting you used to see in earlier generations of the product.

Ground-level platform decks, sometimes called floating decks, have also found a niche in Moncton. If the deck sits less than 24 inches above grade, you typically avoid the permit process and the railing requirement, which simplifies the build considerably. These work well as standalone patio alternatives in flat backyards where you want a clean, level surface without pouring concrete. Builders set them on deck blocks or helical piles to keep the

framing above the soggy spring ground that Moncton is known for.

For railing, the 36-inch minimum height with 4-inch maximum baluster spacing is code across New Brunswick, and most Moncton builders default to aluminum railing systems now. They hold up far better than wood spindles through our winters and keep sightlines clean.

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