

NEW BRUNSWICK DECKS

General Deck Questions

General questions about decks, outdoor living, hiring contractors, and deck-related topics in New Brunswick.

15 Expert Answers from Deck IQ

newbrunswickdecks.com/construction-brain

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What should I look for when inspecting a used home's deck in New Brunswick?

Focus your inspection on five critical areas: the ledger board connection to the house, the footings and post bases, railing security and code compliance, signs of rot at posts and joists, and whether permits were pulled for the original construction. These areas reveal the true condition and safety of a deck far more reliably than the surface appearance of the decking boards.

The ledger board is the single most important structural element to inspect. This is the horizontal board that attaches the deck to the house, and ledger failures are the leading cause of catastrophic deck collapses across North America. The ledger should be fastened with lag screws or through-bolts into the house's rim joist, not just nails, and there should be flashing to direct water away from the junction between the ledger and the house wall. If water has been seeping behind the ledger for years, the house's rim joist and the ledger itself may be rotted, even if the exterior looks sound. Push firmly on the deck near the house wall and feel for any give or sponginess. If the deck bounces or shifts at the house connection, that is a serious structural concern that warrants professional assessment before you finalize a home purchase.

Footings and post bases are the next priority. Walk beneath the deck if possible and examine how the posts connect to the ground. In New Brunswick, deck footings must extend below the frost line, roughly four to five feet deep, to prevent heaving. Posts should sit on concrete piers or sonotubes, not directly on the ground or on simple concrete blocks sitting on the surface. Surface-level supports will shift with frost movement, gradually pushing the deck out of level and stressing every connection in the structure. Check that metal post bases or brackets connect the posts to the footings, keeping the wood separated from direct ground contact.

Railing integrity is both a safety and code compliance issue. Grab each railing section firmly and push outward and sideways. Loose railings are extremely common on older New Brunswick decks and represent an immediate safety hazard, especially for children. Current building code requires railings on any deck surface more than 24 inches above grade, with a minimum height of 36 inches for residential decks and balusters spaced no more than four inches apart. Many older decks were built to previous standards or without permits and may not meet current requirements. While a non-compliant railing does not necessarily mean the deck is unsafe, it does mean you will likely need to upgrade the railings, which is a cost to factor into your offer.

Probe for rot at the most vulnerable points. The bases of posts where they meet footings, the ends of joists where they connect to the ledger and the beam, and any areas where the deck traps moisture are the places rot develops first. Use a screwdriver or awl to probe the wood. Sound pressure-treated lumber will resist the probe, while rotted wood will feel soft and the tool will sink in easily. Pay particular attention to any areas where the deck boards prevent water from draining freely, as standing water accelerates decay dramatically.

Finally, ask the seller or their agent for permit records. Check with the local municipality to confirm whether a building permit was issued for the deck and whether a final inspection was completed and passed. An unpermitted deck does not necessarily mean poor construction, but it means no independent inspector verified that the structure meets code. In New Brunswick, unpermitted structures can create complications with insurance claims and future resale. Knowing the approximate age of the deck also helps you gauge remaining useful life. A well-built pressure-treated deck in New Brunswick's climate can last 20 to 25 years with proper maintenance, but one that has been neglected may need replacement after 12 to 15 years.

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Q2

What outdoor living features add the most value to a home in Moncton NB?

A well-built deck delivers the strongest return at 65 to 80 percent of cost recovered at resale, followed by outdoor lighting, fire features, and outdoor kitchens, all of which have become increasingly desirable in the Greater Moncton real estate market. The key is matching your outdoor improvements to how Moncton buyers actually use their properties through the province's distinct seasons.

Decks remain the foundation of outdoor living value in Moncton. The city's real estate market consistently shows that homes with quality decks sell faster and command higher prices than comparable homes without them. A deck effectively extends your living space and creates the platform on which all other outdoor features are built. Buyers browsing listings in Moncton, Dieppe, and Riverview respond strongly to photos showing a well-maintained deck with room for furniture and entertaining. The 65 to 80 percent return on investment makes decks one of the highest-performing exterior improvements available, outperforming many interior renovations.

Outdoor lighting is one of the most cost-effective upgrades you can make to any outdoor space. Low-voltage LED deck lighting, path lights, and accent lighting on landscaping features can transform the feel of your backyard for a relatively modest investment, often between \$1,500 and \$5,000 depending on scope. Lighting extends the usable hours of your outdoor space well into the evening, which is particularly valuable during New Brunswick's long summer days when the sun does not set until after nine o'clock. From a resale perspective, lighting signals to buyers that the outdoor space was thoughtfully designed, not just built.

Fire features have gained significant popularity in the Moncton market over the past several years. A built-in fire pit or a natural gas fireplace integrated into a deck or patio area creates a gathering point that extends the outdoor season into the cooler months of May, September, and October. Propane and natural gas options are cleaner and more convenient than wood-burning pits, and they avoid the bylaw complications that some Moncton neighbourhoods have with open wood fires. A quality fire feature typically costs \$2,000 to \$8,000 installed and consistently draws positive attention from buyers.

Outdoor kitchens represent a larger investment, typically \$8,000 to \$25,000 for a built-in setup with a gas grill, counter space, and storage. The return on investment varies more than simpler features because the cost is higher and not all buyers value an outdoor kitchen equally. However, in Moncton's growing market of move-up buyers looking at homes in the \$400,000-plus range, a well-designed outdoor kitchen can be a differentiator that sets your property apart. The key is proportionality. An outdoor kitchen that costs more than the deck it sits on can look overbuilt for the neighbourhood.

Privacy features such as pergolas, lattice screens, and strategic plantings also add meaningful value, particularly in Moncton's newer subdivisions where lot sizes tend to be smaller and neighbours are close. These features do not always show up in appraisal numbers, but they make buyers feel that the outdoor space is a genuine room rather than an exposed platform.

The most effective approach is to layer these features thoughtfully. Start with a quality deck as your base, add lighting for ambiance and function, then choose one or two additional features that match your lifestyle and your neighbourhood's price point. Overbuilding outdoor features relative to the surrounding homes can reduce your return rather than enhance it.

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Q3

Can I build a deck over an existing concrete patio in Saint John NB?

Yes, you can build a deck over an existing concrete patio in Saint John, using either pressure-treated sleepers laid directly on the concrete or adjustable pedestal systems that create an elevated surface. This approach saves the cost and mess of demolishing the old patio while giving you a fresh, attractive outdoor surface.

The most common method uses pressure-treated sleepers, which are flat lumber pieces, typically two-by-fours or two-by-sixes, laid on their flat side directly on the concrete surface. The deck boards are then fastened across the sleepers perpendicular to their direction. This creates a low-profile deck that sits just a few inches above the existing patio. The sleepers can be shimmed to create a level surface even if the concrete has minor cracks, heaving, or settling, which is common in Saint John given the city's clay-heavy soils and significant freeze-thaw cycling.

The critical requirement with any over-concrete deck build is maintaining proper drainage slope. Your existing patio was originally poured with a slight slope away from the house, typically one-quarter inch per foot, to direct rainwater away from your foundation. Your new deck structure must not obstruct this drainage. Water needs to flow freely beneath the deck boards, across the concrete surface, and away from the house. This means avoiding any design that traps water against the foundation wall. Sleeper layouts should run perpendicular to the drainage direction so water can pass between them rather than being dammed.

Adjustable pedestal systems are the more modern alternative and work particularly well on concrete surfaces. These are plastic or rubber supports with threaded posts that allow you to fine-tune the height at each point. They create a uniform air gap beneath the deck surface that promotes excellent drainage and airflow. Pedestal systems are more expensive than sleepers but offer superior levelling capability, which is valuable if your Saint John patio has settled unevenly over the years. They also allow easy access beneath the deck for cleaning or inspection.

Before building over your patio, assess the condition of the existing concrete. Minor surface cracks and cosmetic wear are not a concern since the concrete is serving as a base, not a finished surface. However, if the slab has heaved significantly, broken into separate sections that have shifted, or is actively sinking, these structural issues should be addressed first. A slab that has heaved due to frost can continue to move and will push your deck out of

level over time. In Saint John, where winter frost penetration is substantial, slabs poured without adequate gravel base are particularly prone to this movement.

You should also check whether a building permit is required. In Saint John, the permit requirements depend on the height of the finished deck surface above grade and its overall size. A low-profile deck built over an existing patio on sleepers is often below the threshold that triggers a permit, but confirming with the City of Saint John's building inspection department before starting is always wise. If the deck will include railings, stairs, or will be attached to the house with a ledger board, permit requirements are more likely to apply.

One advantage specific to building over concrete is that you avoid the cost of excavation and footing installation, which can represent 15 to 25 percent of a typical deck budget. The existing slab serves as your foundation, and the sleeper or pedestal system distributes the load across its surface. This makes over-concrete builds one of the more cost-effective ways to upgrade your outdoor space in Saint John.

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How do I choose between wood and composite for my deck in New Brunswick?

Wood is cheaper upfront but requires staining or sealing every two to three years, while composite costs more initially but demands virtually zero maintenance, and over a 10- to 15-year period composite often works out cheaper in total cost of ownership. The right choice for your New Brunswick home depends on your budget timeline, your willingness to maintain the deck, and your aesthetic preferences.

Pressure-treated lumber remains the most common decking material in New Brunswick, and for good reason. The upfront cost is significantly lower, typically \$25 to \$40 per square foot installed for a standard deck, compared to \$45 to \$75 per square foot for composite. For homeowners working with a tight budget who need a functional deck this summer, pressure-treated wood delivers a solid structure at an accessible price point. The wood also has a natural warmth and grain pattern that many people prefer, and it can be stained in any colour you choose.

However, New Brunswick's climate is particularly demanding on wood decking. The province experiences a full four-season cycle with heavy snow loads, spring freeze-thaw cycles, significant rainfall, and summer humidity. This combination accelerates the wear on wood surfaces. Pressure-treated lumber will begin to grey, crack, and splinter within two to three years if not maintained with a quality exterior stain or sealant. That maintenance cycle means purchasing stain, renting or buying application equipment, spending a weekend on prep and application, and hoping for a dry weather window. Over 15 years, a homeowner can expect to restain five to seven times, with each application costing \$300 to \$800 in materials alone for a mid-sized deck, plus the value of your time.

Composite decking eliminates that maintenance cycle almost entirely. Modern composite boards are made from a blend of wood fibres and plastic polymers, wrapped in a protective cap that resists fading, staining, scratching, and moisture absorption. You will never need to stain, seal, or sand a composite deck. Cleaning involves a periodic wash with soap and water or a light pressure wash. The boards will not splinter, which is a meaningful consideration for families with young children who use the deck barefoot.

When you run the numbers over a 10- to 15-year ownership period, the math often favours composite. Assume a 300-square-foot deck. The wood version might cost \$10,000 installed, with \$500 in maintenance every two to three years, totalling roughly \$12,500 to \$13,500 over 15 years. The composite version might cost \$16,000 installed with essentially no maintenance costs beyond occasional cleaning. The gap narrows considerably, and when you factor in the time spent maintaining wood, composite can be the better overall value.

New Brunswick homeowners should also consider the specific conditions of their deck site. A north-facing deck that stays shaded and damp is a poor candidate for wood because it will develop mould and algae quickly between maintenance cycles. A south-facing deck with full sun exposure will fade wood stain faster, increasing maintenance frequency. Composite handles both scenarios without issue. On the other hand, if your deck is close to a fire pit or

barbecue, be aware that composite boards can melt or discolour from concentrated heat, while wood simply chars and can be sanded.

Neither material is universally superior. Wood makes sense for budget-conscious homeowners who enjoy hands-on maintenance and want the lowest possible upfront cost. Composite makes sense for homeowners who want a low-effort, long-lasting surface and are willing to invest more at the outset to avoid years of recurring maintenance work.

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Q5

Should I get my deck designed by a professional in Fredericton NB?

Professional deck design is worth the investment for multi-level decks, complex lot conditions, or projects that integrate with your home's architecture, typically costing \$500 to \$2,000 for detailed drawings in the Fredericton market. For a simple, single-level rectangular deck, a professional design may not be necessary, but for anything beyond the basics, the upfront cost pays for itself in avoided mistakes and better results.

Fredericton has some specific site conditions that make professional design more valuable than in some other markets. Many homes in the city sit on sloped lots, particularly in neighbourhoods like Skyline Acres, the Northside, and areas along the Saint John River. A deck on a sloped lot requires careful engineering of post heights, beam spans, and footing placement. Getting these calculations wrong can result in a structure that looks awkward, feels unsafe, or fails a building inspection. A professional designer or structural technologist will account for the grade change, soil conditions, and drainage patterns to produce a plan that works with your specific lot rather than against it.

The permit process in Fredericton also favours having professional drawings. When you apply for a building permit through the City of Fredericton's development services, you need to submit a site plan and construction drawings

that show dimensions, footing locations, structural members, railing details, and the relationship to your property lines and house. While hand-drawn sketches are sometimes accepted for very simple projects, professional CAD drawings move through the review process more smoothly and reduce the chance of revision requests that delay your start date.

Professional design becomes especially valuable when your deck incorporates features beyond a basic platform. If you are planning multiple levels, wraparound sections, integrated stairs to different yard elevations, built-in planters, privacy screens, or a hot tub pad, the interactions between these elements create structural and aesthetic considerations that are difficult to resolve on the fly during construction. A designer considers sight lines from inside the house, sun exposure at different times of day, privacy from neighbours, traffic flow from the door to the stairs, and how the deck connects to landscaping. These details are the difference between a deck that feels like an afterthought and one that feels like a natural extension of your home.

For a straightforward 12-by-16-foot single-level deck attached to the back of your house on a flat lot, professional design is optional. Most experienced deck contractors in the Fredericton area can handle the layout, sizing, and permit drawings for a simple project like this as part of their standard service. Their quote typically includes basic drawings sufficient for the permit application.

Where many homeowners get into trouble is the middle ground, a project that seems simple but has one or two complicating factors. An uneven lot, a second-storey attachment point, proximity to a septic system, or integration with an existing porch can each add enough complexity that professional design prevents costly mid-build changes. If you are spending \$15,000 or more on your deck project, allocating \$500 to \$1,500 for proper design drawings represents a small percentage of the total budget and delivers real protection against expensive surprises.

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Q6

What is the difference between a deck and a patio in terms of cost and value in NB?

A deck in New Brunswick typically costs \$25 to \$75 per square foot and is an elevated wood or composite structure, while a patio runs \$15 to \$35 per square foot and sits at ground level using concrete, pavers, or stone. Decks generally deliver stronger resale value, but the right choice depends on your lot, your home's layout, and how you plan to use the space.

The cost difference starts with the structural requirements. A deck requires footings that extend below the frost line, which in most of New Brunswick is four to five feet deep. Those footings support posts, beams, and joists that create the elevated platform. The lumber, hardware, and labour involved in building this structure account for a significant portion of the cost. A ground-level patio, by contrast, sits on a compacted gravel base or directly on prepared soil. There are no posts, no joists, and no railing requirements. The materials are typically concrete, interlocking pavers, or natural flagstone, and the installation process is fundamentally different from framing a deck.

Within the deck price range, the spread from \$25 to \$75 per square foot reflects material choices and complexity. A simple rectangular pressure-treated deck with basic railings will land near the lower end. A multi-level composite deck with aluminum railings, built-in lighting, and custom stairs will push toward the upper end. Similarly, patio costs vary based on material. A basic concrete slab is the cheapest option, while natural stone laid in a pattern with a polymeric sand base costs considerably more.

Resale Value Comparison

Decks consistently outperform patios in terms of return on investment in the New Brunswick real estate market. A well-built deck typically recovers 65 to 80 percent of its cost at resale, making it one of the better-performing exterior improvements. Patios also add value, but they are generally perceived as less of a feature by buyers because they do not extend usable living space in the same way an elevated deck does. A deck attached to a main-floor kitchen or living room effectively creates an outdoor room, which is a strong selling point in the Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John markets where buyers increasingly prioritize outdoor living.

That said, patios have clear advantages in certain situations. If your yard is flat and your main-floor level is close to grade, an elevated deck may look and feel out of proportion. A patio is also the better choice for fire pit areas, outdoor dining spaces that benefit from a solid surface, or heavily shaded areas where wood decking would stay damp and develop mould. Patios require virtually no ongoing maintenance beyond occasional pressure washing, while wood decks need staining or sealing every two to three years.

Many New Brunswick homeowners find that the best approach is a combination. A deck off the back of the house provides the elevated outdoor living area connected to indoor spaces, while a patio at grade level serves as a landing for stairs, a fire pit zone, or a garden seating area. This combination maximizes both function and curb

appeal without over-investing in either one. When budgeting, consider the total cost of ownership over 10 to 15 years, including maintenance, not just the upfront installation price.

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What insurance do I need to build a deck in New Brunswick?

If you are hiring a contractor to build your deck, they need commercial general liability insurance and WorkSafeNB coverage, while your existing homeowner's insurance should cover personal injury on your property during the project. Understanding both sides of the insurance equation protects you from significant financial exposure.

On the contractor side, commercial general liability insurance is the most critical policy to verify. This covers damage the contractor or their crew causes to your property during construction, as well as injuries to third parties. A reputable deck builder in New Brunswick should carry a minimum of one million dollars in general liability coverage, and many carry two million. Before any work begins, ask for a current certificate of insurance and confirm the policy is active by calling the insurer directly. Certificates can be outdated or even fabricated, so the phone call is worth the five minutes.

WorkSafeNB coverage is equally important and is legally required for most construction businesses operating in the province. WorkSafeNB is New Brunswick's workplace health and safety commission, and it provides workers' compensation insurance that covers medical costs and lost wages if a worker is injured on your job site. If a contractor does not carry WorkSafeNB coverage and one of their workers is hurt building your deck, you as the homeowner could be held liable for those costs. You can verify a contractor's WorkSafeNB status by requesting their clearance letter or checking directly with WorkSafeNB. This is not optional due diligence; it is essential financial protection.

On the homeowner side, your standard homeowner's insurance policy generally covers personal injury that occurs on your property. If a visitor or passerby is injured at your home during construction, your policy's personal liability component would typically respond. However, most homeowner's policies do not cover construction defects or contractor negligence. That is why the contractor's own liability insurance exists. You should also notify your insurance provider before a major deck project begins, particularly if the deck significantly increases your home's square footage or includes elevated sections. Some insurers want to know about structural additions so they can adjust your coverage and replacement cost estimates.

If you are building the deck yourself as a DIY project, the insurance picture changes. Your homeowner's policy generally does not cover injuries to people you hire informally to help, nor does it cover construction defects. If you hire day labourers without WorkSafeNB coverage and someone is injured, you bear the full financial risk. This is one of the under-appreciated advantages of hiring a properly insured professional deck builder.

For the deck itself, once it is complete, your homeowner's insurance should cover it as part of your dwelling or as an attached structure. Contact your insurer after completion to update your policy with the new value. A well-built

deck adds real value to your home, and you want that value reflected in your coverage in case of fire, storm damage, or other covered events.

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Q8

How do I get multiple deck building quotes in Dieppe NB?

The best approach is to get at least three written quotes from licensed deck builders in the Greater Moncton area, then compare the full scope of work rather than just the bottom-line price. This process takes some effort upfront but consistently saves homeowners money and frustration.

Start by assembling your shortlist. The Greater Moncton market, including Dieppe, Moncton, and Riverview, has a healthy number of contractors who specialize in deck construction. Ask neighbours, friends, and coworkers who have had decks built recently for recommendations. Online reviews are useful but should be weighed alongside word-of-mouth referrals. Once you have five or six names, narrow the list to three or four who you will invite for site visits and quotes.

Before the contractors arrive, prepare a clear description of what you want. Sketch out the approximate size, note the location relative to your house, identify whether it will be ground level or elevated, and list features like railings, stairs, built-in seating, or lighting. Decide whether you are leaning toward pressure-treated wood or composite decking. The more specific you are, the more comparable the quotes will be. If each contractor is guessing at a different scope, the numbers become meaningless to compare.

When contractors visit your Dieppe property, pay attention to how thorough they are. A good estimator will measure the site, check the grade and drainage, look at the house attachment point for ledger board conditions, ask about your permit status, and discuss footing requirements for your specific soil conditions. If someone gives you a

number over the phone without visiting, that is a red flag. Deck pricing in New Brunswick varies enormously based on site conditions, and a proper quote requires eyes on the ground.

Once you have your written quotes in hand, compare them line by line. Each quote should break down materials, labour, permits, footings, hardware, railings, and stairs as separate items. A quote that simply says "12x16 deck, \$14,000" tells you very little. You want to see what lumber species and grade they are using, what type of fasteners, how deep the footings will be, and what is included in the cleanup. The cheapest quote often omits items that the more expensive quotes include, such as permit fees, post caps, or final staining.

Also compare timelines and payment terms. A reputable Dieppe-area contractor will typically ask for a deposit of 10 to 30 percent, with progress payments tied to milestones and the balance due on completion. Avoid anyone asking for full payment upfront. Confirm that each contractor carries liability insurance and WorkSafeNB coverage, and verify those independently.

Finally, do not automatically choose the lowest quote. The middle quote from a contractor with strong references, proper insurance, and a detailed written scope is often the best value. Price is one factor, but quality of workmanship, reliability, and warranty terms matter just as much when you are investing in a structure that should last 20 years or more.

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Q9

Can I build a deck in the fall or winter in Moncton NB?

You can technically build portions of a deck during fall and even early winter in Moncton, but significant limitations apply to concrete work, finishing, and overall quality, making it far from ideal. Most experienced Moncton deck contractors wind down new projects by mid-October and strongly discourage full builds once

overnight temperatures consistently drop below freezing.

The biggest constraint is concrete footings. Every deck in New Brunswick requires footings that extend below the frost line, which is approximately four to five feet deep in the Moncton area. Pouring concrete when temperatures are below 10 degrees Celsius creates serious curing problems. The chemical reaction that gives concrete its strength slows dramatically in cold weather and essentially stops below freezing. While there are winter concrete additives and insulated blanket methods, these add significant cost and are typically reserved for commercial construction, not residential deck footings. If your footings do not cure properly, the entire structure above them is compromised.

Framing work is somewhat more forgiving of cold weather. Pressure-treated lumber can be cut and fastened in near-freezing conditions, and experienced carpenters can work effectively into November if the ground is not snow-covered and the site remains accessible. However, productivity drops considerably. Shorter daylight hours in Moncton mean the work day shrinks from roughly ten hours in June to under eight hours by November, and cold hands make precision work slower and more difficult. Labour costs per square foot tend to increase for late-season work simply because everything takes longer.

Staining and sealing are essentially impossible once Moncton's fall weather turns. Most exterior wood finishes require application temperatures above 10 degrees Celsius for a sustained period, with no rain or frost for 24 to 48 hours after application. From mid-October onward, finding a suitable window in Moncton becomes very unlikely. This means a fall-built deck would need to sit unfinished through the entire winter and be stained the following spring, exposing the raw wood to months of freeze-thaw cycles, moisture, and UV damage.

There are some situations where fall or early winter work makes sense. If your footings were poured during warmer months and you are simply completing the framing and decking, a mild November can provide enough working days to get the structure enclosed. Composite decking is also more tolerant of cold-weather installation than wood, since it does not require staining. Some homeowners deliberately split their project into a fall substructure phase and a spring completion phase to get ahead of the busy May-June booking rush.

If you are considering an off-season build in Moncton, get a detailed written agreement that specifies what happens if weather delays push the timeline. Confirm that any concrete work will follow cold-weather protocols if temperatures are marginal. Ultimately, the May through October window exists for good reason, and planning within it gives you the best combination of quality, cost efficiency, and contractor availability.

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What is the building season for decks in New Brunswick?

The primary deck building season in New Brunswick runs from May through October, with the best conditions typically falling between mid-May and late September. This window aligns with the province's frost-free period and gives concrete footings, stains, and sealants the warm temperatures they need to cure properly.

New Brunswick's climate is shaped by its coastal and inland geography, and spring can arrive quite differently in Moncton versus Edmundston. Along the Fundy coast and in the Saint John River Valley, ground frost can persist into late April, making footing excavation difficult or impossible before May. In most years, overnight temperatures in the southern part of the province reliably stay above freezing by mid-May, which is the threshold many contractors use to begin scheduling pours for concrete piers and sonotubes. Concrete needs sustained temperatures above 10 degrees Celsius for at least 48 hours to gain proper strength, and pouring footings in marginal conditions risks cracking and reduced load capacity over the life of the deck.

Beyond footings, the building season matters for wood treatment and finishing. Pressure-treated lumber needs to acclimate and dry before accepting stain, and most exterior stains and sealants require application temperatures between 10 and 30 degrees Celsius with no rain for 24 to 48 hours. Trying to stain a deck in late October when overnight temperatures are dipping near zero can lead to poor adhesion and peeling within the first year. If you choose composite decking, temperature is less of a concern for the boards themselves, but the substructure still relies on proper footing cures and dry conditions for joist hangers and hardware.

The smart strategy for New Brunswick homeowners is to begin planning and booking contractors in March or April. Experienced deck builders in the Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John markets often have their spring and early summer schedules filled by mid-April. Getting your quotes, permits, and material selections locked down during the late winter months means your project can break ground as soon as conditions allow in May. Permit processing through your local municipality can take two to four weeks, so submitting applications in March gives you a buffer.

October is generally the tail end of comfortable building weather, though some contractors will push into early November for framing work if the fall is mild. However, finishing tasks like railing installation, staining, and final grading become increasingly risky as November progresses. Snow, freezing rain, and shortened daylight hours all reduce productivity and quality. Most reputable builders in New Brunswick will avoid committing to new deck starts after mid-September unless the project is relatively small and can be completed quickly.

Planning around New Brunswick's building season is not just about comfort. It directly affects the structural integrity of your footings, the longevity of your finishes, and the availability of qualified contractors. Starting your planning process in late winter gives you the best chance of a smooth, on-schedule build during the prime months.

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Q11

How do I find a reputable deck builder in Saint John NB?

The most reliable way to find a reputable deck builder in Saint John is through personal referrals from neighbours, friends, or family who have had deck work done recently, combined with checking the New Brunswick Construction Network directory and collecting at least three detailed quotes before making your decision. Finding the right contractor takes effort upfront, but it prevents the far greater expense and frustration of hiring the wrong one.

Word of mouth remains the gold standard for finding quality contractors in Saint John. Drive through your neighbourhood and look at decks that impress you — a well-built deck is its own advertisement. If you see one you admire, there is nothing wrong with knocking on the door and asking who built it and whether they would recommend them. People who have had a great experience with a contractor are almost always happy to share the name, and people who have had a bad experience will save you from repeating their mistake. Post in local Saint John community groups and ask for recommendations; you will quickly see which names come up repeatedly with positive feedback.

Online directories and review platforms provide another layer of research. The New Brunswick Construction Network directory lists deck builders and contractors serving the Saint John area, with business profiles that include their services, coverage area, and contact information. Google Reviews and Facebook business pages offer unfiltered feedback from past customers, though you should read reviews critically — look for detailed, specific reviews rather than generic five-star ratings, and pay attention to how the contractor responds to any negative feedback. A contractor who addresses complaints professionally demonstrates the kind of accountability you want in someone working on your home.

Once you have identified three to five potential contractors, request detailed written quotes from at least three of them. A proper quote should itemize materials, labour, permit costs, and any additional fees rather than presenting a single lump-sum number. This level of detail allows you to make meaningful comparisons between contractors and understand exactly what you are paying for. Be cautious of quotes that are dramatically lower than the others — in Saint John's market, a quote that undercuts the competition by 30 percent or more often indicates that corners will be cut on materials, the contractor is underinsured, or the price will climb through change orders once work begins.

When evaluating contractors, verify the fundamentals. Ask for their WorkSafeNB registration number and confirm it is current. Request proof of liability insurance with a minimum \$2 million policy. Confirm they will pull the required building permit through the City of Saint John and that inspections are part of their process. These are non-negotiable baseline requirements, not optional extras.

Meet potential contractors in person at your property before making a decision. A professional deck builder will want to see the site, assess the grade and soil conditions, check the condition of your home's rim joist if the deck will be attached, and discuss your vision for the space. A contractor who quotes a price over the phone without visiting the site is not someone you want building a structure attached to your home. During the site visit, pay attention to how they communicate — do they listen to what you want, explain their recommendations clearly, and answer your questions without being evasive?

Finally, get everything in writing. A detailed contract should specify the scope of work, materials to be used including brand names and grades, start and completion dates, payment schedule tied to milestones, cleanup responsibilities, and warranty terms. A handshake agreement is not sufficient for a project that typically costs \$5,000 to \$30,000 or more in the Saint John market.

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What questions should I ask a deck contractor in New Brunswick before hiring?

Before signing a contract with any deck builder in New Brunswick, you should ask about their WorkSafeNB registration, liability insurance coverage, who pulls the building permit, their projected timeline, the payment schedule, and what warranty they offer on their work. These six questions will tell you more about a contractor's professionalism and reliability than any advertisement or website ever could.

Start with their WorkSafeNB number. WorkSafeNB is the province's workplace health and safety commission, and any contractor with employees is required to be registered. Ask for their account number and verify it is active. A contractor who cannot or will not provide this information may be operating without proper coverage, which exposes you to potential liability if a worker is injured on your property. This is not a technicality — it is a serious financial risk that New Brunswick homeowners sometimes overlook.

Next, ask about liability insurance. A reputable deck contractor should carry a minimum of \$2 million in commercial general liability insurance. This covers damage to your property during construction — a misplaced footing that cracks your foundation, a delivery truck that damages your driveway, or similar incidents. Ask to see a current certificate of insurance, not just a verbal confirmation. Any legitimate contractor will have this documentation readily available and will not be offended by the request.

Clarify who is responsible for pulling the building permit. In most New Brunswick municipalities, a building permit is required for deck construction, and the process involves submitting plans, paying fees, and scheduling inspections. A professional contractor should handle the permit process as part of their scope of work. If a contractor suggests building without a permit or asks you to obtain it yourself, treat that as a warning sign. Unpermitted work can result in fines from your municipality, problems with your homeowner's insurance, and complications when you sell your home.

Ask for a realistic timeline that accounts for weather delays. A trustworthy contractor will give you an honest estimate rather than an optimistically short one designed to win your business. In New Brunswick's building season, rain delays are inevitable, and a contractor who acknowledges this upfront is being straight with you. Get the start date and estimated completion date in writing as part of your contract.

The payment schedule should be clearly defined and reasonable. Industry standard in New Brunswick is typically a deposit of 10 to 30 percent to secure your spot and allow the contractor to order materials, with progress payments tied to completion milestones, and a final payment upon completion and your satisfaction with the work. Be cautious of any contractor who demands full payment upfront or a deposit exceeding 50 percent. Conversely, a contractor who requires no deposit at all may not be financially stable enough to purchase materials without your funds.

Finally, discuss the warranty in specific terms. What exactly is covered, for how long, and what is the process for making a warranty claim? A quality deck builder should warranty their workmanship for a minimum of one to two years, covering issues like loose boards, railing problems, and structural settling that results from installation errors. This is separate from manufacturer warranties on the decking materials themselves. Get the warranty terms in writing as part of your contract, not as a verbal promise.

Beyond these six essentials, ask for references from recent projects in your area and take the time to actually call them. Ask those references whether the contractor stayed on budget, communicated well during the project, and responded promptly when issues arose after completion.

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Should I hire a deck builder or do it myself in Fredericton NB?

Hire a professional for any raised or structurally complex deck, but a ground-level platform deck or refinishing work like staining are reasonable DIY projects for a handy homeowner in Fredericton. The decision comes down to three factors: safety, building code compliance, and the honest assessment of your own skill level.

The strongest argument for hiring a professional is structural safety. Any deck that is elevated more than 24 inches above grade requires engineered connections, proper footing depths, and railing systems that meet the New Brunswick Building Code. Fredericton's frost depth requires footings to extend below the frost line, and undersized or improperly placed footings will shift during freeze-thaw cycles, compromising the entire structure. A deck attached to your house must be properly ledger-bolted to the rim joist with flashing to prevent water infiltration — improper ledger connections are the leading cause of catastrophic deck collapses across North America. These are not areas where learning as you go is acceptable.

The building permit process in the City of Fredericton also favours working with a professional. Permits are required for most deck constructions, and the application requires structural drawings, footing specifications, and compliance details that experienced builders produce routinely. A professional builder knows what the local building inspector expects to see and builds accordingly, avoiding the costly and demoralizing experience of failing an inspection and having to tear out and redo work.

That said, there are deck-related projects well suited to DIY. A ground-level floating deck — a freestanding platform sitting on deck blocks directly on the ground — involves minimal structural risk and straightforward carpentry. If you are comfortable using a circular saw, drill, and level, and you can follow a detailed plan, a small ground-level deck is achievable over a weekend or two. Similarly, stripping and re-staining an existing deck is a project that requires patience and attention to weather conditions rather than specialized skills. Sanding, cleaning, and applying stain are tasks where your labour saves real money, since the material cost is modest but a professional will charge \$2 to \$5 per square foot for the work.

The cost difference is significant enough to factor into your decision. Professional deck construction in Fredericton typically runs \$25 to \$75 per square foot depending on materials, complexity, and the builder's experience. A DIY build using pressure-treated lumber will cost roughly \$10 to \$25 per square foot in materials alone, representing substantial savings. However, those savings evaporate quickly if mistakes require professional correction, and a deck built without proper permits can create serious problems when you sell your home, as buyers and their inspectors will flag unpermitted structures.

If you are leaning toward hiring, invest time in finding the right contractor. Ask for their WorkSafeNB registration number to confirm they carry workplace safety coverage, verify they have liability insurance, clarify whether they or you are responsible for pulling the building permit, and get a detailed written contract covering timeline, payment schedule, materials, and warranty terms. A reputable Fredericton deck builder will welcome these questions rather than dodge them. Getting three or more quotes gives you a realistic sense of pricing and helps you identify outliers — both suspiciously low bids that may indicate corners being cut, and inflated quotes that do not reflect the scope of work.

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Q14

How long does a typical deck build take in Moncton NB?

A typical residential deck build in Moncton takes between 3 days for a small, simple deck and up to 3 weeks for a large, multi-level structure with custom features. The actual timeline depends on the size and complexity of the project, permit requirements, weather conditions, and your contractor's current workload.

For a small, straightforward deck — roughly 100 to 150 square feet with a simple rectangular layout, standard railing, and basic stairs — an experienced crew can typically complete the entire build in 3 to 4 days. This assumes the footings have been dug and the concrete has already cured, which adds 2 to 3 days before framing begins. A small deck attached to a back door for a barbecue and a couple of chairs is the most common project in this category, and Moncton builders handle dozens of them every summer.

A medium-sized deck in the 150 to 400 square foot range with features like an angled corner, built-in bench seating, or a transition between two levels typically takes 5 to 7 working days of active construction. This is the most common deck size in Moncton's suburban neighbourhoods, particularly in areas like Riverview and Dieppe

where lot sizes accommodate a generous outdoor living space. Factor in the footing cure time and you are looking at roughly two weeks from the first shovel in the ground to the final coat of stain.

Large and complex deck projects — multi-level structures exceeding 400 square feet, wraparound designs, decks with integrated pergolas or privacy walls, or elevated decks requiring substantial structural support — can take 2 to 3 weeks of build time. Projects involving composite decking with hidden fastener systems take somewhat longer than pressure-treated lumber builds because the installation process is more methodical. If your project includes features like built-in lighting, under-deck drainage systems, or custom cable railing, each of these adds time to the overall schedule.

Beyond the physical construction, there are timeline factors that Moncton homeowners often underestimate. The building permit process through the City of Moncton or the Town of Riverview typically takes one to two weeks, though it can stretch longer during the busy summer season when municipal offices are processing a high volume of applications. Your contractor should be pulling this permit, and it needs to be approved before any work begins.

Moncton's weather also plays a role in scheduling. Rain days are inevitable during the summer building season, and a stretch of wet weather can add several days to any project. Coastal fog and morning dampness can delay the start of work on some days, particularly for staining and finishing tasks that require dry conditions. Most Moncton deck builders factor weather delays into their project estimates, but it is worth discussing explicitly so you have realistic expectations.

Material delivery timing matters as well. Standard pressure-treated lumber is generally available on short notice from local suppliers, but composite decking, specialty fasteners, and custom railing systems may need to be ordered weeks in advance. Confirming material availability and delivery dates before your build is scheduled to start prevents the frustrating situation of a crew arriving with no materials to work with.

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What is the best month to start building a deck in New Brunswick?

June through August is the peak and most reliable window for deck construction in New Brunswick, but booking your contractor in March or April is essential to secure a spot during this prime building season.

The province's relatively short construction season, combined with high demand during the warm months, means that planning ahead is the single most important step in getting your deck built on schedule.

June is widely considered the ideal month to begin a deck build in New Brunswick. By early June, the ground has fully thawed and dried from spring runoff, frost is no longer a concern for concrete footings, and daytime temperatures are consistently warm enough for all aspects of construction. Soil conditions are stable enough for digging footings without encountering the soggy, waterlogged ground that plagues April and early May builds. June also offers the longest daylight hours of the year, giving builders maximum productive time on site each day.

July and August remain excellent building months, though July can bring stretches of heavy rain and August occasionally delivers heat waves that slow work. Both months provide reliable temperatures well above the 10-degree-Celsius minimum needed for concrete footing cures and for applying stain or sealant as a finishing step. The vast majority of deck construction in the province happens during these three months.

May and September are also viable but come with caveats. Early May in New Brunswick can still bring overnight frost, particularly in the northern and interior regions around Edmundston and Miramichi, and the ground may still be soft from spring thaw. Late May is generally safe for starting work. September offers comfortable working temperatures and fewer bugs, which is a genuine advantage during a multi-day build, but the window narrows quickly. By late September, nighttime temperatures begin dipping toward the freezing mark, and any concrete work or staining needs to be completed before that happens.

Building a deck in the fall or winter months is strongly discouraged in New Brunswick. Concrete will not cure properly below 10 degrees Celsius, and the province's winters bring sustained freezing temperatures from November through March that make foundation work impossible. Frozen ground cannot be excavated for footings, and the snow and ice that blanket the province for five months create unsafe working conditions. While some framing work can technically be done in cold weather, starting a project that cannot be completed before freeze-up creates problems with exposed, unfinished structures sitting through winter weather.

The critical takeaway for New Brunswick homeowners is that the best builders book up fast. If you want a June start date, you should be contacting contractors and getting quotes in March or April. Waiting until May to start calling around often means your project gets pushed to late summer or even the following year. Use the early months of the year to finalize your design, obtain your building permit from your local municipality, and select your materials

so that when your contractor is ready to begin, there are no delays. Material availability has been unpredictable in recent years, and ordering specialty items like composite decking or custom railings early ensures everything is on site when the build crew arrives.

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