

NEW BRUNSWICK DECKS

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# Decking Materials

Questions about pressure-treated lumber, cedar, exotic hardwoods, and other natural wood decking options for NB's climate.

16 Expert Answers from Deck IQ

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## What is the difference between AC2 and MCA pressure treatment for NB decks?

**AC2 and MCA are both copper-based pressure treatments, but MCA (micronized copper azole) is the current standard that replaced AC2 around 2013-2015.** For New Brunswick decks, you'll almost exclusively find MCA-treated lumber at retailers today, and it's actually superior for our Maritime climate.

**MCA treatment** uses microscopic copper particles suspended in an azole co-biocide, creating more uniform protection throughout the wood fiber. This micronized copper penetrates deeper and more evenly than the older AC2 formulation, which is crucial for NB's harsh freeze-thaw cycles that can open up wood grain and expose untreated areas. The azole component provides additional protection against the fungi and mold that thrive in our humid Maritime climate.

**AC2 (Alkaline Copper Quaternary)** was the previous generation copper-based treatment. While effective, it didn't penetrate as uniformly as MCA, and the quaternary ammonium compounds were less effective against certain fungi common in wet climates like ours. You might still find some AC2 lumber in stock at smaller suppliers, but major retailers have largely switched to MCA.

**For New Brunswick deck builders, MCA offers several advantages** over AC2. It handles our 100+ annual freeze-thaw cycles better due to more uniform copper distribution. The treatment is less likely to leach out during our wet springs and humid summers. MCA-treated lumber also tends to have fewer surface deposits and stains more evenly when you're ready to apply your first coat of stain (remember to wait 3-6 months for the wood to dry below 15% moisture content).

**Both treatments are safe for residential use** and far safer than the old CCA (chromated copper arsenate) that was banned in 2003. Neither AC2 nor MCA contains arsenic or chromium. However, always wear gloves when handling pressure-treated lumber and avoid burning the scraps.

**When shopping for deck lumber in NB**, simply ask for "pressure-treated lumber rated for ground contact" if you're buying posts, or "above-ground PT lumber" for joists and decking. The supplier will provide MCA-treated lumber as standard. Look for the grade stamp showing "MCA" and the appropriate use category - UC4A for ground contact posts, UC3B for above-ground framing and decking.

**The bottom line:** If you're building a deck in New Brunswick today, you'll get MCA treatment, which is actually better suited to our climate than the older AC2 formulation. Focus on proper installation, adequate ventilation, and that crucial 3-6 month drying period before staining rather than worrying about treatment types.

Need help finding a deck builder who understands proper pressure-treated lumber selection and installation? New Brunswick Decks can match you with experienced local contractors for free.

## What is the price of deck post caps in New Brunswick and are they worth it?

**Deck post caps in New Brunswick typically cost \$8-50 per cap depending on material and style, and they're absolutely worth the investment for protecting your deck posts from our harsh Maritime climate.**

Post caps serve a critical function in New Brunswick's wet, freeze-thaw climate. Without caps, water sits on top of your deck posts, soaks into the wood grain, and when it freezes (which happens 100+ times per year in NB), it expands and splits the post from the inside. This leads to structural weakness and premature post replacement, which can cost \$200-500 per post including labor.

### Material Options and Pricing:

**Basic plastic caps** run \$8-15 each and provide essential water protection. While not fancy, they do the job of keeping moisture out of post tops. **Aluminum caps** cost \$15-35 each and offer better durability and a cleaner appearance. **Copper caps** range \$25-50 each, develop a beautiful patina over time, and last decades in our Maritime environment. **Decorative metal caps** with solar lights or ornate designs can run \$30-80 each but add both function and curb appeal.

For a typical deck with 6-8 posts, you're looking at \$50-400 total investment depending on your choice. Compare this to replacing even one rotted post (\$200-500), and caps pay for themselves many times over.

**Installation timing matters in New Brunswick.** Install caps during the dry months (June through September) when posts have had time to dry out from winter moisture. If you're building a new deck, have your contractor install caps immediately after construction. For existing decks, spring is ideal timing after you've inspected posts for winter damage.

**Beyond water protection**, post caps provide a finished, professional appearance that increases your deck's visual appeal and potentially your home's value. They also prevent debris from accumulating on post tops, which can trap moisture and create pest nesting spots.

**Professional vs DIY installation** depends on your cap choice. Basic plastic caps are straightforward DIY projects requiring just a drill and screws. However, if you're installing caps with electrical components (solar lights) or need to trim post tops level first, hiring your deck builder ensures proper installation and maintains any warranties.

The bottom line: post caps are one of the most cost-effective deck investments you can make in New Brunswick's climate. They're essential protection, not just decoration, and will extend your deck's lifespan significantly while keeping it looking sharp through our challenging seasons.

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Q3

## Where can I buy deck building materials in Moncton NB?

**Moncton offers a strong selection of deck building material suppliers, with Kent Building Supplies on Berry Mills Road serving as the most comprehensive single source for pressure-treated lumber, composite decking, and structural hardware in the Greater Moncton area.** The city's position as the commercial hub of southeastern New Brunswick means homeowners in Moncton, Dieppe, and Riverview have better access to specialty decking products than most other communities in the province.

Kent Building Supplies operates multiple locations in the Moncton area, but the Berry Mills Road location carries the most extensive lumber yard inventory. As a New Brunswick-based chain, Kent has strong relationships with regional lumber suppliers and typically stocks a full range of pressure-treated dimensional lumber in SPF, including the 5/4x6 decking boards, 2x8 and 2x10 joists, 4x4 and 6x6 posts, and beam-grade material that a complete deck project requires. Kent also carries composite decking from major manufacturers, though their in-store selection varies by season. For specific Trex or TimberTech products, placing a special order through Kent four to six weeks before your build date ensures you get the exact colour and product line you want rather than being limited to whatever is on the shelf.

Home Hardware and Home Building Centre locations in Moncton and Dieppe provide another reliable option. The Dieppe Home Hardware Building Centre on Champlain Street maintains a well-stocked lumber yard and is particularly convenient for residents of Dieppe and the eastern side of the metro area. Home Hardware's national buying power keeps pressure-treated lumber pricing competitive with Kent, and they carry the Simpson Strong-Tie structural connector line that forms the backbone of proper deck framing.

For homeowners specifically seeking composite decking, Moncton has several options beyond the big box stores. Specialized building material dealers can order directly from Trex, TimberTech, and Fiberon with access to the

complete colour and product range rather than the limited selection that retail stores typically keep in stock. Pricing through specialty dealers is often comparable to retail on larger orders because of volume purchasing arrangements, and the product knowledge available from staff who focus specifically on decking materials is substantially deeper than what a general-purpose store provides.

Rona, now operating under the Lowe's Canada banner, has a Moncton location that carries decking materials and often runs seasonal promotions on pressure-treated lumber in the spring. Their inventory tends to be more focused on the most common dimensions and products, so if your project requires unusual sizes or premium composite lines, you may need to supplement with a specialty order.

For fasteners and structural hardware specifically suited to New Brunswick's climate, Industrial Fasteners in Moncton's industrial park area stocks stainless steel screws, specialty joist hangers, and commercial-grade structural connectors that the retail stores may not carry. This is a particularly valuable resource if you are building a coastal-adjacent deck in the Shediac direction and need 316 stainless steel fasteners in bulk quantities.

Pricing context for Moncton's market as of early 2026 helps with project budgeting. Pressure-treated 5/4x6x12 deck boards run approximately \$12 to \$16 each depending on grade and supplier. Pressure-treated 2x10x12 joists for framing range from \$18 to \$24 each. A basic 300-square-foot deck framing and decking package in pressure-treated lumber runs approximately \$3,500 to \$5,500 in materials from Moncton suppliers, while a composite surface on pressure-treated framing for the same footprint will run \$8,000 to \$14,000 in materials depending on the product line selected. Delivery from most Moncton suppliers is available for a flat fee of \$50 to \$100 within the metro area. One practical tip for spring shopping: the best pressure-treated lumber arrives at dealer yards in April and May, and hand-selecting boards early in the season before stock has been picked over yields noticeably better results for your finished deck.

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## Should I use stainless steel or coated screws for my coastal deck in Saint John?

**For a coastal deck in Saint John, stainless steel screws are the clear recommendation, and the additional cost over coated alternatives is one of the most justifiable upgrades in your entire project budget.** Saint John's position at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy creates a persistently salt-laden atmosphere that tests metal fasteners more aggressively than almost any other location in New Brunswick, and the consequences of fastener failure on an elevated deck range from cosmetic damage to structural danger.

Stainless steel deck screws come in two primary grades relevant to residential construction: 305 and 316. Grade 305, sometimes marketed as 18-8 stainless, provides excellent corrosion resistance for most residential applications and costs between \$0.15 and \$0.20 per screw. Grade 316, which contains molybdenum for enhanced resistance to chloride corrosion, costs \$0.20 to \$0.25 per screw and is the superior choice for properties directly along the Saint John harbour, in the South End near the waterfront, or anywhere with direct line-of-sight exposure to the bay. For a standard 300-square-foot deck requiring approximately 1,500 screws, the total fastener cost runs roughly \$225 to \$300 for grade 305 or \$300 to \$375 for grade 316.

Coated screws from premium manufacturers like GRK and SPAX represent the primary alternative, priced at \$0.08 to \$0.15 per screw. These products feature proprietary multi-layer coatings, ceramic particles, or polymer barriers that provide meaningfully better corrosion resistance than standard hot-dipped galvanized fasteners. GRK's Climatek coating and SPAX's Wirox and Yellox finishes have strong reputations and perform well in most Canadian environments. The total fastener cost for a 300-square-foot deck drops to approximately \$120 to \$225, saving roughly \$100 to \$175 compared to stainless steel.

That savings calculation looks different when you extend the analysis over time. In Saint John's coastal environment, even premium coated screws will begin showing corrosion at the head and along the shank within five to eight years. The coating is a barrier that, once breached by the mechanical stress of installation or the constant chemical assault of salt air, allows corrosion to progress from the breach point. Once a coated screw begins rusting, the rust stains bleed into surrounding wood, creating dark streaks that no amount of cleaning fully removes. On composite decking, rust stains from corroding fasteners are even more visually objectionable against the clean, uniform surface.

Stainless steel does not rely on a coating for its corrosion resistance. The chromium content in the alloy forms a self-healing oxide layer that regenerates when scratched or damaged. This means a stainless screw installed in a Saint John deck will look and perform essentially the same in year fifteen as it did in year one. There is no coating to wear through, no barrier to breach, and no progressive corrosion pathway to worry about.

The structural argument is equally compelling. When coated screws corrode, they lose cross-sectional area and therefore holding strength. A number 10 screw that has lost 20 percent of its shank diameter to corrosion has lost significantly more than 20 percent of its shear and withdrawal resistance. On a deck that experiences New Brunswick's freeze-thaw cycling, where boards are constantly pushing and pulling against their fasteners as they expand and contract, weakened screws are the first failure point. Deck boards that begin to pop up, squeak, or feel loose underfoot are almost always exhibiting fastener deterioration rather than board failure.

There is one scenario where coated screws are defensible in Saint John: if your property is well inland, on the north side of the city, several kilometres from the harbour and shielded from prevailing salt winds by terrain or dense development. In neighbourhoods like the north end beyond Millidgeville, salt exposure is measurably lower, and high-quality coated fasteners can provide 12 to 15 years of reliable service. But for the majority of Saint John properties, particularly anywhere in the South End, West Side, East Side waterfront, or harbour-facing elevations, stainless steel is the standard that experienced local deck builders default to without hesitation.

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Q5

## What thickness of deck boards is best for snow load in Edmundston NB?

**The standard 5/4x6 deck board, which measures approximately one inch thick by five and a half inches wide, is the correct choice for residential decks in Edmundston and handles the region's substantial snow loads effectively when supported by properly spaced joists.** Edmundston sits in one of New Brunswick's heaviest snowfall zones, with the upper Saint John River valley regularly accumulating snowpacks that generate ground snow loads in the 3.0 to 3.5 kPa range, placing it at the higher end of the province's design requirements.

The 5/4 designation in lumber sizing refers to the board's nominal thickness of one and a quarter inches, which after milling and treatment yields an actual thickness of approximately one inch. This has been the decking industry standard across Canada for decades, and it exists at this dimension for sound engineering reasons. At one inch of actual thickness, the board provides sufficient bending strength to resist both the concentrated loads of foot traffic and furniture and the distributed loads of accumulated snow, provided the joists beneath are spaced at the standard 16-inch on-centre interval. Moving to wider joist spacing, such as 24 inches on centre, is where snow load becomes a genuine concern for 5/4 boards in Edmundston's climate.

At 16-inch joist spacing with 5/4x6 decking, the boards can safely support a combined load well in excess of what Edmundston's worst winter delivers. The snow load calculation works out to roughly 60 to 70 pounds per square foot at the 3.0 to 3.5 kPa design load, distributed evenly across the deck surface. Each 5/4x6 board spanning 16 inches between joists carries only about 8 to 10 pounds of snow load per linear foot of board, which is well within the material's capacity whether you are using pressure-treated lumber or composite decking.

Some homeowners in northern New Brunswick consider using full 2x6 boards (actual thickness one and a half inches) for added confidence against heavy snow. While there is nothing wrong with this approach structurally, it introduces tradeoffs worth understanding. The extra half inch of thickness means more material cost, roughly 30 to 40 percent more per board. The heavier boards also retain more moisture within the wood, which in Edmundston's extended cold season means more freeze-thaw cycling damage within the board itself. Thicker boards take longer to dry after rain or snowmelt, and that prolonged moisture retention accelerates surface deterioration, checking, and fungal growth. For these reasons, most experienced deck builders in the Edmundston and Madawaska County area recommend staying with 5/4 boards and ensuring the joist spacing is appropriate rather than overbuilding the surface.

Composite decking boards present a different thickness consideration. Most composite products are manufactured at approximately one inch thick, comparable to 5/4 lumber, but their engineered composition means they do not behave like natural wood under load. Trex, TimberTech, and Fiberon all specify maximum joist spacing for their products, typically 16 inches for standard residential applications and 12 inches for diagonal or 45-degree installations. Following the manufacturer's joist spacing requirement is non-negotiable for warranty coverage and is especially important in Edmundston where the snow loads test these specifications more aggressively than in milder regions.

One often overlooked factor in Edmundston is the mechanical stress from snow removal. The deck boards need to withstand not just the static weight of snow but the scraping forces of shovels and the impact of ice chunks being cleared. This is where 5/4 boards in good condition outperform thinner alternatives and where composite decking offers a genuine advantage over wood. A shovel blade that chips and gouges pressure-treated SPF slides harmlessly across capped composite, maintaining both the structural integrity and appearance of the surface

through years of heavy winter maintenance.

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Q6

## Can I use SPF lumber for deck framing in New Brunswick?

**Yes, SPF (spruce-pine-fir) lumber can be used for deck framing in New Brunswick provided it is pressure-treated to the appropriate retention level, but it should never be used for the decking surface itself.** This distinction between framing and decking is critical and frequently misunderstood by homeowners tackling their first deck project in the province.

SPF is the dominant structural lumber species group sold in New Brunswick, which makes sense given that the province's forestry industry produces enormous volumes of spruce and fir. When you walk into Kent Building Supplies or Home Hardware in Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John and pick up a pressure-treated 2x8 or 2x10, there is a very high probability it is SPF. The wood is pressure-treated with MCA (micronized copper azole) to a retention level appropriate for its intended use. For deck framing that will not be in direct ground contact, the UC3B (Use Category 3B, above ground exposed) rating is the minimum standard. For posts or any members in ground contact, UC4A is required. These retention levels are stamped on the end tag of every treated board.

As framing material, pressure-treated SPF performs well in New Brunswick's climate. The treatment protects against the rot and fungal decay that untreated softwood would succumb to within a few years of exposure to the province's wet springs and heavy snowfall. SPF's structural properties are adequate for residential deck spans when properly sized according to span tables. A pressure-treated SPF 2x8 joist on 16-inch centres can span approximately 10 feet for residential deck loads including New Brunswick's design snow loads of 2.0 to 3.5 kPa, depending on your specific municipality. A 2x10 extends that span to roughly 12 to 13 feet under the same

conditions.

Where SPF falls short is as a decking surface, meaning the boards you actually walk on. Even when pressure-treated, SPF deck boards present several problems in New Brunswick's environment. The wood is relatively soft compared to cedar or hardwood alternatives, with a Janka hardness of only about 400 to 500 pounds-force. This means furniture legs dent it, dropped tools gouge it, and snow shovels scar it readily. SPF is also prone to significant checking, splitting, and warping as it cycles through New Brunswick's dramatic seasonal moisture and temperature changes. A pressure-treated SPF deck board installed in June will commonly develop noticeable surface checks by the following spring after enduring its first winter of freeze-thaw cycling.

The grain structure of SPF species does not handle foot traffic gracefully either. Within two to three seasons, high-traffic areas develop a fuzzy, splintered surface that is uncomfortable underfoot and difficult to remedy without aggressive sanding. This splintering tendency worsens after each winter as ice formation within the wood fibres physically tears the surface grain apart.

For the decking surface in New Brunswick, better options abound. Standard 5/4x6 pressure-treated decking boards, which measure approximately one inch thick and five and a half inches wide, are typically available in either SPF or a denser species. If your supplier offers hem-fir or southern yellow pine treated decking, these are meaningfully harder and more wear-resistant surface options. Composite decking eliminates the material concern entirely, as products from Trex and TimberTech are engineered to resist all of the surface degradation issues that plague SPF in this climate.

The framing beneath your deck is a different engineering challenge than the surface. It needs structural strength, dimensional stability under load, and decay resistance, all of which pressure-treated SPF provides at a reasonable cost. A typical deck framing package of pressure-treated SPF for a 300-square-foot deck in New Brunswick runs approximately \$1,800 to \$2,800 depending on the design complexity and joist sizing, which represents solid value for a material that will reliably support the structure for 20 to 30 years when properly installed with appropriate fasteners and adequate ventilation underneath.

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## What is the difference between ACQ and MCA pressure-treated lumber for NB decks?

**MCA (micronized copper azole) has largely replaced ACQ (alkaline copper quaternary) as the standard pressure treatment for residential lumber in New Brunswick, offering comparable rot protection with significantly less corrosion to metal fasteners and connectors.** Understanding the difference matters because the treatment type directly affects which fasteners you can safely use, how long your structural connections last, and what maintenance your deck will require over its lifetime.

ACQ was the first major replacement for CCA (chromated copper arsenate) when that arsenic-containing treatment was phased out of residential use in Canada in 2004. ACQ uses dissolved copper and a quaternary ammonium compound to protect wood against decay, fungus, and insect damage. It works effectively for these purposes, and ACQ-treated lumber installed properly will resist rot for 20 to 30 years in New Brunswick's climate. However, ACQ has a significant drawback: the alkaline copper solution is highly corrosive to metals. The dissolved copper ions in ACQ create an electrochemical reaction with standard galvanized fasteners and connectors, eating through protective zinc coatings roughly two to three times faster than untreated wood would. This means that decks built with ACQ lumber and standard galvanized hardware experience accelerated fastener failure, with screws and joist hanger nails potentially losing structural integrity within 8 to 12 years in New Brunswick's wet climate.

MCA technology addressed this corrosion problem by changing how the copper is delivered into the wood. Instead of dissolving copper in an alkaline solution, MCA uses micronized copper particles, essentially copper ground to an extremely fine powder and suspended in water. These tiny particles are driven into the wood's cellular structure during the pressure treatment process, where they become physically lodged rather than remaining in a chemically reactive dissolved state. The result is wood that contains the same protective copper but in a form that is far less aggressive toward metal fasteners. Independent testing has consistently shown that MCA-treated lumber corrodes galvanized fasteners at rates comparable to untreated wood, which represents a dramatic improvement over ACQ.

For New Brunswick deck builders, the practical implications are straightforward. With MCA-treated lumber, standard hot-dipped galvanized fasteners meeting the G185 coating specification are considered compatible and should provide normal service life. This is the combination most building supply dealers in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John stock and recommend. You still benefit from upgrading to coated screws from manufacturers like GRK or SPAX at \$0.08 to \$0.15 per screw for better long-term performance, and stainless steel remains the gold standard for coastal locations like Saint John, Bathurst, and Shediac, but MCA does not demand stainless steel the way ACQ arguably does.

When shopping for pressure-treated lumber at New Brunswick suppliers, you can identify the treatment type from the end tag stapled to each board. MCA-treated lumber is typically stamped with designations like MCA-C or bears the Wolmanized brand name from Lonza, the primary manufacturer. ACQ lumber will be marked as ACQ-C, ACQ-D, or similar variants. Most major suppliers in the province, including Kent Building Supplies and Home Hardware locations, have largely transitioned their residential inventory to MCA, but ACQ stock still circulates, particularly at smaller yards or when older inventory is being cleared.

The colour difference between the two treatments is subtle but noticeable. ACQ-treated wood tends to have a stronger green tint due to the higher concentration of dissolved copper, while MCA-treated lumber appears more naturally brown or tan with a lighter greenish cast. Both will weather to a similar grey over time if left unstained, and both accept stain and finish products equally well. For New Brunswick homeowners planning to stain their deck, the treatment type has no meaningful impact on stain adhesion or colour outcome, though allowing the standard four to eight weeks of drying time before staining applies to both.

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Q8

## How does Maritime salt air affect different decking materials in Bathurst NB?

**Maritime salt air in Bathurst dramatically accelerates the deterioration of metal fasteners and untreated wood while having minimal effect on composite decking, making material selection one of the most consequential decisions for any deck project along the Chaleur Bay coastline.** Bathurst's position on the southern shore of the Baie des Chaleurs exposes structures to persistent salt-laden winds that penetrate several kilometres inland, and homeowners even in the town centre experience measurably more corrosion than those building in interior communities like Miramichi or Fredericton.

Pressure-treated lumber, the most common decking material across New Brunswick, suffers in Bathurst's coastal environment in ways that are not immediately obvious. The wood itself holds up reasonably well against salt exposure, as the MCA (micronized copper azole) treatment that is now standard in the province provides genuine rot and fungal resistance. However, the salt air's real damage occurs at the fastener points. Standard galvanized screws and nails develop rust within three to five years in direct coastal exposure, and that rust bleeds into the surrounding wood, creating dark stains and weakening the connection. As the fasteners corrode, they lose holding power, and deck boards begin to loosen, squeak, and eventually work free. The structural connections, including joist hangers, post bases, and ledger bolts, are equally vulnerable, and their failure carries far more serious consequences than a loose deck board.

Cedar decking, which some Bathurst homeowners choose for its natural beauty, is particularly vulnerable to the salt-and-moisture combination. Cedar's natural oils provide moderate decay resistance, but salt deposits draw moisture into the wood grain and interfere with the oils' protective properties. Cedar decks within a kilometre of Bathurst's shoreline typically show significant greying, splitting, and surface erosion within four to six years even with diligent annual maintenance. The wood's relatively soft character means that salt crystal formation within the grain causes physical damage that harder species resist more effectively.

Composite decking is where Bathurst homeowners gain the clearest advantage in a coastal environment. Products from manufacturers like Trex, TimberTech, and Fiberon are engineered from wood fibre and polymer blended materials that are capped with a protective shell impervious to salt, moisture, and UV exposure. Salt air simply washes off composite surfaces with rain or routine cleaning, and because the material does not absorb moisture, there is no internal damage pathway for salt to exploit. Trex Enhance, the mid-range line installed at \$45 to \$55 per square foot in the Bathurst market, handles coastal exposure essentially as well as the premium Transcend line at \$60 to \$75 per square foot. The performance difference between those tiers relates more to colour options, scratch resistance, and aesthetics than to salt air durability.

## **Fastener Strategy for Bathurst Coastal Decks**

Regardless of your decking surface material, the fastener system beneath it must be selected specifically for coastal duty. Stainless steel screws at \$0.15 to \$0.25 each are effectively mandatory for any deck within two kilometres of Bathurst Harbour or the bay shoreline. All structural connectors, including joist hangers, post bases, and beam brackets, should be stainless steel or at minimum ZMAX-coated to prevent the catastrophic failure that standard galvanized connectors risk in this environment.

The aluminum framing systems that some composite manufacturers now offer present an intriguing option for Bathurst. Aluminum does not rust and is unaffected by salt air, eliminating the single greatest vulnerability in coastal deck construction. The material cost premium over pressure-treated framing is significant, roughly 40 to 60 percent more, but the elimination of framing deterioration over the deck's lifetime can make the economics favourable on a

20-year analysis, particularly when you account for the cost of re-fastening or replacing corroded structural components that pressure-treated frames inevitably require in Bathurst's environment.

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Q9

## What gauge of joist hangers do I need for a residential deck in Dieppe?

**For a standard residential deck in Dieppe, you need minimum 18-gauge galvanized steel joist hangers rated for your specific joist dimensions, with 16-gauge or heavier recommended for any elevated deck, hot tub support, or spans exceeding 10 feet.** The gauge requirement is driven by both the New Brunswick Building Code and the actual structural loads your deck must handle, which in Dieppe include significant snow accumulation through the Moncton region's winters.

The most commonly used joist hanger for residential decking in the Greater Moncton area, including Dieppe, is the Simpson Strong-Tie LUS series or its equivalent from USP Structural Connectors. For standard 2x8 joists, the Simpson LUS28 at 18-gauge is the baseline for ground-level decks with typical residential loading. For 2x10 joists, which are increasingly common as homeowners push for longer unsupported spans, the LUS210 serves the same function. These hangers are rated for specific allowable loads that vary based on the lumber species, and since most pressure-treated framing lumber sold in New Brunswick is SPF (spruce-pine-fir), you need to verify the hanger's load table against SPF values rather than the higher Douglas Fir ratings that manufacturers sometimes feature prominently.

New Brunswick's design snow load is a critical factor that directly affects your joist hanger requirements. The Dieppe and Moncton area typically falls in the 2.0 to 2.8 kPa range for ground snow load, depending on your specific location and roof or overhead structure interactions. When you combine snow load with the standard 1.9

kPa live load for residential decks and the dead load of the decking material itself, the total load on each joist hanger connection can be substantial. For a 2x8 joist on 16-inch centres spanning 10 feet, each hanger connection carries roughly 400 to 550 pounds of combined load during peak winter conditions. An 18-gauge hanger handles this adequately for standard configurations, but the margin of safety narrows with wider joist spacing or longer spans.

Stepping up to 16-gauge hangers is advisable in several common Dieppe scenarios. If your deck will support a hot tub, the concentrated point loads from a filled tub weighing 3,000 to 5,000 pounds demand heavier connections throughout the support area. If your deck is elevated more than four feet above grade, the consequences of a connection failure are more severe, and building inspectors in the Dieppe and Moncton jurisdiction will scrutinize your structural connections more carefully. The Simpson LUS series is available in both gauges at similar dimensions, so upgrading is straightforward.

Fastener selection for the joist hangers deserves attention as well. Each hanger has designated nail holes that must be filled completely with the correct fastener. Simpson specifies their Strong-Drive SD connector screws or 10d x 1.5-inch joist hanger nails for most LUS hangers. Using standard deck screws in joist hangers is a code violation and a genuine safety hazard because deck screws are not rated for the shear forces that joist hanger connections experience. This is one of the most common mistakes building inspectors flag on deck projects throughout the province.

For Dieppe homeowners building near the Petitcodiac River or in lower-lying areas where moisture exposure is higher, consider upgrading to Simpson's ZMAX coating or stainless steel joist hangers rather than standard galvanized. The additional cost of approximately \$1 to \$3 per hanger is minimal relative to the total project budget but provides significantly better corrosion resistance over the deck's lifespan. If you are using MCA pressure-treated lumber, which is now the standard in New Brunswick, standard galvanized hangers meeting G185 coating specification are considered compatible, but the heavier ZMAX coating still offers a meaningful longevity advantage in high-moisture installations.

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## Is IPE hardwood decking worth the cost in New Brunswick?

**IPE hardwood decking is a premium product that can perform beautifully in New Brunswick, but the extreme cost combined with the province's harsh winters makes it a difficult investment to justify for most homeowners compared to high-end composite alternatives.** IPE typically runs \$12 to \$18 per linear foot for material alone, and a professionally installed 300-square-foot IPE deck in the Fredericton or Moncton area will generally cost between \$85 and \$120 per square foot when factoring in the specialized labour, pre-drilling requirements, and stainless steel fasteners the wood demands.

IPE, also known as Brazilian walnut, is one of the densest and most durable natural woods available, with a Janka hardness rating of approximately 3,680 pounds-force. It is naturally resistant to rot, insects, and fungal decay without requiring chemical treatment. In tropical and temperate climates, IPE decks routinely last 40 to 75 years. However, New Brunswick's climate subjects the wood to stresses that its South American origins did not prepare it for. The province's freeze-thaw cycle, which can produce temperature swings from -30C in January to +32C in July, causes even the densest hardwoods to expand and contract. IPE's extreme density actually works against it somewhat in this regard, as the wood resists absorbing moisture but can develop surface checking and end-grain cracking when subjected to repeated freezing.

The maintenance demands are another factor New Brunswick homeowners should weigh carefully. Left untreated, IPE weathers to a silver-grey patina that many people find attractive. But if you want to preserve the rich brown colour that makes the wood so appealing initially, you will need to apply a UV-protective oil finish at least once annually, and more realistically twice per year given New Brunswick's intense summer sun followed by months of snow and ice. Each application involves cleaning, possibly light sanding, and careful oil treatment. For a 300-square-foot deck, annual maintenance products run \$150 to \$300, and professional refinishing services in the Moncton and Saint John markets charge \$3 to \$5 per square foot.

Installation presents its own challenges in New Brunswick. IPE is so dense that every screw hole must be pre-drilled, which roughly doubles the labour time compared to cedar or pressure-treated lumber. Few general contractors in the province have extensive experience working with IPE, so finding qualified installers may require searching beyond your immediate area. The wood also dulls saw blades and drill bits rapidly, adding tool replacement costs that contractors factor into their quotes.

Where IPE genuinely excels is in its resistance to wear and structural integrity over time. It does not splinter the way softwoods do, making it excellent for barefoot use around pools or hot tubs. Its natural density means it resists impact damage from dropped objects, furniture, and heavy snow removal equipment.

For New Brunswick homeowners drawn to the natural beauty and longevity of IPE, a realistic comparison is warranted. Trex Transcend, the premium composite line, installed in the province runs roughly \$60 to \$75 per square foot, requires virtually zero maintenance, handles freeze-thaw cycling without checking, and carries a 25-year warranty. The installed cost difference on a 300-square-foot deck can easily reach \$10,000 to \$15,000. Over a 25-year period, when you add IPE's annual maintenance costs, the total ownership gap widens further. IPE remains a statement material for homeowners who prioritize natural wood aesthetics above all else and are prepared for the ongoing commitment it requires in a Maritime climate.

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Q11

## What type of screws and fasteners should I use for decking in Saint John NB?

**For decking in Saint John, stainless steel screws are the strongest recommendation due to the city's direct exposure to Bay of Fundy salt air, which accelerates metal corrosion far beyond what inland communities experience.** Standard galvanized fasteners that might last fifteen years in Fredericton can begin showing rust stains and structural weakening within five to seven years along the Saint John coastline.

Stainless steel deck screws, typically 305 or 316 grade, cost between \$0.15 and \$0.25 per screw depending on the grade and length. For a standard 300-square-foot deck requiring roughly 1,500 to 1,800 screws, that translates to approximately \$225 to \$450 in fastener costs alone. This is noticeably more than coated alternatives, but in Saint John's maritime environment the investment pays for itself by avoiding premature fastener failure and the ugly rust bleeding that ruins deck boards from the inside out. Grade 316 stainless is the superior choice for properties closest to the harbour or waterfront, while 305 grade performs adequately for homes further inland in areas like Millidgeville or the east side.

Coated screws from manufacturers like GRK and SPAX, priced at \$0.08 to \$0.15 each, are a reasonable middle ground for Saint John homeowners whose properties sit well back from the water. These fasteners feature proprietary coatings that resist corrosion better than standard hot-dipped galvanized, and they hold up respectably in moderate maritime exposure. However, if your deck faces the harbour or you are within a kilometre of open saltwater, the coating will degrade faster than the manufacturers' general warranties suggest, since those warranties are not calibrated for Atlantic coastal conditions specifically.

Beyond the screws themselves, your joist hangers, post bases, and structural connectors demand equal attention. Simpson Strong-Tie manufactures a stainless steel line specifically for coastal construction, and these should be your default in Saint John. Using galvanized joist hangers with stainless screws creates a galvanic corrosion risk where the dissimilar metals actually accelerate each other's deterioration, so consistency across all metal components matters.

For the ledger board connection, lag screws or structural bolts should also be stainless or at minimum hot-dipped galvanized meeting ASTM A153 standards. The ledger is the most critical structural connection on any deck, and a corroded lag bolt failure in that location can cause catastrophic collapse. New Brunswick building inspectors in the Saint John region are increasingly attentive to fastener specifications during inspections, particularly for elevated decks.

If you are installing composite decking, most manufacturers supply or recommend proprietary hidden fastener systems. Trex, for example, offers their Hideaway system, while TimberTech has the CONCEALoc line. These hidden fasteners are typically made from stainless steel or high-grade coated steel and are engineered to work with the specific expansion and contraction rates of their boards through New Brunswick's freeze-thaw cycles. Using generic hidden fasteners can void your composite warranty, so check manufacturer specifications carefully.

One additional consideration for Saint John is the fog. The city averages over 100 foggy days per year, and that persistent moisture combined with salt creates a uniquely aggressive environment for metal. Even stainless steel benefits from annual inspection, and any fasteners showing early signs of crevice corrosion should be replaced promptly before the damage spreads to surrounding wood or composite material.

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Q12

## Should I use 2x6 or 2x8 joists for my deck in Fredericton?

**Use 2x8 joists for your Fredericton deck in almost every scenario because the additional span capacity, stiffness, and resilience to long-term moisture exposure make them the superior choice over 2x6 joists for the modest cost difference.** A 2x6 joist is only appropriate for very small decks or very short spans, and even then, the money saved rarely justifies the trade-off in structural performance.

The fundamental difference comes down to span. A 2x6 SPF joist at 16 inches on centre spans a maximum of approximately 8 feet under standard residential deck loading of 50 pounds per square foot combined. A 2x8 at the same spacing extends that to 10 feet. In Fredericton, where most residential decks run 10 to 16 feet deep from the house, a 2x6 joist cannot cross the distance without adding an intermediate beam and additional footings. That intermediate beam with its posts and footings sunk to Fredericton's 1.2-metre frost depth adds far more cost than the price difference between 2x6 and 2x8 lumber. At current New Brunswick lumber yard pricing, a 12-foot 2x8 pressure-treated board runs roughly \$18 to \$24 while a 12-foot 2x6 is \$12 to \$16. On a 16-foot-wide deck requiring 13 joists, the upgrade from 2x6 to 2x8 costs approximately \$80 to \$105 in additional lumber. A single concrete footing sunk to 1.2 metres in Fredericton's soil costs \$150 to \$250 installed, and an intermediate beam requires three to four footings minimum. The 2x8 pays for itself immediately by eliminating that beam.

Beyond span, stiffness is the quality you feel underfoot every time you walk across your deck. Engineers measure this as deflection, the amount the joist bends under load. Building code limits deflection to the span divided by 360, meaning a 10-foot joist can sag no more than about a third of an inch under full load. A 2x6 at 8 feet meets this requirement on paper, but in practice, Fredericton homeowners with 2x6 joist decks frequently report a noticeable bounce or springiness underfoot. This is because the code represents a minimum standard, and a joist at its maximum span is working at the upper boundary of acceptable deflection. A 2x8 spanning the same 8 feet deflects approximately 40 percent less, producing a deck that feels solid and confident rather than soft and bouncy. If you plan to place heavy items on the deck like a large ceramic planter, a full outdoor dining set, or a barbecue island, that extra stiffness is not a luxury but a practical necessity.

Fredericton's climate introduces a long-term consideration favouring the 2x8. The city experiences temperature swings from minus 25 Celsius in January to plus 30 in July, combined with Maritime humidity that keeps wood moisture content elevated for much of the year. Over 15 to 20 years, this cycling gradually weakens wood fibres

through repeated expansion and contraction. A 2x6 at its maximum 8-foot span has less reserve strength to absorb that degradation than a 2x8 at the same distance. Building inspectors in the Fredericton area generally prefer to see 2x8 as the minimum joist size on new deck permits for this reason.

The one scenario where 2x6 joists make sense is a very small attached deck or landing, such as a 6x8-foot platform at a back door that primarily serves as a transitional space rather than a living area. At a 6-foot span, a 2x6 has ample capacity and the low profile helps when you need to keep the deck surface close to the door threshold height. For any deck larger than about 80 square feet or spanning more than 7 feet, the 2x8 is the right call.

Regardless of which size you choose, all joists should be pressure-treated SPF with MCA treatment, connected using 18-gauge minimum joist hangers such as the Simpson Strong-Tie LUS26 for 2x6 or LUS28 for 2x8, with stainless steel or exterior-rated coated fasteners throughout.

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## What size lumber do I need for deck joists spanning 12 feet in NB?

**For a 12-foot joist span on a residential deck in New Brunswick, you need 2x10 pressure-treated lumber at 16 inches on centre, which safely handles spans up to 13 feet.** A 2x8 joist will not work at this distance because its maximum recommended span tops out at 10 feet for standard residential deck loading, leaving you well short of the 12-foot requirement with no safety margin.

The span ratings for deck joists are based on the National Building Code of Canada's prescribed residential deck loads: 40 pounds per square foot of live load (people, furniture, snow) and 10 pounds per square foot of dead load (the weight of the structure itself), totalling 50 PSF combined. In New Brunswick, where winter snow loads on a deck surface can be substantial, particularly in northern communities like Bathurst and Edmundston where seasonal snowfall totals exceed 300 centimetres, that 40 PSF live load figure covers the worst-case scenario of heavy wet snow accumulation before you clear the deck.

The standard joist span table for SPF (spruce-pine-fir) lumber, which is what pressure-treated lumber in New Brunswick is made from, gives these maximum spans at 16 inches on centre: 2x6 joists span up to 8 feet, 2x8 joists span up to 10 feet, 2x10 joists span up to 13 feet, and 2x12 joists span up to 16 feet. Your 12-foot span falls squarely within the 2x10 range with a foot of margin. That margin matters because real-world conditions in New Brunswick introduce variables that the span table cannot fully account for, including the extra weight of wet snow, the concentrated loads from large planters or hot tubs, and the gradual weakening of wood fibres exposed to decades of Maritime humidity cycling.

You could technically tighten joist spacing to 12 inches on centre and use 2x8 joists for spans approaching 11 to 12 feet, but this is not recommended. You end up using more total lumber than the 2x10 at 16-inch option because the tighter spacing means more joists across the same deck width. On a 16-foot-wide deck, 16-inch spacing requires 13 joists while 12-inch spacing requires 17. Additionally, if you are installing composite decking from Trex, TimberTech, or Fiberon, the manufacturer warranty typically requires 12-inch on-centre joist spacing regardless, so starting with 2x10s gives you flexibility to meet those requirements.

For your 12-foot span, specify No. 2 grade or better SPF lumber with MCA pressure treatment rated UC3B for above-ground use. Each joist should sit in a properly rated joist hanger at the ledger board and beam connections. The standard for New Brunswick deck construction is the Simpson Strong-Tie LUS series at 18-gauge minimum steel thickness. These hangers are designed to carry the full load capacity of the joist they support and provide the mechanical connection that prevents joists from rotating or pulling free under load.

The connection at each end of your 12-foot joists is where the structure either succeeds or fails over time. At the house end, the joists typically attach to a ledger board that is itself lag-bolted to the house rim joist. At the outer

end, they rest on a beam supported by posts on footings. In New Brunswick, those footings must reach the local frost depth: 1.2 metres in Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton, extending to 1.5 metres in Bathurst and Edmundston. A beam supporting 2x10 joists spanning 12 feet on a standard-width deck should be built from doubled 2x10s or a single engineered beam rated for the load, supported by posts no more than 8 feet apart.

All fasteners connecting your joist system must be stainless steel or exterior-rated coated fasteners approved for use with MCA-treated lumber, as the copper in MCA treatment reacts with standard galvanized hardware over time.

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Q14

## How long does cedar decking last in New Brunswick's Maritime humidity?

**Western red cedar decking lasts 20 to 25 years in New Brunswick's Maritime climate when properly maintained, while eastern white cedar typically delivers 10 to 15 years before requiring significant board replacement.** These timelines reflect the real-world performance that deck builders and homeowners across the province experience, not the optimistic figures sometimes quoted by lumber suppliers.

The distinction between western red cedar and eastern white cedar is crucial for New Brunswick homeowners because both are sold simply as "cedar" at many local retailers. Western red cedar, harvested primarily in British Columbia, contains significantly higher concentrations of thujaplicins, the natural compounds that resist fungal decay. In a province where relative humidity routinely sits between 75 and 85 percent through the summer months and coastal communities like Saint John, Moncton, and Shediac experience regular fog, that extra fungal resistance translates directly into years of additional service life. Eastern white cedar, while more locally available and typically \$10 to \$15 per square foot cheaper, simply cannot match that performance under sustained Maritime moisture exposure.

New Brunswick's freeze-thaw cycle is the other major factor that determines cedar lifespan. Between November and April, Moncton and Fredericton experience approximately 100 to 120 freeze-thaw cycles per winter. Each cycle drives moisture into the wood grain during the thaw and then expands it during the freeze, physically splitting wood fibres over time. This mechanical weathering process is relentless and affects cedar more than denser species because cedar is relatively soft at roughly 350 on the Janka hardness scale. The result is surface checking, which are small cracks along the grain that accumulate season after season. Surface checking alone does not indicate structural failure, but each check creates a new pathway for moisture penetration, accelerating the decay cycle deeper into the board.

Maintenance is what separates a 15-year cedar deck from a 25-year one in New Brunswick. The baseline requirement is annual cleaning with a dedicated deck wash product, followed by application of a penetrating oil-based stain or sealant. Film-forming stains that sit on the surface tend to peel in Maritime humidity because moisture vapor passing through the wood from below pushes the film off. Penetrating products soak into the grain and protect from within, flexing with the wood through seasonal movement rather than cracking and peeling. Plan to spend a full weekend each spring on this maintenance. Power washing is effective for cleaning but must be done carefully, keeping the pressure below 1,500 PSI and holding the nozzle at least 12 inches from the surface. Higher pressures tear cedar fibres and create a fuzzy, damaged surface that actually absorbs more moisture and deteriorates faster.

The underside of your cedar decking matters as much as the top surface, and this is where many New Brunswick decks fail prematurely. Moisture rises from the ground beneath the deck, condenses on the underside of boards, and creates a persistently damp environment that fosters mould and fungal growth where you cannot easily see it. Adequate ventilation beneath the deck structure is essential. Maintain a minimum of 18 inches of clearance between the ground and the bottom of your joists, and ensure the grade beneath the deck slopes away from the house to prevent water pooling. In particularly damp locations or low-lying lots common in river valley communities like Fredericton and Miramichi, laying a ground-level vapour barrier of 6-mil polyethylene beneath the deck can reduce the moisture rising from below by 60 to 70 percent.

Western red cedar decking in New Brunswick typically costs \$35 to \$55 per square foot installed, depending on the grade selected and the complexity of the build. Over a 20 to 25 year lifespan, factoring in annual maintenance costs of \$200 to \$400 per year for cleaning products and stain, the total lifetime cost per year of use comes in comparable to composite decking, which costs more upfront but requires less annual upkeep.

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**Q15**

## Is pressure-treated lumber safe for deck building in Moncton NB?

**Yes, modern pressure-treated lumber is safe for residential deck building in Moncton and throughout New Brunswick.** The treatment chemicals used today are fundamentally different from the older formulations that caused legitimate health concerns, and millions of decks across Canada are built with current-generation PT lumber every year without issue.

The pressure-treated lumber available at Moncton building supply stores like Kent, Home Hardware, and specialty lumber yards uses MCA (micronized copper azole) treatment. This replaced CCA (chromated copper arsenate) for residential applications back in 2004 after Health Canada restricted CCA use in consumer products due to the arsenic component. MCA uses microscopic particles of copper combined with an organic fungicide called tebuconazole. The copper provides the primary rot and insect resistance, while the tebuconazole adds supplementary protection against a broader range of fungal species. Neither component poses the health risks associated with the old chromium and arsenic compounds.

For Moncton deck construction specifically, you need to understand the treatment rating system because not all PT lumber is created equal. Lumber rated UC3B (Use Category 3B, above ground with moderate exposure) is appropriate for decking boards, railings, and joists that sit above the structure. Lumber rated UC4A (ground contact) is required for any component that touches or is embedded in soil or concrete, including posts set in footings and beams that sit close to grade. Moncton's frost depth of 1.2 metres means your deck posts are going deep, and that buried portion absolutely must be UC4A rated. Using UC3B lumber in ground contact is not a safety hazard to people, but the wood will rot prematurely because it does not contain enough preservative to handle sustained moisture exposure.

The one genuine precaution with modern PT lumber is handling during construction. Sawing and sanding create dust containing copper compounds, so builders should wear dust masks when cutting and wash hands before

eating. Once your deck is assembled, the surface poses no contact risk to barefoot users, children, or pets. You should not burn PT lumber scraps, as combustion releases concentrated copper compounds that are harmful when inhaled. Dispose of offcuts through regular construction waste channels.

A practical consideration specific to Moncton and the greater Maritime region is the drying period before finishing. Pressure treatment injects preservative into the wood under hydraulic pressure, which also forces a significant amount of water into the cellular structure. When that lumber arrives at your job site, it may contain 50 to 75 percent moisture content. In Moncton's humid Maritime climate, where summer relative humidity regularly sits above 75 percent, this moisture takes considerably longer to escape than it would in, say, Calgary or Ottawa. You need to allow 3 to 6 months of air drying before applying any stain, sealant, or paint to your PT deck boards. Building your deck in late spring and staining in early fall is the typical Moncton timeline. Staining wet PT lumber traps moisture beneath the finish, which causes bubbling, peeling, and premature failure of the coating within one to two seasons.

The structural performance of pressure-treated SPF (spruce-pine-fir) lumber, which is the standard species group for PT lumber sold in New Brunswick, meets all building code requirements for residential deck framing. Your 2x8 joists will span up to 10 feet and 2x10 joists up to 13 feet at standard 16-inch on-centre spacing, the same as untreated lumber of the same grade. The treatment does not reduce the structural capacity of the wood. Pair your PT framing with 18-gauge minimum joist hangers, specifically Simpson Strong-Tie LUS series or equivalent, and use only stainless steel or approved coated fasteners. Standard zinc-plated hardware reacts with the copper in MCA-treated lumber, causing accelerated corrosion of the metal and a black staining of the wood around each connection point.

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## What is the best wood species for building a deck in New Brunswick's climate?

**Western red cedar is the best overall wood species for deck building in New Brunswick, offering the strongest combination of natural rot resistance, dimensional stability, and beauty that holds up to the province's demanding Maritime climate.** It outperforms eastern white cedar significantly in durability and is the preferred choice among experienced deck builders from Moncton to Edmundston.

Western red cedar contains naturally occurring thujaplicins, chemical compounds that resist fungal decay and insect damage without any chemical treatment. In New Brunswick's humidity, which averages 75 to 85 percent relative humidity through much of the summer and brings frequent fog in coastal areas like Saint John and Shediac, this natural resistance is critical. Eastern white cedar, while locally available and cheaper, has considerably less of these protective compounds and tends to deteriorate faster under constant moisture exposure. A western red cedar deck surface properly maintained will deliver 20 to 25 years of service in New Brunswick conditions, while eastern white cedar typically shows significant weathering within 10 to 15 years. Western red cedar decking runs \$35 to \$55 per square foot installed across most New Brunswick communities, which positions it between pressure-treated lumber and composite options.

Pressure-treated lumber remains the most commonly used decking material in New Brunswick purely because of cost. Modern PT lumber uses MCA (micronized copper azole) treatment, which replaced the older CCA (chromated copper arsenate) formulation that raised health concerns. MCA-treated spruce-pine-fir is the standard product available at lumber yards throughout the province, and for ground-contact applications like posts and beams, you need lumber rated UC4A, which indicates a higher retention level of preservative suitable for direct soil or concrete contact. Pressure-treated decking is functional and affordable, typically \$18 to \$30 per square foot installed, but it comes with a significant requirement in New Brunswick: you must let it dry for 3 to 6 months before applying any stain or sealant. The treatment process saturates the wood with moisture, and New Brunswick's humid climate slows the drying process compared to drier provinces. Staining too early traps moisture inside the wood and leads to premature peeling and discolouration.

IPE hardwood represents the premium end of the wood spectrum and is increasingly appearing on high-end properties in Rothesay, Quispamsis, and waterfront homes around the province. This Brazilian hardwood is extraordinarily dense, rated Class 1 for durability, and can last 40 years or more even in New Brunswick's wet climate. It resists rot, insects, and UV damage better than any other wood option. The costs are substantial at \$75 to \$120 per square foot installed, and the density that makes it durable also makes it very difficult to work with. Pre-drilling every screw hole is mandatory, standard saw blades dull quickly, and the weight of the boards requires additional structural consideration in your joist and beam sizing. Most New Brunswick deck builders who work with

IPE charge a labour premium of 30 to 50 percent above their standard wood deck rates.

For the structural framing underneath any decking surface, SPF lumber is perfectly acceptable when properly pressure-treated. The joists, beams, and posts that form the skeleton of your deck do not need to be cedar or hardwood. Treated SPF at UC4A rating for ground contact and UC3B for above-ground framing provides reliable structural performance at a fraction of the cost. What matters far more than the species of your framing lumber is the connection hardware. All joist hangers should be 18-gauge minimum steel, with Simpson Strong-Tie LUS series being the industry standard across New Brunswick. Every fastener throughout the structure, from framing screws to decking fasteners, must be stainless steel or code-rated exterior coated. Maritime salt air, even well inland along river corridors, accelerates corrosion on unprotected steel hardware in ways that builders in drier climates simply do not encounter.

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