

NEW BRUNSWICK DECKS

Staining & Sealing

Questions about deck stains, sealers, finishes, power washing, and protecting wood decks from NB weather.

15 Expert Answers from Deck IQ

newbrunswickdecks.com/construction-brain

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What is the annual cost of maintaining a stained deck in New Brunswick's climate?

The annual cost of maintaining a stained deck in New Brunswick ranges from \$600-\$1,200 for a typical 200 square foot deck, though this varies significantly based on deck size, stain quality, and whether you DIY or hire professionals.

New Brunswick's harsh Maritime climate is particularly demanding on stained wood decks. Our 100+ freeze-thaw cycles per year are the biggest enemy — water penetrates the wood grain, freezes, expands, and literally splits boards from within. Combined with heavy snow loads (250-300cm annually), high humidity that promotes mold and mildew, and intense summer UV that breaks down stain finishes, NB decks need more frequent maintenance than those in milder climates.

For pressure-treated lumber decks, you'll need to restain every 2-3 years in our climate. The process involves power washing (\$200-400 if hired out, \$50-100 if you rent equipment), minor repairs like replacing split boards or loose screws (\$100-300), and applying quality exterior stain. Professional staining runs \$3-6 per square foot, so a 200 sq ft deck costs \$600-1,200 for the staining alone. If you DIY, expect to spend \$150-300 on quality stain (you'll need 1-2 gallons) plus your time.

Cedar decks actually require more frequent maintenance in NB — annual cleaning and sealing is recommended due to cedar's softer nature. While cedar naturally resists rot, it's more susceptible to surface damage from our freeze-thaw cycles. Budget \$400-800 annually for cedar deck maintenance.

Timing is critical in New Brunswick. You can only stain between mid-May and September when temperatures consistently stay above 10°C and you have 48 hours of dry weather forecast. Many homeowners make the expensive mistake of staining too early or late in the season, leading to poor adhesion and premature failure.

Smart maintenance strategies can reduce costs. Use high-quality semi-transparent stains (\$60-80/gallon) rather than cheap options — they last longer in our climate. Clean your deck each spring with a deck cleaner to remove mildew and UV damage before it penetrates deeply. Address small repairs immediately rather than letting them become major structural issues.

The hidden costs add up too. Replacing boards damaged by freeze-thaw cycles (\$15-25 per board installed), fixing loose railings from frost heave, and dealing with mold growth on north-facing surfaces all contribute to annual maintenance expenses.

This is exactly why composite and PVC decking have become so popular in New Brunswick — they eliminate virtually all annual maintenance costs. While the upfront investment is higher (\$45-85/sq ft vs \$25-40/sq ft for PT

lumber), you'll save \$600-1,200 annually in maintenance, making composite decking cost-neutral within 5-7 years.

Need help finding a deck builder to assess your current deck's condition or discuss low-maintenance alternatives? New Brunswick Decks can match you with local professionals who understand our challenging Maritime climate.

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Q2

How many coats of stain does a new deck need in New Brunswick?

A new deck in New Brunswick typically needs one to two coats of penetrating oil stain, depending on the wood species, its porosity, and whether the lumber has been allowed to weather sufficiently before the first application. Applying more stain is not always better — over-application is one of the most common mistakes homeowners make, and it can actually cause worse performance than a single properly applied coat.

New pressure-treated lumber, which is the most common decking material used in New Brunswick, presents a particular challenge because it arrives from the lumberyard saturated with moisture and chemical preservatives. This high moisture content prevents stain from penetrating effectively. The general recommendation is to let new pressure-treated decking weather for 3-6 months before staining, allowing the wood to dry out, the preservative chemicals to stabilize, and the surface to open up enough to accept stain. If you build your deck in May or June, a fall application in September or October often hits the ideal window — the wood has dried through the summer but has not yet begun to deteriorate from UV exposure and moisture cycling.

Once the wood is ready, a single generous coat of a quality penetrating oil stain like TWP 1500, Cabot Australian Timber Oil, or Sikkens Cetol DEK is typically all that new pressure-treated decking needs. Apply the stain liberally, allow it to soak in for 15-20 minutes, then back-brush any areas where the product is pooling or sitting on the surface. Penetrating stains work by soaking into wood fibres, so any excess left on top will dry as a sticky film that

peels and looks terrible. If after 20 minutes the wood appears to have absorbed everything and looks dry or uneven, you can apply a second coat wet-on-wet — meaning before the first coat has fully cured. This wet-on-wet technique is preferable to waiting and applying a second coat days later, which can create adhesion problems between layers.

Cedar decking behaves differently from pressure-treated lumber. Cedar is naturally porous with an open grain structure, which means it absorbs stain readily. New cedar often benefits from two coats — the first soaks deep into the grain and the second builds up protection near the surface. However, cedar also contains natural oils and tannins that can bleed through stain, so it is important to use a product formulated for cedar or one that includes tannin-blocking properties. Apply the first coat, wait the manufacturer's recommended time between coats (usually 4-8 hours for penetrating oils), then apply the second coat.

Composite and PVC decking, which has grown increasingly popular in New Brunswick for its low-maintenance appeal, generally should not be stained at all. These manufactured products come with factory-applied colour and UV protection, and applying a traditional wood stain over them typically results in poor adhesion and peeling. If your composite decking has faded and you want to restore its colour, there are specialty composite deck coatings available, but these are a different category from traditional wood stains.

For New Brunswick's climate specifically, the single most important factor is not the number of coats but ensuring that whatever coats you apply fully penetrate the wood. A single coat that soaks in completely will outperform three coats of product sitting on the surface. New Brunswick's freeze-thaw cycles are relentless — Fredericton averages over 100 freeze-thaw transitions per winter — and any stain sitting as a film on top of the wood will be cracked apart by expanding ice within the first season. This is why penetrating oil stains dramatically outperform film-forming products in the Maritimes, and why proper application technique matters more than coat count.

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What is the best UV-resistant deck sealer for south-facing decks in Dieppe NB?

TWP 1500 is widely considered the best UV-resistant deck sealer for south-facing decks in Dieppe, thanks to its high concentration of UV stabilizers and trans-oxide pigments that block solar radiation while maintaining a natural wood appearance. South-facing decks in Dieppe receive the full brunt of sun exposure from morning through afternoon, and during New Brunswick's long summer days — over 15 hours of daylight near the solstice — that UV bombardment breaks down wood lignin rapidly, turning even the finest cedar or pressure-treated lumber grey and lifeless without proper protection.

When evaluating UV-resistant sealers, the critical ingredient to look for is UV stabilizers in the formula. These are chemical compounds — typically hindered amine light stabilizers (HALS) or benzotriazole derivatives — that absorb ultraviolet radiation before it can reach the wood's cellular structure. Trans-oxide pigments also play a vital role by physically blocking UV rays through microscopic mineral particles suspended in the stain. The more pigment a stain contains, the more UV protection it provides, which is why semi-transparent stains outperform clear sealers in UV resistance by a significant margin.

TWP 1500 excels on south-facing decks because its formula combines both UV stabilizer chemistry and heavy trans-oxide pigment loading. In independent testing and real-world use across the Maritimes, TWP 1500 consistently maintains its colour and protective qualities for 2-3 years on horizontal surfaces, even on fully exposed southern exposures. Its penetrating oil base soaks deep into wood fibres, which means it will not crack, peel, or blister when Dieppe's winter freeze-thaw cycles stress the wood. Available in colours like Cedartone, Honeytone, and Dark Oak, TWP 1500 allows you to choose a shade that both complements your home and provides maximum UV filtering — darker tones inherently block more UV than lighter ones.

Cabot Australian Timber Oil is another strong performer for Dieppe's south-facing decks. Its blend of long oils and UV-absorbing pigments provides reliable sun protection while enhancing the natural wood grain. It penetrates well into both cedar and pressure-treated lumber and offers a warm, natural finish. Cabot tends to be slightly easier to apply than TWP 1500, with a more forgiving wet-edge window, which matters when you are staining a large south-facing surface in direct sun — you need to work quickly to avoid lap marks, and Cabot's slower absorption rate gives you a few extra minutes.

Sikkens Cetol DEK takes a slightly different approach, building a thin translucent film that contains advanced UV filters. It provides excellent sun protection and a distinctive satin finish, though it requires more careful application to avoid brush marks. On south-facing decks, Sikkens' UV-filtering technology performs well, but the semi-film-forming nature means you need to be more attentive to maintenance — if the film starts to wear unevenly, you should recoat before bare wood is exposed.

For a south-facing deck in Dieppe specifically, avoid clear waterproofing sealers entirely. Products marketed as "clear wood sealers" contain little to no UV-blocking pigment, and on a full-south exposure they will allow the wood to grey within a single season. Even the best clear sealer offers only marginal UV protection compared to a semi-transparent tinted product. The small amount of colour that a semi-transparent stain adds is the price of meaningful UV defence, and most homeowners find that the warm wood tones these products provide are actually more attractive than bare grey wood.

Reapplication frequency on a south-facing deck in Dieppe should be planned for every 2 years at minimum, compared to 2-3 years for decks with partial shade. The combination of direct solar exposure, Dieppe's summer humidity, and winter ice creates an accelerated wear cycle that demands consistent maintenance.

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Do I need to strip old stain before restaining my deck in New Brunswick?

You must strip old stain before restaining if the existing finish is peeling, flaking, cracking, or forming a hard film on the surface — never stain over a failing finish, as the new coat will not adhere properly and will begin peeling within months. However, if your current stain is simply faded but still intact and well-bonded to the wood, you may be able to apply a fresh coat directly over it after proper cleaning.

The distinction comes down to the type of stain that was previously applied and its current condition. Film-forming stains — including most solid-colour stains and some semi-solid products — sit on top of the wood surface and create a painted-like layer. When these products deteriorate in New Brunswick's harsh climate, they crack and peel because moisture gets trapped beneath the film during freeze-thaw cycles. Once you see any peeling or flaking, no matter how minor, you must strip the entire surface down to bare wood. Applying new stain over a flaking finish simply traps the old failure beneath a fresh layer, and within one New Brunswick winter the new coat will lift along with the old one.

Penetrating stains — including semi-transparent oils like TWP 1500, Cabot Australian Timber Oil, and Sikkens Cetol DEK — work differently. They soak into the wood fibres rather than forming a surface film, which means they do not peel. Instead, they fade gradually as UV exposure and foot traffic wear them away. If your deck was previously treated with a penetrating oil stain and it has simply faded to a lighter version of its original colour with no flaking, you can often clean the deck with a wood cleaner and light pressure wash, let it dry for 48 hours, and apply a fresh coat of the same type of product directly over the old finish. The new oil will absorb into the partially depleted wood and restore protection.

Here is where New Brunswick homeowners run into trouble: many people do not know what type of stain was applied previously, especially if they bought a home with an already-stained deck. A simple test can tell you what you are dealing with. Sprinkle a few drops of water on the deck surface. If the water beads up and sits on top, there is still a film-forming product present. If the water soaks in within 30 seconds to a minute, the previous stain has worn through sufficiently for a new penetrating coat. If the water beads in some spots and soaks in others, you have uneven wear and should strip the entire surface for a consistent result.

The stripping process itself involves applying a chemical deck stripper — products like Cabot Problem Solver or Defy Wood Stain Stripper — spreading it evenly across the surface, allowing 15-30 minutes of dwell time, and then pressure washing at 1,200-1,500 PSI to remove the loosened finish. Follow this with an oxalic acid wood brightener to neutralize the alkaline stripper and restore the wood's natural pH, which is essential for proper stain absorption. Allow the deck to dry completely for at least 48 hours, and ideally 72 hours in New Brunswick's often-humid conditions, before applying new stain.

For New Brunswick decks specifically, the aggressive freeze-thaw cycling from November through April — sometimes multiple cycles within a single week during shoulder seasons — makes proper stripping even more important than in milder climates. Any old stain residue left beneath a new coat creates a weak bond layer where moisture can collect and freeze, accelerating failure. When in doubt about whether to strip, strip. The extra day of preparation work saves you from repeating the entire job a year later.

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Q5

How much does it cost to have a deck professionally stained in Moncton NB?

Professional deck staining in Moncton typically costs between \$3.50 and \$7.00 per square foot for a complete job including preparation, cleaning, and stain application, putting a standard 300-square-foot deck in the range of \$1,050 to \$2,100. The wide range reflects differences in deck condition, product selection, and the extent of preparation work required before any stain touches the wood.

The largest cost variable is preparation, not the staining itself. A deck in good condition that simply needs a power wash before restaining will cost significantly less than one with old peeling stain that must be chemically stripped, sanded, and brightened before new product can be applied. Stripping alone can add \$1.00-2.00 per square foot to the job because it involves applying a chemical stripper, allowing dwell time, pressure washing the residue, then applying an oxalic acid brightener to neutralize the wood and open the grain. For a 300-square-foot deck in Moncton, a full strip-and-retain job could run \$1,500 to \$2,400, while a maintenance re-coat on a deck in decent shape might come in at \$1,050 to \$1,500.

Product cost is the second major factor. Professional-grade penetrating oil stains like TWP 1500, Cabot Australian Timber Oil, and Sikkens Cetol DEK typically retail for \$60-90 per gallon and cover 200-400 square feet per gallon

depending on wood porosity. A 300-square-foot deck usually requires 1.5 to 2 gallons for a single coat, putting material cost at roughly \$90-180 for the stain alone. Professionals in Moncton generally mark up materials modestly or include them in their per-square-foot rate, but it is worth asking whether the quote includes product or if that is billed separately.

Labour rates for experienced deck staining professionals in the Moncton area generally fall between \$40 and \$65 per hour. A straightforward wash-and-stain on a 300-square-foot deck takes a skilled crew roughly 4-6 hours across one to two days, accounting for drying time between the wash and stain application. A full strip job extends that to 8-12 hours of work spread over two to three days. Larger decks with multiple levels, intricate railing systems, or built-in benches take proportionally longer because of the detail work around balusters and edges.

Railings and stairs are commonly overlooked in initial quotes but add meaningful time and cost to the job. Staining a railing system with individual balusters is painstaking work — each baluster must be coated on all four sides — and many Moncton professionals charge an additional \$8-15 per linear foot for railings. A 300-square-foot deck might have 50-60 linear feet of railing, adding \$400-900 to the total. Always confirm whether the quoted price includes railings, stairs, and the underside joists visible from below, or just the deck surface.

Seasonal timing also affects pricing in Moncton. The prime staining season runs from late May through September, and contractors are busiest in June and July. Booking in early May or September can sometimes yield lower rates as demand softens. Some contractors offer early-bird discounts of 10-15% for jobs booked and scheduled before the rush begins.

When comparing quotes from Moncton-area contractors, ask specifically what preparation is included, which stain product they plan to use, whether railings and stairs are in the price, and how many coats will be applied. Getting at least three quotes from different professionals gives you a reliable sense of the local market rate for your specific deck's needs.

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What is the best waterproof sealer for a cedar deck in Bathurst NB?

The best waterproof sealers for a cedar deck in Bathurst are penetrating oil-based products like Cabot Australian Timber Oil, TWP 1500, and Sikkens Cetol DEK, all of which protect against moisture while allowing the wood to breathe. Cedar is naturally rot-resistant thanks to its extractives, but Bathurst's northern New Brunswick climate — with heavy snowfall, coastal moisture from the Bay of Chaleur, and dramatic freeze-thaw cycles — puts tremendous stress on any unprotected wood surface.

Cabot Australian Timber Oil is one of the most popular choices for cedar decks in the Maritimes. It uses a blend of natural oils that penetrate deep into cedar's open grain, creating a hydrophobic barrier from within the wood rather than forming a film on top. This is critical in Bathurst because surface-film sealers crack and peel when trapped moisture expands during freeze-thaw. Cabot's formula also enhances the natural warmth of cedar's colour, and it comes in both natural and tinted versions. For a cedar deck, the Natural or Jarrah Brown tones complement the wood beautifully. Expect to pay roughly \$65-80 per gallon, with one gallon covering approximately 200-400 square feet depending on the porosity of your wood.

TWP 1500 is another exceptional option, and many professional deck builders in New Brunswick consider it the top-performing penetrating stain on the market. Its formulation includes a high concentration of wood preservatives and UV stabilizers that protect cedar from both moisture and the greying effects of sun exposure. TWP 1500 is particularly well-suited to Bathurst's conditions because it remains flexible within the wood, accommodating the expansion and contraction that cedar undergoes through New Brunswick's wide temperature swings — from -25°C or colder in January to +30°C in July. It comes in a range of semi-transparent colours that allow cedar's grain to show through.

Sikkens Cetol DEK provides a slightly different approach, offering a translucent finish with excellent UV protection. It builds up a thin protective layer over multiple coats while still allowing moisture vapour to pass through, which prevents the trapping effect that causes peeling. For a coastal location like Bathurst, where salt air and high humidity are constant factors, Sikkens' advanced resin technology resists moisture penetration effectively.

Choosing the Right Product for Bathurst's Climate

When selecting a sealer, look specifically for products that list UV stabilizers in their formula. South-facing and west-facing deck surfaces in Bathurst receive intense afternoon sun during the long summer days, and UV radiation breaks down cedar's lignin, causing greying and surface degradation. All three products mentioned above include UV-blocking ingredients, but TWP 1500 is generally regarded as having the strongest UV protection of the three.

Avoid film-forming polyurethane or lacquer-style sealers entirely on a cedar deck in northern New Brunswick. These products trap moisture beneath a hard shell, and when that moisture freezes — which it will, repeatedly, from November through April — the film cracks, peels, and allows water in while preventing it from escaping. The result is accelerated rot, which defeats the entire purpose of sealing.

For application timing in Bathurst, the optimal window is late May through September, when temperatures are consistently above 10°C and you can find a stretch of 2-3 dry days. Cedar should weather for 3-6 months before the first stain application on new wood, and reapplication is typically needed every 2-3 years depending on exposure and foot traffic.

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How do I prepare my deck for staining after a New Brunswick winter?

Proper preparation for staining after a New Brunswick winter involves inspecting for damage, making any necessary repairs, cleaning the surface thoroughly with a deck wash solution, power washing at controlled pressure, and then allowing the wood to dry for 48 to 72 hours before applying stain. Skipping or rushing any of these steps is the most common reason deck stains fail prematurely in the Maritime climate, because stain applied over dirty, mildewed, or damp wood simply will not penetrate and bond the way it needs to in order to survive the next cycle of seasons.

The process should begin in late April or early May once the snow has fully melted and the deck has had at least a week of above-zero temperatures to begin drying out. Start with a thorough visual inspection. Walk every square foot of the deck and check for boards that have heaved, popped fasteners, split ends, or soft spots that indicate rot. New Brunswick winters are particularly hard on fastener connections, and it is common to find screws that have backed out slightly or nails that have lifted due to the repeated expansion and contraction of freeze-thaw cycles. Reset or replace any loose fasteners and replace boards that have deteriorated beyond serviceable condition before doing any cleaning, because you do not want to stain a board that will need to be pulled out next month.

Next, sweep the entire deck surface to remove leaves, pine needles, twigs, and the general debris that accumulates over winter. Pay particular attention to the gaps between boards where organic debris traps moisture and creates the conditions for mildew and rot. A putty knife or a specialized deck gap tool works well for cleaning out packed debris from between boards.

If your previous stain is still largely intact but worn thin, the surface needs cleaning but not stripping. Apply a quality deck cleaning solution following the manufacturer's dilution instructions, scrub it into the wood with a stiff-bristle brush, and let it dwell for 10 to 15 minutes. Products like Cabot Problem Solver Wood Brightener or a homemade solution of oxygen bleach and water work well. Avoid chlorine bleach, which can damage wood fibres and kill surrounding plants.

If the old stain is peeling, flaking, or has failed in patches, you need to strip it before re-staining. Apply a chemical stain stripper such as Cabot Problem Solver Wood Stripper or Deck Boss, let it work according to the directions, and then power wash to remove the loosened finish. This extra step adds a day to the project but is essential because new stain will not adhere over failing old stain.

Power washing should be done at no higher than 1,500 PSI for pressure-treated lumber and around 1,000 to 1,200 PSI for softer cedar. Use a fan tip rather than a zero-degree nozzle, hold the wand 8 to 12 inches from the surface, and work with the grain, not across it. Excessive pressure or incorrect technique can gouge the wood, raising fuzzy fibres that create an uneven surface and cause the stain to absorb unevenly. After washing, let the deck dry for a

full 48 to 72 hours. This drying time is critical in New Brunswick's humid spring weather, where cool overnight temperatures and morning dew can keep the wood damp longer than you expect.

Before staining, perform the water sprinkle test in several areas. If the water soaks into the wood within 10 seconds, the surface is ready. If it beads up, give it another day or two of drying. Once the deck passes this test, you are ready to apply your stain during a window when temperatures will remain above 10 degrees Celsius with no rain forecast for 24 to 48 hours. The ideal staining season in New Brunswick runs from mid-May through September, with June and July typically offering the most reliable conditions across the province.

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Q8

Can I stain my deck in the fall before winter hits in Fredericton NB?

Yes, you can stain your deck in the fall in Fredericton, but you need to finish the job before sustained nighttime temperatures drop below 5°C and before the first heavy frost sets in. Most quality deck stains require air and surface temperatures of at least 10°C for proper absorption and curing, and Fredericton's fall weather typically provides a reliable window from mid-September through mid-to-late October where daytime highs still reach 12-18°C.

The key challenge with fall staining in Fredericton is the narrowing daylight hours and increasing moisture. Dew forms earlier in the evening and lingers longer into the morning, which means you have a shorter daily window for application. Plan to start staining no earlier than two hours after any morning dew has evaporated and stop at least three to four hours before sunset so the stain has time to begin curing before the temperature drops. A product like TWP 1500 or Cabot Australian Timber Oil performs well in these shoulder-season conditions because penetrating oil stains are more forgiving of moderate temperatures than film-forming products.

Before applying stain, the deck surface needs to be clean and dry. This is where fall timing gets tricky in New Brunswick. You need at least two consecutive dry days before staining — one for cleaning and drying, one for application — and ideally 48 hours of dry weather after application for full curing. Check the Environment Canada forecast for Fredericton carefully and pick a stretch where rain is not expected. September often offers the most predictable dry spells, while October can bring more frequent Atlantic-influenced precipitation.

Surface preparation is just as important as timing. If your deck has existing stain that is peeling or flaking, you must strip it down to bare wood first — never stain over a flaking finish, as the new coat will fail within months. Use a deck stripper followed by a wood brightener to open the grain, then allow 24-48 hours of drying before applying stain. If the old finish is simply faded but still intact and not peeling, a light power wash at no more than 1,500 PSI followed by thorough drying may be sufficient preparation.

For fall application specifically, consider that a deck stained in late October in Fredericton will face freeze-thaw cycles within weeks. A penetrating oil stain handles this far better than a surface-film product because it soaks into the wood fibres rather than sitting on top where ice expansion can crack it. Sikkens Cetol DEK is another excellent option that provides good penetration with UV protection, which matters even during New Brunswick's lower-angle winter sun.

One practical advantage of fall staining in Fredericton is that insect activity has dropped significantly, so you will not have the problem of bugs landing in your wet stain that plagues early summer applications. Pollen counts are also negligible, which means a cleaner finish. Apply a single even coat with a quality stain pad or brush, working with the grain, and back-brush any puddles within 15 minutes. Most penetrating stains only need one coat on previously maintained decks, though bare wood may benefit from a second coat applied wet-on-wet before the first fully absorbs.

The bottom line is that fall staining in Fredericton is not only possible but often produces better results than mid-summer application, as long as you respect the temperature window and monitor the weather forecast closely.

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What colour deck stain is most popular in Moncton NB?

The most popular deck stain colours in Moncton are natural cedar tones and warm honey-brown shades in the semi-transparent range, which complement the earthy siding colours and wooded residential landscapes that characterize neighbourhoods across the Greater Moncton area from Riverview to Dieppe.

These warm, medium-toned wood colours account for the majority of semi-transparent stain sales at local retailers, and Moncton deck contractors consistently report that some variation of cedar or honey is the default choice for most customers who do not have a strong colour preference going in.

The popularity of these natural wood tones makes practical sense beyond pure aesthetics. Semi-transparent stains in the cedar-to-brown spectrum contain enough pigment to provide meaningful UV protection while still allowing the grain character of the pressure-treated lumber or cedar decking to show through. Lighter stains in the natural or clear range look beautiful initially but contain less pigment, which means less UV shielding and a shorter lifespan of only 1 to 2 years before the wood begins to grey. Very dark stains like walnut or dark mahogany absorb significantly more heat from the sun, which can make the deck surface uncomfortably hot underfoot during Moncton's July and August afternoons when temperatures push into the high 20s and low 30s, and the increased heat absorption also accelerates the drying and cracking of the stain itself.

Specific product colours that sell heavily in the Moncton market include Cabot Australian Timber Oil in Honey Teak, which provides a warm golden-brown finish that ages gracefully. TWP 1500 in Cedartone is another perennial favourite, offering a classic cedar colour with excellent penetration. Ready Seal in Natural Cedar and Golden Pine both move in large volumes. Benjamin Moore Arborcoat in Translucent Cabot Brown and Oxford Brown are popular picks at Benjamin Moore dealers in the Moncton area. Sikkens Cetol DEK in Natural and Cedar are the go-to choices for homeowners willing to invest in that premium product line.

Grey-toned stains have been gaining ground in Moncton over recent years, reflecting a broader design trend toward modern and coastal aesthetics. Products like Cabot Semi-Transparent in Driftwood Grey and Benjamin Moore Arborcoat in Silver Grey appeal to homeowners who want a weathered, contemporary look that pairs well with the coastal character of southeastern New Brunswick. These grey tones work particularly well on homes near the Petitcodiac River or in the Magnetic Hill and north-end neighbourhoods where the architecture leans toward newer contemporary builds.

Colour choice also interacts with the type of wood being stained. Pressure-treated lumber, which makes up the vast majority of Moncton deck construction, has a greenish cast when new that most homeowners want to warm up, making cedar and honey tones a natural correction. Western red cedar decking, which is less common but used on higher-end builds, has its own warm reddish-brown base colour that many owners prefer to enhance with a natural

or light cedar stain rather than cover with something darker.

One practical consideration that Moncton homeowners should keep in mind is that the colour you see on a stain sample chip or can lid will look different on your actual deck. The underlying wood colour, the age and weathering of the boards, and whether the wood is wet or dry all affect the final appearance. Most stain manufacturers offer small sample sizes, and it is always worth purchasing a sample can and testing it on an inconspicuous section of your deck before committing to several gallons. Apply the sample to a clean, dry area and let it cure for the full recommended time before judging the colour, as most stains darken or shift slightly as they dry and penetrate into the wood.

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Is semi-transparent or solid stain better for decks in New Brunswick's Maritime weather?

Semi-transparent stain is the better overall choice for decks in New Brunswick's Maritime climate because it penetrates into the wood rather than forming a heavy surface film, which makes it far more resistant to the peeling and blistering that solid stains are prone to under the province's relentless freeze-thaw cycling and high humidity conditions. While solid stain does offer certain advantages in specific situations, the practical reality of maintaining a deck through New Brunswick winters makes semi-transparent the more forgiving and sustainable long-term option for most homeowners.

The fundamental difference between these two products determines how they perform in Maritime weather. Semi-transparent stain soaks into the wood fibres and deposits pigment within the cellular structure while still allowing the natural grain pattern to show through. Because it lives inside the wood, it flexes with the seasonal expansion and contraction that New Brunswick's temperature swings demand. When it eventually wears out after 2 to 3 years, it does so by gradually fading and eroding, which means the re-staining process involves only cleaning the deck and applying a fresh coat. There is no scraping, no stripping, and no fighting with peeling film. This wear pattern is enormously practical in a province where homeowners already spend considerable time on spring property maintenance after the long winter.

Solid stain behaves more like thin paint. It forms an opaque film on the wood surface that completely hides the grain, and it contains significantly more pigment than semi-transparent products. This heavier pigment load provides superior UV protection and colour retention, and solid stain can last 3 to 5 years before needing renewal. On vertical surfaces like railings, deck skirting, and fascia boards, solid stain performs very well because water runs off these surfaces quickly and does not have the chance to work its way behind the film. The problem arises on horizontal deck floor surfaces where water from rain, snowmelt, and spring runoff pools in the grain and in gaps between boards.

In New Brunswick, the horizontal deck surface endures roughly 30 to 50 freeze-thaw cycles per winter. Each cycle drives moisture into any tiny crack or imperfection in the solid stain's film. As that trapped moisture freezes, it expands and lifts the film away from the wood, creating blisters and eventually peeling sheets of stain. Once solid stain begins to peel, the only remedy is to strip it down to bare wood using a chemical stripper like Cabot Problem Solver or Deck Boss, followed by pressure washing and sanding. This stripping process is labour-intensive, messy, and expensive, often costing \$2 to \$4 per square foot just for the preparation before new stain is even applied.

There are situations where solid stain makes sense in New Brunswick. If your deck boards are older and heavily weathered with deep checking and an unattractive appearance, solid stain can hide that wear and give the surface

a fresh, uniform look that semi-transparent stain cannot achieve. It is also a reasonable choice on covered or roofed deck areas where the surface is protected from direct rain and snow, dramatically reducing the moisture-driven peeling problem. And for railings and vertical trim on any deck, solid stain is an excellent choice that will outlast semi-transparent by a significant margin.

For the typical uncovered New Brunswick deck floor, however, semi-transparent penetrating stain in an oil-based formula represents the best balance of appearance, protection, and maintainability. Popular products among New Brunswick deck professionals include TWP 1500 Series, Ready Seal, Cabot Australian Timber Oil, and Benjamin Moore Arborcoat semi-transparent. The 2-to-3-year maintenance cycle is manageable, the preparation is straightforward, and the result is a natural-looking finish that showcases the wood while standing up to everything the Maritime climate delivers.

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Q11

How long after building should I wait to stain a new pressure-treated deck in Saint John?

You should wait 3 to 6 months after construction before staining a new pressure-treated deck in Saint John, allowing the wood to dry to a moisture content below 15 percent so the stain can properly penetrate the fibres. Freshly installed pressure-treated lumber is saturated with the water-based preservative solution used during the treatment process, and this retained moisture will prevent deck stain from absorbing into the wood. Staining too early is one of the most common mistakes Saint John homeowners make, and it results in stain that sits on the surface, fails to bond, and wears off within weeks or months.

The 3-to-6-month range is a guideline rather than an exact science because the actual drying time depends heavily on when the deck was built and what weather conditions follow construction. A deck built in Saint John during May or June benefits from the warm, relatively dry summer months that follow, and may be ready for staining by late August or September of the same year, which falls at the shorter end of the range. A deck built in September or October, on the other hand, will go through the wet fall season and then sit under snow all winter, and likely will not be ready for staining until the following June or July, closer to the 9-month mark. The key variable is how much warm, dry weather the wood experiences after installation, not simply how many calendar days have passed.

The definitive way to know whether your Saint John deck is ready for stain is the water sprinkle test. Choose several spots on the deck surface, including areas that get full sun and areas that stay shaded, and sprinkle a small amount of water on each. If the water beads up and sits on the surface, the wood still contains too much moisture and the preservative chemicals are repelling absorption. If the water soaks into the wood within about 10 seconds, the surface has dried sufficiently to accept stain. You can also use a pin-type moisture meter, available at Kent or Home Hardware for around \$30 to \$50, to get a precise reading. Insert the pins into the wood in several locations and look for readings below 15 percent. Test in multiple spots because shaded areas and boards near the ground may retain moisture longer than sun-exposed surfaces.

Saint John presents a particular challenge for this drying process because of its coastal Maritime climate. The city's proximity to the Bay of Fundy means frequent fog, high relative humidity, and more overcast days than inland cities like Fredericton. These conditions slow the drying of new pressure-treated lumber compared to what homeowners in drier regions might experience. It is not unusual for a Saint John deck to need the full 6 months or even slightly longer before passing the water test, especially if the deck is on the north side of the house or in a shaded yard that does not get much direct sun.

During the waiting period, the wood will begin to weather and turn grey on the surface. This is normal and not a cause for concern. The greyed surface layer comes off easily with a deck cleaning solution and a light pressure wash at no more than 1,500 PSI during the preparation stage before staining. After washing, allow the deck to dry for 48 to 72 hours before applying stain.

When the wood is finally ready, apply two coats of a penetrating semi-transparent stain on new wood for maximum protection. Subsequent maintenance re-staining every 2 to 3 years will only require a single coat. Budget approximately \$200 to \$400 in product for a DIY application on a 200-square-foot deck, or \$600 to \$1,200 for professional application.

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Q12

What temperature does it need to be to stain a deck in New Brunswick?

You need a sustained temperature of at least 10 degrees Celsius for deck staining in New Brunswick, with no rain in the forecast for 24 to 48 hours after application, and ideally the temperature should stay above 10 degrees overnight as well to allow proper penetration and curing. This temperature threshold is not arbitrary. Below 10 degrees, the solvents and oils in deck stain cannot penetrate the wood fibres effectively, the product becomes too viscous to spread evenly, and the curing chemistry slows dramatically, all of which result in a finish that underperforms and wears out prematurely.

In practical terms, this temperature requirement shapes the staining season in New Brunswick to a reliable window from mid-May through the end of September. While individual warm days can occur in late April or early October, the overnight temperatures during those shoulder periods frequently drop below 10 degrees, and morning dew can settle on partially cured stain and cause blotching or whitening. The most dependable staining conditions across the province typically fall from June through August, when even overnight lows in Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John generally remain well above the 10-degree threshold.

The rain-free window after application is just as important as the temperature. Oil-based stains, which are the preferred choice for New Brunswick's freeze-thaw climate, require 24 to 48 hours of dry conditions to fully penetrate and begin curing. If rain hits an oil-based stain within that window, it can wash the product out of the wood surface before it bonds, leaving you with uneven coverage and wasted material. Water-based stains cure faster at 4 to 6 hours but still need that initial dry period to set up properly. Before starting any staining project, check Environment Canada's forecast for your specific area and look for a block of at least two consecutive dry days with temperatures staying above 10 degrees through the nighttime hours.

Direct sunlight during application is another temperature-related factor to consider. On a hot New Brunswick summer day when deck surface temperatures climb above 32 to 35 degrees in direct afternoon sun, stain can dry

too quickly on the surface before it has time to penetrate into the wood. This creates a superficial film that peels prematurely. The ideal approach is to stain in the morning as the temperature is rising, or to follow the shade around the deck, working on sections that are not in direct intense sunlight. If your deck faces south and receives full sun all day, starting at 7 or 8 in the morning gives you several hours of good working conditions before the surface gets too hot.

Fall staining is a question that comes up frequently from New Brunswick homeowners who missed the summer window. It is technically possible to stain into late September and occasionally early October if you are in a southern part of the province like Saint John or Sussex and you catch a warm spell with daytime highs above 15 degrees and overnight lows staying above 10. However, this becomes increasingly risky after mid-September because a single unexpected overnight frost or early autumn rain event can compromise the finish. If you find yourself in October without having stained, it is generally better to wait until the following May rather than gamble on deteriorating conditions.

For those planning their staining project, the ideal New Brunswick conditions are a day with an air temperature between 15 and 27 degrees, low humidity, light breeze for ventilation, no direct blazing sun on the work surface, and a forecast showing no precipitation for at least 48 hours. These conditions align most consistently with June and July mornings across the province.

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Should I use oil-based or water-based deck stain in Fredericton?

For Fredericton's climate, oil-based deck stain is the stronger choice because it penetrates deeper into wood fibres, provides superior protection through the city's harsh freeze-thaw winters, and wears more gracefully over time without the peeling and flaking that can plague water-based products on horizontal surfaces exposed to heavy snow and ice. That said, water-based stains have improved considerably in recent years and may be the better option in certain specific situations, so understanding the trade-offs is important before committing to either product type.

Oil-based stains work by soaking into the cellular structure of the wood and displacing moisture from within. This deep penetration is the key advantage for Fredericton conditions. The capital region experiences some of the most dramatic temperature swings in New Brunswick, with winter days that can start at minus 25 and warm above zero by afternoon during January and February thaw events. Each of these transitions drives the freeze-thaw cycling that is the number-one destroyer of deck finishes. Because oil-based stain lives inside the wood rather than on top of it, there is no surface film to be pushed off by expanding ice crystals. When oil-based stain eventually wears out after 2 to 3 years, it fades and erodes gradually, which means you can simply clean the deck and apply a fresh coat without the stripping and sanding that failed film-forming products demand. Products like TWP 1500 Series, Ready Seal, and Cabot Australian Timber Oil are popular among Fredericton deck owners and contractors for exactly this reason.

The main drawbacks of oil-based stain are the longer drying time of 24 to 48 hours during which the deck cannot get wet or be walked on, the stronger odour during application, the need for mineral spirits for brush and tool cleanup, and higher VOC content. In Fredericton's staining season of mid-May through September, the dry time requirement means you need to carefully watch Environment Canada's forecast and pick a window with at least two consecutive dry days. Application is typically best done in the morning so the stain has the full warmth of the day to penetrate before evening dew.

Water-based stains offer some genuine advantages. They dry much faster at 4 to 6 hours, which reduces the risk window for rain interruption and allows you to apply two coats in a single day if needed. Cleanup requires only soap and water. They emit lower VOCs, which matters if your deck is near windows that might be open during application. Modern water-based formulas from brands like Benjamin Moore Arborcoat and Behr Premium have also improved their penetration and adhesion compared to the water-based products of a decade ago.

However, even the best water-based stains tend to form a thinner surface layer rather than truly penetrating the wood the way oil-based products do. On Fredericton's horizontal deck surfaces that hold snow for five months of the year, this surface layer is more vulnerable to the mechanical grinding of ice, the scraping of shovels, and the

relentless freeze-thaw cycling. Water-based stains generally need re-application every 1 to 2 years on Fredericton decks, compared to 2 to 3 years for oil-based.

One scenario where water-based stain does make sense in Fredericton is when you are working with a tight weather window late in the season. If September is slipping away and you have a narrow 24-hour dry period, a water-based stain's 4-to-6-hour dry time gives you a much better chance of getting the job done before the weather closes in. Professional staining runs \$3 to \$6 per square foot regardless of product type, while DIY materials cost \$200 to \$400 for a typical 200-square-foot deck surface.

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Q14

How often should I stain my deck in Moncton NB?

Most Moncton homeowners should plan on re-staining their deck every 2 to 3 years if using a semi-transparent penetrating stain, which is the most common and practical choice for the Greater Moncton area's Maritime climate. This frequency accounts for the heavy wear that Moncton's specific weather patterns inflict on deck finishes, including significant freeze-thaw cycling from late October through April, high summer humidity from the Petitcodiac River corridor and proximity to the Northumberland Strait, and intense UV exposure during the long June-through-August daylight hours.

The actual re-staining interval depends on which type of stain you are using. Transparent stains that allow full wood grain visibility last only 1 to 2 seasons in Moncton before the wood begins to grey and lose its water-repellent properties. Semi-transparent stains, which are by far the most popular choice among Moncton deck owners, hold up for 2 to 3 years on horizontal surfaces that take the full brunt of rain, snow, and foot traffic. Solid stains can push the interval to 3 to 5 years because they contain more pigment and therefore more UV protection, but they come

with the trade-off of eventually peeling and requiring more preparation work at re-staining time. The staining schedule for vertical surfaces like railings and fascia boards is more forgiving, often lasting a full year or two longer than the deck floor because they shed water quickly and bear no foot traffic.

Knowing When Your Deck Needs Re-Staining

Rather than following a rigid calendar, the most reliable method is to perform a simple water test each spring after the snow melts and the deck has dried out for a few days. Sprinkle a tablespoon of water on the deck surface in several locations. If the water beads up and sits on the surface, the stain is still providing adequate moisture protection and you can wait another season. If the water soaks into the wood within about 10 seconds, the stain has worn through and the wood is absorbing moisture, which means it is time to re-stain before the summer season. This test is especially useful because it accounts for the variable wear that different areas of the deck experience. You may find that high-traffic zones near the door and around the barbecue area fail the water test a full year before lower-traffic perimeter areas.

Moncton's ideal staining window is tighter than many homeowners realize. The most reliable period runs from mid-May through the end of September, when overnight temperatures stay consistently above 10 degrees Celsius and there are enough consecutive dry days for the stain to penetrate and cure. Many Moncton residents try to stain in early May or late September to get ahead of or extend the season, but cool overnight temperatures and morning dew can interfere with proper curing and result in a stain that wears prematurely.

For the re-staining process itself, preparation is the step that most determines how long the new coat will last. A thorough cleaning with a deck wash product followed by a light pressure wash at no more than 1,500 PSI removes the grey surface fibres, mildew, and dirt that prevent stain from penetrating evenly. Allow the deck to dry for 48 to 72 hours after washing before applying stain. When using a quality oil-based semi-transparent product like TWP, Cabot Australian Timber Oil, or Ready Seal, a single maintenance coat is typically sufficient for re-staining, unlike the two coats recommended for first-time application on new wood. Budget roughly \$200 to \$400 for materials if doing it yourself, or \$600 to \$1,200 for professional application on a standard 200-square-foot Moncton deck.

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Q15

What is the best deck stain for New Brunswick's freeze-thaw climate?

Oil-based, semi-transparent penetrating stains perform best in New Brunswick's freeze-thaw climate because they soak deep into the wood grain rather than forming a surface film, which means there is no film to crack or peel when moisture trapped in the wood expands and contracts through the province's harsh winter cycling. The distinction between penetrating and film-forming products is the single most important factor when choosing a deck stain for Maritime conditions, more important than brand name or colour selection.

New Brunswick experiences an exceptionally punishing freeze-thaw environment. Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John all see between 30 and 50 freeze-thaw transitions per winter season, where temperatures swing above and below zero within a 24-hour period. Each cycle forces absorbed moisture in the wood to expand as it freezes and contract as it thaws. A film-forming stain or solid-colour coating that sits on the wood surface will eventually be pushed off by this mechanical action, resulting in cracking, blistering, and peeling that looks unsightly and requires labour-intensive stripping before re-application. A penetrating stain, by contrast, lives within the wood fibres and flexes with the wood through each cycle, eventually wearing away by gradual erosion rather than dramatic failure.

Among the top-performing products for New Brunswick conditions, TWP (Total Wood Preservative) in either the 100 or 1500 series is widely regarded by professional deck contractors in the province as an outstanding performer. It penetrates deeply, contains strong UV inhibitors, and wears gracefully over 2 to 3 years without peeling. Ready Seal is another excellent penetrating oil that requires no back-brushing and is very forgiving during application, making it a strong choice for DIY homeowners. Cabot Australian Timber Oil has a loyal following in the Maritimes for its rich colour and deep penetration, though it does require careful application technique to avoid lap marks. Benjamin Moore Arborcoat in its semi-transparent oil formula offers excellent colour retention and is readily available through Benjamin Moore dealers in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John. Sikkens Cetol DEK Finish is a premium option that provides exceptional UV protection, which matters particularly for south-facing decks that receive strong summer sun exposure.

The semi-transparent opacity is the most popular choice among New Brunswick homeowners because it allows the natural wood grain to show through while still providing meaningful colour and UV protection. Semi-transparent stains typically last 2 to 3 years on horizontal deck surfaces in this province before needing re-application, and when they do wear down, they can simply be cleaned and re-coated without stripping. Transparent stains offer the most natural look but only last 1 to 2 seasons in Maritime weather, which makes maintenance frequency impractical

for many homeowners. Solid stains last longer at 3 to 5 years but behave more like paint, forming a film that can eventually peel in freeze-thaw conditions and requiring scraping and stripping to refresh.

For application, the ideal window in New Brunswick runs from mid-May through September when temperatures are consistently above 10 degrees Celsius and the forecast shows no rain for 24 to 48 hours after application. Oil-based stains need 24 to 48 hours of dry weather to cure properly, so checking Environment Canada's extended forecast before starting is essential. Professional staining in the province typically costs \$3 to \$6 per square foot, while a DIY approach using quality product runs \$200 to \$400 in materials for a standard 200-square-foot deck.

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