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# Permits & Building Codes

NB building code requirements, permit processes,  
frost footing depth, retaining wall regulations, and  
WorkSafeNB for concrete projects

24 Expert Answers from Concrete IQ

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## Q1

### Does a concrete driveway apron connecting to a municipal road in Fredericton require a city permit?

**Yes, connecting a new driveway to a municipal road in Fredericton requires a driveway approach permit from the City of Fredericton.** This permit covers the connection point where your driveway meets the city street, including any work within the municipal right-of-way.

The **driveway approach permit** is separate from any building permit you might need for the driveway itself. The City of Fredericton requires this permit to ensure proper drainage, sight lines, and road safety. The permit process typically involves submitting a site plan showing the proposed driveway location, width, and grade, along with the permit fee (usually \$100-200).

**Key requirements for Fredericton driveway approaches** include maintaining proper sight distance for vehicle safety, ensuring the driveway slope doesn't create drainage issues that direct water onto the municipal road, and positioning the approach to avoid conflicts with utilities, storm drains, or snow storage areas. The city may also specify requirements for the apron material — many municipalities require the first 10-15 feet of driveway (within the right-of-way) to be concrete rather than asphalt to handle the weight of city maintenance equipment.

**If you're replacing an existing driveway** in the same location and footprint, you may not need a new approach permit, but it's worth confirming with the City of Fredericton's engineering department. However, if you're widening the driveway, changing the location, or creating a new driveway entrance, the permit is definitely required.

**For the concrete work itself**, a standard residential driveway replacement typically doesn't require a building permit in Fredericton, but the approach permit is still mandatory for the road connection. The city inspection ensures your new concrete apron meets municipal standards for thickness (typically 6 inches for the approach section), proper reinforcement, and appropriate grades for winter snow removal.

Contact the City of Fredericton's Development Services department before starting any driveway work that connects to a city street. Getting the permit upfront prevents costly delays and ensures your concrete contractor can complete the work without compliance issues.

Need help finding a professional concrete contractor familiar with Fredericton's permit requirements? New Brunswick Concrete can match you with local professionals who handle the approach permit process regularly.

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## Q2

## Do I need a permit to pour a concrete pad for a hot tub in the backyard of a Dieppe home and does it need to be inspected?

For a hot tub pad in Dieppe, you typically do not need a building permit for the concrete pad itself, but you may need an electrical permit for the hot tub's electrical connection, and there could be setback requirements from property lines.

In most New Brunswick municipalities including Dieppe, a concrete pad for a hot tub falls under the same category as a patio or equipment pad — no building permit required as long as it's not part of a permanent structure or addition to your home. However, **the electrical work to connect the hot tub almost certainly requires an electrical permit** since hot tubs require dedicated 220V circuits with GFCI protection.

**Check with the City of Dieppe** before starting your project. While the concrete pad itself likely doesn't need a permit, municipalities have varying rules about setbacks from property lines, and some have specific regulations about hot tub installations. Dieppe may require the hot tub to be a certain distance from your property line (typically 3-5 feet) and from your house. If your hot tub pad is close to a property line or if you're installing a gazebo or pergola over it, permit requirements could change.

**For the concrete pad specifications in New Brunswick conditions**, you'll want a properly designed base that can handle both the weight and our Maritime climate. A filled hot tub can weigh 3,000-6,000 pounds, so your pad needs to be substantial. Plan for a **6-inch thick reinforced concrete slab** with rebar or heavy wire mesh, poured over 6 inches of compacted gravel base. The pad should be slightly larger than the hot tub footprint (add 6-12 inches on all sides) and have a gentle slope away from your house for drainage.

**Use air-entrained concrete** — this is critical in New Brunswick's freeze-thaw climate. Standard concrete without air entrainment will spall and deteriorate within a few years under our 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles. Specify 32 MPa air-entrained mix when ordering ready-mix concrete. The pad should extend below the frost line around the perimeter or have proper insulation underneath to prevent frost heave from shifting your hot tub.

**Consider the timing carefully** — May through October is the ideal concrete pouring window in New Brunswick. If you're planning this for late fall or winter, cold weather concrete requires special measures and costs 25-40% more. Most contractors prefer to pour hot tub pads in late spring through early fall when ground conditions are stable and curing temperatures are favorable.

**While no inspection is typically required for the concrete pad**, having it done right the first time is important. A failed or shifted pad means draining, moving, and potentially damaging your hot tub to fix the foundation underneath. Many homeowners hire a concrete contractor for hot tub pads because the excavation, forming, and finishing need to be precise for proper drainage and level placement.

Need help finding a professional concrete contractor for your hot tub pad? New Brunswick Concrete can match you with local professionals who understand the specific requirements for hot tub installations in our Maritime climate.

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Q3

## Does the City of Moncton require a building permit to replace existing concrete front steps with a new poured concrete stoop larger than the original?

**Yes, the City of Moncton will likely require a building permit if you're expanding the size of your front steps beyond the original footprint.** While replacing existing steps in the same location and size typically doesn't require a permit, enlarging the structure changes the scope from maintenance to new construction.

### Permit Requirements for Step Expansion

When you're increasing the size of concrete steps or adding a larger stoop, you're essentially creating new construction rather than replacing existing infrastructure. The City of Moncton Building Inspection Department considers this new work that must comply with current building codes, including proper footing depth, structural requirements, and safety standards like handrail specifications.

The **footing requirements alone make this permit-worthy work.** In Moncton, any new concrete structure requires footings extending at least 4 feet (1.2 metres) below finished grade to reach below the frost line. Your expanded stoop will need properly sized footings to prevent frost heave — the upward movement of soil during NB's freeze-thaw cycles that can crack and shift concrete structures. The original steps may have been built to different standards or may not have adequate footings for the larger structure you're planning.

### Additional Considerations

The permit process also ensures your expanded stoop meets current **accessibility requirements, drainage standards, and property line setbacks.** Larger stoops can affect water runoff patterns around your foundation, and the city wants to ensure proper grading to direct water away from your home. If your new stoop extends closer to the property line or public sidewalk, there may be setback requirements to consider.

**Building Code Compliance** is another factor — handrail height and spacing, step rise and run dimensions, and landing size requirements have evolved over the years. Your permit application ensures the new structure meets current safety standards, which is especially important for front steps where slips and falls are liability concerns.

### Next Steps

Contact the City of Moncton Building Inspection Department at (506) 853-3516 or visit their office at Moncton City Hall to discuss your specific project. Bring a sketch showing the existing steps and your proposed expansion — they can quickly tell you if a permit is required and what drawings or documentation you'll need to submit. The permit fee for residential step work typically runs \$100-\$300 depending on the project scope.

### **Professional Installation Recommended**

Given the permit requirements, footing depth needs, and NB's challenging freeze-thaw conditions, this is excellent work for a professional concrete contractor. They'll handle the permit application, ensure proper air-entrained concrete for our Maritime climate, and install adequate reinforcement and drainage. Need help finding a qualified contractor? New Brunswick Concrete can match you with local professionals who regularly work with Moncton's building department and understand the specific requirements for residential concrete work in our area.

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## What are the New Brunswick Building Code requirements for concrete wall thickness and reinforcement in a residential basement?

**The New Brunswick Building Code requires minimum 6-inch thick concrete foundation walls for residential basements, with specific reinforcement based on wall height and soil conditions.** For typical single-story homes with 8-foot basement walls, this means #15M (½-inch) vertical rebar spaced 16-24 inches on center, with horizontal reinforcement at the top and bottom of the wall.

**Wall Thickness Requirements** Residential basement walls in New Brunswick must be minimum 6 inches (150mm) thick for concrete construction. This applies to both poured concrete and concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls. The thickness may need to increase to 8 inches for taller walls (over 8 feet) or when dealing with poor soil conditions, high water tables, or significant backfill heights. The wall must extend from the footing (which sits below the 4-foot frost line) to at least 6 inches above finished grade.

**Reinforcement Standards** Vertical reinforcement typically consists of #15M (½-inch diameter) rebar spaced 16-24 inches on center, depending on the wall height and lateral soil pressure. For standard 8-foot basement walls in good soil conditions, 24-inch spacing is common. Horizontal reinforcement includes #15M bars at the top of the wall (within 12 inches of the top) and often at the bottom near the footing connection. The rebar must have proper concrete cover — minimum 2 inches from the exterior face and 1.5 inches from the interior face to prevent corrosion in New Brunswick's Maritime climate.

**NB-Specific Considerations** New Brunswick's freeze-thaw cycles and potential for high groundwater levels make proper reinforcement critical. The concrete mix must be air-entrained (4-7% air content) for any portion exposed above grade, and the foundation must include proper waterproofing and drainage systems. Weeping tile around the exterior footing perimeter is mandatory, connecting to a sump pit or gravity drain. The harsh Maritime climate means foundation walls experience significant thermal cycling and potential hydrostatic pressure during spring thaw periods.

**Footing Integration** The foundation wall must be properly tied to the footing with dowel bars — typically #15M bars extending 18-24 inches into both the footing and wall. The footing itself must be minimum 16 inches wide and 8 inches thick for most residential applications, bearing on undisturbed soil below the frost line. In areas with poor soil conditions or high water tables, the footing may need to be wider or include additional reinforcement as determined by soil testing and engineering analysis.

**When Professional Design is Required** While the Building Code provides minimum standards, any basement with walls over 8 feet high, unusual soil conditions, or complex geometry should have engineered drawings. Retaining wall portions (where the basement extends significantly above grade) definitely require professional

structural design. Additionally, if you're planning any openings for windows, doors, or utilities, the reinforcement around these openings must be properly detailed to maintain structural integrity.

For permit applications and inspections, contact your local building inspection office or the appropriate Rural Service Commission for unincorporated areas. Foundation work requires multiple inspections — footing inspection before pouring, reinforcement inspection before wall pour, and final inspection before backfilling.

Need help finding a qualified foundation contractor for your basement project? New Brunswick Concrete can match you with experienced professionals who understand NB Building Code requirements and Maritime climate challenges.

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Q5

## Do I need a building permit for a concrete driveway in Fredericton NB?

**In most cases, replacing or resurfacing an existing concrete driveway in Fredericton does NOT require a building permit — but installing a new driveway approach (the section that connects to the street) almost always requires a separate driveway approach permit from the City of Fredericton.** Understanding this distinction will save you time and potential fines.

The City of Fredericton, like most NB municipalities, distinguishes between work on your own property and work that affects municipal infrastructure. A new concrete driveway within your property boundaries — meaning you are removing old asphalt or gravel and pouring concrete — is generally considered routine property maintenance and does not trigger the building permit process. Similarly, widening your driveway within your existing lot does not typically require a permit, provided you stay within property line setbacks.

However, the **driveway approach** — the apron that connects your driveway to the public road — is a different matter. Any modification to a driveway approach on a municipal street in Fredericton requires a driveway access permit from the City of Fredericton Engineering and Public Works department. This applies whether you are building a new approach, relocating an existing one, widening it, or changing the curb cut. For driveways connecting to a provincial highway (Trans-Canada, Route 2, or other provincial roads), you need a driveway access permit from the NB Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, which can take longer to process.

There are a few other situations where permit requirements arise. If your new concrete driveway requires significant grade changes, retaining walls, or stormwater management features, you may need additional approvals. If you are in a heritage neighbourhood or special planning zone in Fredericton, design guidelines may apply. And if your property is in the floodplain near the Saint John River — relevant for many Fredericton properties — there may be additional restrictions on impervious surface coverage.

Practically speaking, most Fredericton concrete contractors are familiar with the local permitting requirements and will advise you on what is needed for your specific project. The driveway approach permit typically costs \$50-\$200 and requires a simple application with a sketch showing the driveway location and dimensions.

For a new driveway installation in Fredericton without complications, budget **\$4,500-\$8,000** for a standard two-car concrete driveway (400-600 sq ft) with proper base preparation, 5-6 inch slab thickness, control joints, and a quality air-entrained mix — essential for Fredericton's freeze-thaw cycles. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with local concrete contractors who know Fredericton's permit requirements inside and out.

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**Q6**

## **Do I need a permit for a retaining wall in Moncton NB?**

**In Moncton, retaining walls under 4 feet (1.2 metres) in exposed height generally do not require a building permit, but walls over 4 feet do — and walls over 4 feet typically also require engineer-stamped drawings.**

The height threshold is the critical factor, and it is measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, not just the visible above-grade height.

The City of Moncton follows NB building code requirements for retaining structures. Walls under 4 feet are considered minor landscape structures that fall outside the building permit threshold for most residential properties. That said, even permit-exempt walls must still be set back from property lines — typically a minimum of 0.6 metres (2 feet) from the property line in Moncton's residential zones, though your specific zoning may have different requirements. Always confirm setbacks with the City of Moncton Planning and Development department before starting work.

For walls over 4 feet, the permit process requires a site plan showing the wall location, and most building inspectors in Moncton will require stamped engineering drawings for walls in this height range. The engineering requirement exists because taller retaining walls must resist substantial lateral soil pressure, hydrostatic pressure from groundwater, and the unique frost heave forces that NB winters generate. A 5-foot concrete retaining wall that fails does not just fall over — it can release a significant volume of saturated soil, potentially damaging neighbouring property and creating a safety hazard.

**Frost depth considerations** are critical for retaining wall footings in Moncton. The Moncton area requires footings at least 4 feet (1.2 metres) below finished grade to get below the frost line. A retaining wall footing installed above the frost line will heave in winter, tilt, and eventually fail. This means a 4-foot retaining wall in Moncton requires excavation down to roughly 8 feet total (4 feet of footing depth plus 4 feet of wall height) — a significant and professional undertaking.

For poured concrete retaining walls in Moncton, budget approximately **\$3,000-\$6,000 for a standard 30-linear-foot wall at 3 feet of exposed height**, or \$40-\$75 per linear foot per foot of height for engineered walls over 4 feet. These costs include footing excavation, forming, reinforcement, concrete, and backfill with drainage aggregate.

Always include proper drainage behind any retaining wall — perforated pipe at the base of the wall connected to daylight, surrounded by clear stone. Without drainage, hydrostatic pressure builds behind the wall and dramatically increases the risk of failure, especially during NB's spring thaw when saturated soil becomes heavy and mobile. New Brunswick Concrete can match you with experienced local contractors who build code-compliant retaining walls in Moncton and the greater Dieppe and Riverview area.

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## What permits do I need to pour a new foundation in New Brunswick?

**Pouring a new foundation in New Brunswick always requires a building permit — this is one of the most consistently enforced permit requirements in the province, and for good reason.** A foundation is the structural backbone of your home, and NB's strict frost depth requirements (4-5 feet depending on location) mean that even a small error in design or installation can cause significant structural damage over time.

The building permit process for a new foundation in NB involves several steps. You (or your contractor) submit a permit application to your local building inspection office — this is the municipal office for residents of Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, Miramichi, Bathurst, and other incorporated municipalities, or the Regional Service Commission for unincorporated areas. The application requires site plans showing the proposed structure's footprint, setbacks from property lines, and a foundation plan or drawing. For most residential new builds and additions, you will also need construction drawings — either stamped by an engineer or prepared to NB Building Code standards.

**Key inspections** are required at specific stages. The most critical is the footing inspection, which must happen before you pour the concrete footings. The building inspector will verify that the excavation has reached below the frost line (minimum 1.2 metres / 4 feet in most of NB, deeper in northern communities like Bathurst and Edmundston), that the footing dimensions and reinforcement meet code, and that the footings bear on undisturbed or properly compacted soil. Pouring footings before this inspection is done without approval means you may be required to expose them again or, in the worst case, remove and redo them.

After footings, a foundation wall inspection may be required before backfilling — this allows the inspector to verify wall thickness, reinforcement placement, and any required waterproofing. Your municipality will specify exactly which inspections are required when they issue the permit; keep the inspection card on site and call the building department to schedule each required visit.

**Damp-proofing and drainage** are also code requirements for NB foundations. Poured concrete foundation walls must be damp-proofed on the exterior below grade, and perimeter drainage tile (weeping tile) is required around the footing to manage groundwater. In NB, where spring thaw can push significant amounts of groundwater against foundations — particularly in the Saint John River valley and coastal areas near Moncton and Shediac — these drainage requirements are taken seriously.

Permit fees in NB vary by municipality but typically run **\$500-\$2,000 for a new foundation**, often calculated as a percentage of project value. Budget \$15,000-\$40,000 for a full poured concrete basement foundation for a standard residential home, depending on size and complexity. Never skip or work around the permit process on foundation work — it affects your home insurance, future sale ability, and most importantly, the safety and longevity of your

home.

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Q8

## Do I need a permit for a concrete patio in Saint John NB?

**In most cases, a concrete patio in Saint John does NOT require a building permit — provided it is at grade level, not attached to the house as a structural element, and within the allowed setbacks from property lines.** However, there are specific situations that do trigger permit requirements, so it is worth understanding the distinctions before you pour.

The City of Saint John's building bylaw, like most NB municipalities, exempts straightforward concrete flatwork patios from the permit process. A ground-level patio that is essentially a finished concrete slab, even a large one at 400-600 square feet, is treated similarly to a gravel pad or interlocking stone surface — it is a landscape improvement, not a structure requiring inspection. This makes concrete patios one of the more homeowner-friendly permit-exempt improvements you can make to your Saint John property.

The exceptions are worth knowing. If your patio involves any of the following, permit requirements may apply: a deck-like platform elevated more than 600 mm (24 inches) above grade, which is unusual for a ground-level patio but could occur on sloped lots common in Saint John's hilly terrain; structural columns or piers integrated into the patio; a roof or pergola structure attached to your home; or retaining walls over 4 feet required to create a level patio surface on a sloped lot. For these situations, contact the City of Saint John Building Inspections department to confirm what approvals are needed.

**Setback requirements** still apply to permit-exempt patios. In Saint John residential zones, typical minimum setbacks are 1.2-2 metres from side and rear property lines, though your specific zone may vary. Confirm your setbacks with the city before you finalize the patio layout — a patio poured over a property line is a problem regardless of permit status.

For the patio itself, Saint John's coastal climate demands careful concrete specification. The Bay of Fundy brings significant salt air and moisture to Saint John, and with 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles, a non-air-entrained concrete mix will fail within a few years. Specify **air-entrained concrete (25-32 MPa, 4-7% air content)** for your patio, use a 4-inch minimum slab thickness (5 inches on any surface that might see vehicles), include wire mesh or rebar on chairs at mid-slab height, cut control joints every 8-10 feet, and apply a quality penetrating sealer within 30 days of the pour.

For a standard broom-finish patio in Saint John, budget **\$2,500-\$7,000** for a 200-400 square foot installation, or \$10-\$18 per square foot fully installed. Stamped concrete patios run \$12-\$20 per square foot. New Brunswick Concrete can match you with local Saint John area concrete contractors for a free estimate.

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Q9

## What are the setback requirements for concrete structures in NB?

**Setback requirements for concrete structures in New Brunswick are set by municipal zoning bylaws, not the NB Building Code itself — so the specific distances vary by municipality, zone, and structure type.**

There is no single provincial setback rule that applies everywhere; you must check with your local planning or building department for your specific property and project.

That said, there are general patterns that apply across most NB municipalities for common concrete structures. For **residential driveways and patios**, most municipalities require a minimum setback of 0.6-1.2 metres (2-4 feet) from side property lines. This allows access to the utility corridor along the side yard and prevents disputes with neighbours. Front yard setbacks for driveways are tied to the driveway approach permit process — the approach must connect at the approved curb cut location.

For **retaining walls**, side and rear setbacks of at least 0.6-1.2 metres (2-4 feet) are typical, and taller walls may require greater setbacks. Retaining walls on corner lots face additional restrictions related to traffic sight lines. Front yard retaining walls near the street right-of-way often require pre-approval.

**Concrete sheds, garages, and outbuilding slabs** follow accessory structure rules, which vary considerably. In Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton, most accessory structures require at least 1.2 metres (4 feet) from rear and side property lines. Some municipalities allow structures to be built closer to the property line if the wall on that side is a firewall (no openings), but this applies to the structure, not just the slab.

For **foundations and new homes**, the principal building setbacks in residential zones across NB typically run: front yard 6-7.5 metres (20-25 feet) from the street right-of-way, side yard 1.2-2 metres (4-7 feet) per side, and rear yard 7.5 metres (25 feet). These are minimum distances and your property's specific zoning category and lot size will determine the actual requirements.

A few practical points for NB: first, always measure setbacks from the **property line**, not from the road surface or curb — the road right-of-way may extend several feet onto what looks like your front yard. Second, easements (utility, drainage, or access) on your property can further restrict where you can build even within setback requirements. Third, unincorporated rural areas of NB fall under Regional Service Commission zoning, which may have different rules from nearby municipalities.

The fastest way to confirm setbacks for your project is to call your local building or planning department with your civic address. For properties in Moncton, Dieppe, Riverview, Fredericton, Saint John, Miramichi, or Bathurst, the municipal websites also often have zoning maps and bylaw information available online. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with local contractors who know their municipalities' setback rules well.

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## Does NB building code require air-entrained concrete for exterior work?

**Yes — the National Building Code as adopted in New Brunswick, combined with CSA A23.1 (the concrete materials and construction standard), effectively requires air-entrained concrete for all exterior concrete exposed to freezing and thawing in a moist or wet environment.** For New Brunswick, that means every exterior concrete surface — driveways, patios, sidewalks, steps, porches, exposed foundation walls — requires an air-entrained mix.

The code language specifies concrete exposure categories, and NB exterior flatwork falls into the most demanding category: **Class C-1 or C-2 exposure**, meaning concrete exposed to freezing and thawing in a moist condition and to de-icing chemicals. For this exposure class, CSA A23.1 requires 5-8% total air content for concrete with 20 mm (3/4 inch) aggregate, along with a maximum water-to-cement ratio of 0.45 and a minimum 32 MPa compressive strength. These requirements work together — the air entrainment provides freeze-thaw resistance, the low water-cement ratio improves density and reduces permeability, and the higher strength provides durability.

The practical reason this requirement exists is straightforward and worth understanding as a homeowner. NB experiences **150+ freeze-thaw cycles per year** — among the highest in Canada. Without air entrainment, water enters the microscopic pores in concrete, freezes, expands by 9%, and fractures the concrete matrix from the inside out. The surface scaling and spalling you see on old NB driveways is almost always the result of non-air-entrained concrete (or inadequately air-entrained concrete) failing under this relentless cycle.

Air entrainment works by introducing billions of microscopic air bubbles (4-7% of the concrete volume) using a chemical admixture added at the ready-mix plant. These tiny bubbles act as pressure relief valves — when water freezes and expands in adjacent pores, it has somewhere to go without fracturing the cement paste. The result is concrete that can withstand decades of NB freeze-thaw cycles rather than failing within 3-7 years.

When ordering ready-mix concrete for any exterior NB project, always specify: **air-entrained mix, 6% air content (±1%), 25-32 MPa, with a maximum 0.45 water-to-cement ratio.** Reputable NB ready-mix suppliers deliver this as a standard exterior mix — it should cost only \$10-\$20 per cubic yard more than standard non-air-entrained concrete. Never let a contractor talk you out of air entrainment on exterior work to save a few dollars. The cost difference on a 400 sq ft driveway is less than \$100, but the difference in service life is 20-30 years.

For interior concrete (basement floors, interior garage slabs in heated spaces), air entrainment is less critical. But for any concrete that will experience New Brunswick winters, there is no debate — air entrainment is mandatory.

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Q11

## What inspections are required for a new foundation in New Brunswick?

**A new foundation in New Brunswick requires multiple mandatory inspections at specific stages of construction — and crucially, you must NOT pour concrete before receiving approval at each stage.** Pouring ahead of inspection can result in orders to expose or remove work, which is an expensive and avoidable mistake.

The required inspections are set by your local building inspection authority when they issue your building permit. While the exact stages can vary slightly by municipality, the standard sequence for a new poured concrete foundation in NB involves the following inspections.

**Footing excavation and layout inspection** is the first and most critical. Before any concrete is poured for footings, the building inspector must confirm that the excavation has reached below the frost line (minimum 1.2 metres / 4 feet in southern NB, up to 1.5 metres in northern areas like Bathurst and Edmundston), that the footing dimensions match the approved drawings, that reinforcement (rebar) is correctly placed and supported on chairs, and that the footing bears on undisturbed soil or properly engineered fill. This inspection protects against one of the most common and costly failures in NB construction — footings set too shallow that heave and crack in the first winter.

**Foundation wall forming inspection** is typically required after the walls are formed and reinforced but before the concrete is poured. The inspector checks wall thickness, height above grade (foundations must extend at least 150 mm / 6 inches above finished grade), reinforcement placement, window and door buck locations, and any required anchor bolt placements.

**Damp-proofing and drainage inspection** occurs after the foundation walls are stripped but before backfilling. The inspector verifies that damp-proofing compound (or waterproofing membrane for below-grade living space) has been applied to the exterior of the walls, that perimeter drainage tile (weeping tile) is correctly installed at the footing

level, and that the drainage connects to an approved outlet. This inspection is required before any backfilling covers the exterior of the walls.

**Backfill inspection** in some municipalities confirms that compactable fill is being used and that backfilling is done in lifts to avoid lateral pressure damaging the fresh foundation walls. Concrete foundation walls should not be backfilled until they have reached adequate strength, typically 7 days after pouring in NB summer conditions.

At every stage, call the building inspection office to book your inspection well in advance — in busy seasons (May through September), inspectors in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John can be booked 3-7 business days out. Keep the inspection record card on site and ensure the inspector signs off before proceeding. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with experienced local foundation contractors who manage the inspection process as part of their service.

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**Q12**

## **Do I need a permit to replace my front steps in NB?**

**Replacing existing front steps in New Brunswick typically does NOT require a building permit if you are rebuilding them in the same location and size — this falls under routine maintenance and repair in most NB municipalities.** However, there are important exceptions and a few practical considerations worth knowing.

The general rule across NB municipalities (including Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, Miramichi, and Bathurst) is that like-for-like replacement of concrete steps does not trigger the permit process. You are replacing an existing structure in the same footprint, not adding new structure or changing the use of the property. This is similar to replacing windows in existing openings or re-shingling a roof — maintenance work that is permit-exempt in most

cases.

The exceptions are worth knowing before you start. If your new steps are **significantly larger** than the existing ones — adding a wider landing, extending the width, or increasing the number of steps in a way that changes the structure's footprint — some municipalities treat this as new construction that requires a permit. Similarly, if your steps are connected to structural elements of the home (an attached porch or covered entry structure), the work may be assessed differently than a standalone stair replacement.

One area where confusion is common: **railing requirements**. Even if the steps themselves do not require a permit, if you are replacing steps that currently lack a required handrail, you may find yourself in a situation where the building department, upon being notified of the work, requires you to bring the steps up to current code including railing installation. This is not a reason to avoid doing the work properly — it is a reason to plan for the railing as part of the project.

For the replacement itself, NB's freeze-thaw cycles demand careful concrete specification. Front steps face some of the most punishing conditions of any concrete on your property: foot traffic, de-icing salt, full weather exposure, and the structural stress of daily loading. Use **air-entrained concrete (6% air content, 32 MPa minimum)**, keep the water-to-cement ratio low, and apply a penetrating sealer after the concrete has cured for 28 days. Steps that are poorly specified fail within a few winters in NB conditions — spalling treads are both unsightly and a slip hazard.

For new concrete front steps (3-5 steps with a landing), budget **\$1,500-\$4,000** in the 2025-2026 NB market, depending on the number of steps, landing size, and whether a new railing is included. Removing old steps adds \$300-\$600 to the job. New Brunswick Concrete can match you with local contractors who specialize in concrete step replacement across NB.

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## What are the NB building code requirements for residential foundations?

**NB residential foundations must comply with the National Building Code of Canada as adopted by New Brunswick, with the most critical requirements being frost depth footings (minimum 1.2 metres below grade in southern NB), adequate wall thickness and reinforcement, proper damp-proofing, and drainage.** These are not suggestions — they are enforceable code requirements that your building inspector will verify during construction.

**Footing requirements** are the starting point. All structural footings must extend below the frost line to prevent frost heave. In the Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John areas, the standard minimum footing depth is 1.2 metres (4 feet) below finished grade. In northern communities like Bathurst, Edmundston, and Campbellton, 1.4-1.5 metres (4.5-5 feet) may be required due to colder sustained winter temperatures. Footings must bear on undisturbed natural soil or properly engineered and compacted fill — never on organic material, topsoil, or soft clay without engineering assessment. Typical residential strip footing dimensions are 400-600 mm (16-24 inches) wide and 200-250 mm (8-10 inches) thick, though specific dimensions depend on soil bearing capacity and the load being carried.

**Foundation wall requirements** specify that poured concrete walls for a standard residential basement must be a minimum of 200 mm (8 inches) thick for walls up to 2.4 metres high, with horizontal and vertical reinforcement as specified in the code based on wall height and the depth of unbalanced fill (backfill on one side only, which creates lateral pressure). Walls must extend a minimum of 150 mm (6 inches) above finished exterior grade to protect the wood framing above from moisture. Concrete must meet a minimum 20 MPa (but most NB contractors use 25-30 MPa for foundations).

**Damp-proofing and waterproofing** are mandatory below grade. Damp-proofing (a bituminous coating) is the minimum code requirement for foundations where the below-grade space is unoccupied storage. For habitable basement space, full waterproofing (typically a membrane system) is required. NB's high groundwater conditions in river valley areas like Fredericton and coastal areas near Moncton mean waterproofing is practically necessary even where damp-proofing is technically code-sufficient.

**Perimeter drainage** (weeping tile) is required around the perimeter of the footing for all basement foundations. The drainage tile must be installed on the footing, surrounded by clear stone, and wrapped in filter fabric to prevent soil infiltration. It must drain to daylight or a sump pit with a sump pump.

**Anchor bolt requirements** ensure that the wood sill plate (the bottom plate of the wall framing) is properly anchored to the foundation. Code requires 12 mm (1/2 inch) anchor bolts at maximum 2.4 metre (8 foot) spacing, within 300 mm of each corner.

All foundation work requires a building permit and mandatory inspections at key stages. Budget \$15,000-\$40,000 for a full residential basement foundation in NB, depending on size and site conditions.

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Q14

## Do concrete contractors need to be licensed in New Brunswick?

**New Brunswick does not have a formal provincial licensing system for general concrete contractors the way some provinces license electricians or plumbers — but this does not mean you should hire any contractor without vetting them carefully.** The absence of a licence requirement makes your own due diligence more important, not less.

Unlike regulated trades such as electrical (which requires a licensed electrician in NB) or gas fitting (which requires certification), concrete work in New Brunswick is an unregulated trade at the provincial level. There is no provincial body that issues concrete contractor licences, and no licence number to check before hiring. This is consistent with most of Canada — concrete is treated as a construction trade that relies on market reputation, experience, and general business registration rather than formal professional licencing.

What does exist, and what you should absolutely verify, is the following. First, any concrete contractor operating as a business in NB should be **registered with Service New Brunswick** (a valid business registration). This is a basic legal requirement for operating a business in the province. Second, any contractor employing workers on a construction site must be registered with and in good standing with **WorkSafeNB** — New Brunswick's workplace safety and compensation body. You can and should verify a contractor's WorkSafeNB coverage directly through the WorkSafeNB website or by calling their clearance line. Third, a legitimate concrete contractor should carry **commercial general liability insurance** — typically \$2 million or more — to cover damage to your property or

injury on the job site. Ask for a certificate of insurance before signing anything.

For foundation work and larger structural concrete projects, some NB contractors carry certifications such as the **ACI (American Concrete Institute) field testing technician** certification, which demonstrates knowledge of concrete testing, quality control, and placement practices. This is a positive credential to look for on significant projects.

The practical reality in NB is that concrete quality varies considerably between contractors. An experienced crew that has been pouring driveways and foundations in Moncton or Fredericton for 10-20 years will understand NB's frost depth requirements, air entrainment needs, and seasonal timing in ways that a new contractor may not. Ask for references, look at photos of past work, and get at least three quotes for any project over \$2,000.

New Brunswick Concrete connects homeowners with local concrete professionals through the New Brunswick Construction Network directory. As with any hiring decision, we recommend verifying WorkSafeNB coverage, requesting proof of liability insurance, and checking references before awarding the work.

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**Q15**

## **What is WorkSafeNB and do I need to check if my concrete contractor has it?**

**WorkSafeNB is New Brunswick's workplace safety and workers' compensation authority — and yes, you should absolutely verify that any concrete contractor you hire has valid WorkSafeNB coverage before work begins on your property.** This protects you from potential liability if a worker is injured on your job site.

WorkSafeNB is a provincial Crown corporation that administers the Workers' Compensation Act in New Brunswick. It provides no-fault insurance coverage for workers injured on the job and sets safety standards for workplaces

across the province. When a registered employer has WorkSafeNB coverage, injured workers receive wage replacement, medical care, and rehabilitation through WorkSafeNB — without the need to sue the employer or the homeowner.

Here is why this directly affects you as a homeowner: **if a concrete worker is injured on your property and the contractor does not have WorkSafeNB coverage, you could be held personally liable** for the worker's injuries and lost wages. This is not a hypothetical risk — concrete work involves significant physical hazards, including excavation, heavy equipment, working with heavy forms and reinforcement, and the physical demands of placing and finishing concrete. Injuries happen, and without WorkSafeNB coverage, the injured worker's recourse may extend to you as the property owner.

Verifying WorkSafeNB coverage is straightforward. Ask your contractor for their WorkSafeNB account number and verify it yourself at the WorkSafeNB website ([worksafenb.ca](https://worksafenb.ca)) using their Clearance Letter system. A clearance letter confirms that the contractor is registered and in good standing with their WorkSafeNB account — meaning their premiums are paid and their account is active. Request a clearance letter dated within the past 30 days before work starts.

Under New Brunswick's Workers' Compensation Act, most businesses employing workers in the construction industry are required to register with WorkSafeNB and pay premiums based on their payroll. A legitimate, established concrete contractor will have this coverage as a standard part of doing business. A contractor who cannot or will not provide a WorkSafeNB clearance letter is a red flag — either they are not properly registered, or their account is in arrears.

Note that **sole proprietors with no employees** may be exempt from mandatory WorkSafeNB registration (they can purchase optional personal coverage), but any contractor with employees or subcontractors working on your site must be registered. For any concrete project involving more than one person — which is most pours larger than a small sonotube — WorkSafeNB coverage should be confirmed. New Brunswick Concrete recommends verifying this for every project, regardless of size.

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## Do I need a driveway approach permit in Oromocto NB?

**Yes, if you are building a new driveway connection to a road in Oromocto — or modifying an existing driveway approach — you will need a driveway approach permit, and the authority you apply to depends on whether your road is a municipal street or a provincial highway.** Oromocto is a town that borders significant Department of National Defence land and provincial road infrastructure, so it is worth understanding the permit process specifically.

For driveway approaches connecting to **municipal streets within the Town of Oromocto**, the permit comes from the Town of Oromocto Public Works department. This is a standard driveway access permit that covers the curb cut (if applicable), the concrete apron at the road edge, and any grading changes in the municipal right-of-way. The application process is relatively simple — a basic form and sketch of your driveway location and dimensions, a nominal fee (\$50-\$200), and confirmation of your property address.

For approaches connecting to **provincial highways** — which applies to many properties in the Oromocto area given the town's geography and proximity to Route 2 and other provincial routes — the permit comes from the **NB Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (NB DTI)**. Provincial highway access permits take longer to process than municipal permits (allow 2-4 weeks), have specific engineering and sight-line requirements, and may dictate the location and width of your approach. NB DTI will not approve an approach that creates a safety hazard by blocking sight lines or placing a driveway near an intersection.

For the concrete apron and driveway work entirely within your private property, no permit is typically required in Oromocto for a standard driveway replacement. The permit applies specifically to the connection point with the road right-of-way and any work within that right-of-way.

Practical timing note: provincial highway access permits must be obtained **before** any work begins — including before gravel base preparation near the road edge. Starting work on a provincial highway right-of-way without a permit can result in stop-work orders and fines. Municipal permits in Oromocto similarly should be in hand before breaking ground at the road edge.

For a typical residential concrete driveway in Oromocto, budget the same as elsewhere in the Fredericton region: **\$4,500-\$8,000** for a standard two-car driveway with proper base and air-entrained concrete suitable for NB's freeze-thaw conditions. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with local contractors familiar with the Oromocto area permit process and the specific requirements for the Town of Oromocto and NB DTI approaches.

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Q17

## What is the NB building code minimum for foundation wall thickness?

The NB building code (National Building Code as adopted in NB) specifies a minimum poured concrete foundation wall thickness of 150 mm (6 inches) for low-rise residential construction — but in practice, **200 mm (8 inches) is the standard for most NB basement walls, and most contractors and engineers use this as a baseline.** The specific requirement depends on wall height, the depth of unbalanced fill, and the load being carried.

The NB Building Code uses tables that factor in multiple variables to determine required wall thickness and reinforcement. The key variables are: the **unsupported wall height** (from footing to first floor framing), the depth of **unbalanced fill** (soil on only one side of the wall), and whether the wall is a bearing wall supporting floors and roof loads or a non-bearing wall.

For a typical NB residential basement with 2.4-2.5 metres of wall height and 1.8-2.1 metres of unbalanced fill (the portion of the wall below grade with backfill on only one side), the code minimum for a poured concrete wall is generally **200 mm (8 inches)**. Walls with greater unbalanced fill depths — common when you have a full 8-foot basement in NB where the exterior grade drops sharply — may require 250 mm (10 inches) or reinforcement beyond the code minimum.

Reinforcement is closely tied to wall thickness requirements. Most NB poured foundation walls include **horizontal reinforcement** (typically two runs of 10M rebar at specified spacing near the top of the wall) to resist the bending forces created by soil pressure against the wall. The code tables specify when additional vertical or horizontal rebar is required based on wall height and fill depth. Taller walls or walls with unusually deep backfill often require a stamped engineering drawing that specifies both thickness and reinforcement — especially if the wall exceeds 2.4

metres in height.

Wall thickness also affects the **thermal performance** of your foundation. NB winters are cold, and an 8-inch concrete wall is a poor insulator (concrete has very low R-value). Building code requires minimum insulation levels on foundation walls in NB to meet the energy efficiency requirements of Part 12 of the National Energy Code for Buildings. This insulation is almost always applied to the interior of the wall as rigid foam board, not factored into structural wall thickness.

For any new foundation in NB, work with a building contractor or structural engineer who is familiar with local soil conditions, frost depth, and the NB Building Code requirements. The footing inspection required before pouring will include a check of your wall forming layout, so the design must be confirmed before construction begins. Budget \$15,000-\$40,000 for a full poured concrete basement foundation depending on size and site conditions in the NB market.

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**Q18**

## **Do I need a permit for a shed pad in Fredericton NB?**

**In most cases, you do not need a building permit for a concrete shed pad in Fredericton, provided the shed itself meets the exemption threshold — but the rules involve both the pad and the structure being built on it, and getting this wrong can create headaches when you sell your home.** The permit requirement in New Brunswick is typically tied to the shed, not the concrete pad alone.

**The City of Fredericton's general rule** follows the NB building code framework: accessory structures (sheds, garages, workshops) under 10 square metres (approximately 108 square feet) typically do not require a building

permit. A standard 10x10 shed (100 sq ft) falls under this threshold; a 12x12 (144 sq ft) or larger does not. If the shed requires a permit, inspectors will want to see the foundation/pad as part of the inspection process.

**The concrete pad itself**, used purely as a base for a permitted or exempt shed, is not independently permit-required in most NB municipalities when you're staying within the standard exemption limits. Replacing or pouring a simple slab on grade for a small shed is generally treated the same as pouring a driveway or patio — it falls outside the permit framework unless it's supporting a structure that itself requires a permit.

**What does matter** even without a formal permit is setback compliance. In Fredericton, accessory structures must maintain minimum distances from property lines — typically 0.6 metres (about 2 feet) from rear and side lot lines for small sheds, though this varies by zone. Placing a shed pad too close to a property line can result in a bylaw complaint from neighbours or a required removal if discovered. Check Fredericton's zoning bylaw or call the City's Development Services office (506-460-2068) to confirm the setback requirement for your specific property zone before pouring.

**Practical advice for Fredericton homeowners:** call the City before you pour, even if you believe no permit is needed. A five-minute phone call to the Development Services department will give you a definitive answer for your specific address and shed size, and creates a record that you checked — useful if questions arise later. Inspectors are generally helpful at this stage and far less so after the concrete is poured in the wrong location.

**For the pad itself**, a 4-inch concrete slab on a 4-inch compacted gravel base is standard for a residential shed in Fredericton. Air-entrained mix (25 MPa) is appropriate — the shed will not fully protect the slab from frost and freeze-thaw effects at the perimeter. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with local contractors who handle shed pads throughout the Fredericton area.

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## What is the maximum retaining wall height without a permit in Saint John NB?

In Saint John, retaining walls exceeding 1.2 metres (approximately 4 feet) in exposed height generally require a building permit, and walls over this height may also require engineered drawings. This threshold aligns with the NB Building Code and is common across most NB municipalities, though you should confirm the current specific requirement directly with the City of Saint John's Development and Building Inspections department before beginning any retaining wall project.

**The 4-foot threshold is about safety, not bureaucracy.** A retaining wall is a structural element that resists significant lateral earth pressure — the force of the soil pushing horizontally against the wall. As wall height increases, that pressure increases dramatically (soil pressure increases with the square of height, roughly). A wall that is 4 feet tall must resist roughly four times the lateral force of a 2-foot wall. Below 4 feet, a well-designed concrete or masonry wall built by an experienced contractor has a reasonable safety margin without requiring an engineer's stamp. Above 4 feet, the forces involved are substantial enough that an engineer's design is needed to ensure the wall won't fail.

**Retaining wall failure is not gradual** — walls typically perform fine until they don't, then collapse suddenly. In NB, frost heave adds substantial upward and lateral force on retaining walls every winter. Walls without adequate drainage (weeping tile at the base, gravel backfill, and drainage outlets through the wall) accumulate hydrostatic pressure when groundwater can't escape. Saint John's high rainfall and the Bay of Fundy's influence mean drainage is a particularly important consideration for retaining walls in that area.

**For walls under 4 feet** that don't require a permit, you still must comply with property setback requirements. In Saint John, retaining walls must generally be set back from property lines — the exact distance depends on your zoning designation. Call the City's Development and Building Inspections at 506-658-2911 to confirm the setback and permit threshold for your specific location before you pour.

**Cost context:** a poured concrete retaining wall in the Saint John area runs \$25-\$50 per linear foot per foot of height for standard residential work, and \$40-\$75 per linear foot per foot of height for engineered walls over 4 feet. A 30-linear-foot wall at 3 feet high runs approximately \$2,500-\$5,000 fully installed with drainage. Proper drainage — crushed stone backfill and weeping tile at the base — is not optional in NB; skipping it is the most common cause of retaining wall failure in the Maritime climate.

New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with retaining wall contractors serving Saint John, Rothesay, Quispamsis, and surrounding communities.

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Q20

## Do I need a footing inspection for deck piers in New Brunswick?

**Whether you need a footing inspection for deck piers in New Brunswick depends on whether your deck requires a building permit — and most decks above a certain size do.** If a building permit is required for your deck, a footing inspection (before the concrete is poured and the inspection is failed-safe before covering the work) is almost certainly part of the process.

**The NB building code and most municipal bylaws** require a building permit for decks that are attached to the house (regardless of height in many municipalities), and for freestanding decks above a certain square footage or height. In Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, decks attached to the dwelling generally require a permit. A permit-exempt deck is typically a small, low-to-grade, freestanding structure — and even then, the thresholds vary by municipality.

**If a permit is required**, the typical inspection sequence for a deck in NB includes: a footing inspection after the holes are dug and before the concrete is poured (so the inspector can verify the hole depth reaches below the 4-foot frost line and is bearing on undisturbed soil), a framing inspection after the deck structure is built but before decking is applied, and a final inspection on completion. The footing inspection is the most critical — it's the only opportunity to verify that the foundation of the deck meets NB Building Code requirements before it's buried in concrete.

**Never pour your sonotube footings before the inspection.** This is a common mistake that creates expensive problems — inspectors can require you to excavate and expose the footings to verify depth and bearing if the pour happened before inspection. In NB, with frost depth requirements of 4-5 feet (1.2-1.5 metres), excavating to verify a footing that's already been poured is a significant and costly undertaking.

**If you're uncertain whether your deck needs a permit**, call your local building inspection office before you start digging. In Fredericton, that's the City's Development Services office. In Moncton, the Planning and Development department. In Saint John, the Development and Building Inspections department. In rural NB, contact the Rural Service Commission for your area. A permit is typically \$100-\$300 for a residential deck and is straightforward to obtain — the fee is minor compared to the cost of doing the work twice.

**The practical reality:** most sonotube deck piers in NB should be 10-12 inches in diameter, extending to 4-5 feet below grade (frost depth), filled with air-entrained concrete, and containing a post base anchor set before the concrete sets. This is standard work for any experienced NB deck or concrete contractor. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with professionals who handle deck footings throughout the province.

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**Q21**

## **What are the NB building code requirements for concrete driveway thickness?**

**The NB Building Code does not actually specify minimum thickness requirements for residential concrete driveways** — driveways are not regulated structural elements under the building code in the way that foundations and load-bearing structures are. However, industry standards, material performance requirements, and the realities of New Brunswick's climate establish very clear de facto minimums that any reputable NB concrete contractor will follow.

**The industry standard for a residential concrete driveway in NB is 5-6 inches (125-150 mm) of concrete over a minimum 4-6 inch compacted granular base.** A 4-inch slab is technically used in some markets but is not appropriate for NB conditions — the combination of vehicle loads, frost heave, and freeze-thaw cycling makes 4-inch residential driveways more prone to cracking and displacement. The additional cost of going from 4 to 5 inches

is relatively small (roughly 25% more concrete), while the durability improvement is substantial.

**For driveways that will see heavier vehicle traffic** — frequent delivery trucks, RVs, or heavy pickup trucks — 6 inches is the appropriate minimum. Commercial driveways and any surface that may be accessed by fully loaded concrete or delivery vehicles should be 6-8 inches with #15M rebar on 12-inch centres rather than wire mesh.

**The granular base is as important as the slab thickness.** NB's frost heave cycle means the ground beneath a driveway is moving every winter. A properly compacted granular base (crusher run or clear stone) of 4-6 inches minimizes differential heaving by providing free drainage and a stable bearing surface. Driveways poured directly on poorly drained clay or organic soil, regardless of thickness, will heave and crack. In areas of Moncton and Fredericton with heavy clay soils, the base preparation is as critical as the concrete specification.

**Reinforcement requirements:** wire mesh (6x6 W1.4/W1.4) or #10M rebar on 12-18 inch centres is standard for NB driveways, supported on chairs at mid-slab height. Control joints should be cut or tooled every 8-10 feet to manage cracking location — without them, the slab will crack on its own schedule, usually not where you'd choose.

**What the code does govern** is the driveway approach — where the driveway meets the municipal road. Approach grades, sight lines, and drainage are regulated by the municipality and, for provincial roads, by the NB Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. This connection point requires a permit in most cases. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with driveway contractors experienced in NB conditions across Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, Bathurst, Miramichi, and beyond.

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## Do I need a permit for foundation repair in New Brunswick?

**Whether foundation repair in New Brunswick requires a building permit depends on the nature and scope of the repair — minor crack repairs generally do not require a permit, while structural modifications, underpinning, and major waterproofing work typically do.** This distinction matters both for legal compliance and for your home's insurability and resale value.

**Repairs that typically do NOT require a permit** in NB municipalities include: crack injection with polyurethane or epoxy for non-structural cracks (hairline to 1/4 inch), interior parging or coating, sump pump installation (though electrical permits may be needed for new circuits), interior drainage system installation (French drain at the perimeter), and exterior foundation coating or dampproofing at the surface level.

**Repairs that typically DO require a permit** include: structural crack repair that involves removing and replacing sections of foundation wall, underpinning (excavating beneath existing footings to extend their depth — common when footings are found above the frost line in older NB homes built before modern code requirements), adding new foundation sections for additions, and any work that changes the structural configuration of the foundation. If an engineer is involved in designing the repair — which is strongly recommended for any structural foundation work — the engineer's drawings will typically need to be submitted with the permit application.

**The permit decision also protects you.** If you discover during a pre-sale home inspection (or the buyer's inspector discovers) that unpermitted structural foundation work was done on your home, this creates legal exposure. Foundation work is a major structural element and most NB real estate lawyers and realtors will flag unpermitted foundation repairs as a material disclosure issue. Getting the permit adds some time and cost to the project but protects the value of your home and your legal position.

**Contact your local building department before any major foundation work.** In Fredericton, that's the City's Development Services department. In Moncton, the Planning and Development office. In Saint John, Development and Building Inspections. In rural NB, the Rural Service Commission for your area. For unincorporated communities in NB, the province handles building inspections directly through Service New Brunswick.

**A key caution:** never diagnose foundation cracks as structural or non-structural yourself without professional input. A crack that looks minor — narrow, short, horizontal — may be a serious structural indicator (horizontal cracks in block or poured walls indicate lateral soil pressure and potential wall failure). Have any foundation crack that is wider than 1/8 inch, horizontal, or accompanied by water infiltration assessed by a professional before deciding on a repair approach. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with foundation specialists throughout NB.

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Q23

## How do I connect a new concrete driveway to a provincial road in NB?

**Connecting a new concrete driveway to a provincial road in New Brunswick requires a driveway access permit from the NB Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (NBDTI) before any work begins.** This is not optional — constructing or modifying a driveway access to a provincial highway without a permit is a violation of the Highway Act and can result in the access being required to be removed at your expense.

**The first step is determining who owns the road.** In New Brunswick, roads are either provincially maintained (under NBDTI) or municipally maintained. In urban areas like Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and Bathurst, most roads are municipal and the permit comes from the city or town. In rural areas and on numbered provincial highways (Highway 1, Highway 2, Highway 7, etc.), NBDTI is the authority. If you're unsure, your municipality or Service NB can confirm.

**For NBDTI provincial roads,** the application process involves: submitting a Driveway Access Permit Application through the NBDTI regional office for your area (there are offices in Fredericton, Moncton, Saint John, Miramichi, Bathurst, and Edmundston), providing a sketch showing the property location, proposed driveway location, sight distances in both directions, and setback from intersections. NBDTI will assess the application based on traffic volumes on the road, visibility/sight line requirements, drainage impacts, and road safety standards.

**Key technical requirements** for provincial road connections in NB typically include: minimum sight distance requirements (how far you can see in each direction before the driveway — this increases with posted speed limits), minimum separation from intersections (often 30-60 metres depending on the highway classification), and culvert requirements if the driveway crosses a roadside ditch. NBDTI may require the installation of a culvert (a pipe under the driveway to maintain drainage flow in the ditch) at your expense, and the specifications for that culvert are set

by NBDTI.

**The concrete apron at the road connection** — typically the first 3-6 metres of your driveway from the road edge — must be constructed to NBDTI standards. This usually means 6-inch concrete or a specified granular base designed for the traffic and drainage context. NBDTI may inspect this section before or after the pour.

**Permit fees and processing time** vary, but driveway access permits for residential properties are typically straightforward and processed within a few weeks. Your concrete contractor should be aware of the permit requirement and ideally experienced with NBDTI driveway connections in rural NB. New Brunswick Concrete can help you find driveway contractors familiar with the provincial road connection process across NB.

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Q24

## What is the minimum rebar coverage required in NB foundations?

The minimum concrete cover over reinforcing steel in New Brunswick foundations is governed by the **NB Building Code (which references CSA A23.1 for concrete structures)**, and the required cover depends on the exposure conditions — for NB foundations in contact with soil, the minimum cover is typically 75 mm (3 inches) for concrete cast against and permanently in contact with earth, and 40-50 mm (1.5-2 inches) for formed concrete exposed to weather or soil. These requirements exist to protect the steel from corrosion and ensure adequate bond between concrete and reinforcement.

**Cover is the distance from the outside face of the concrete to the nearest surface of the rebar** — not to the centre of the bar. For a poured concrete foundation wall formed on both sides (the typical residential construction method), the rebar is placed at mid-wall or at specified distances from each face, with the structural engineer's

drawings specifying exact placement based on the loading and wall thickness.

**The specific cover requirements** from CSA A23.1 that apply in NB residential foundation work:

- **Concrete cast against and permanently exposed to earth** (footings, grade beams, walls placed against soil): 75 mm (3 inches) minimum cover
- **Concrete exposed to weather or soil (formed surfaces):** 40 mm (1.5 inches) minimum for #15M bar and smaller; 50 mm (2 inches) for #20M and larger
- **Concrete in interior locations not exposed to weather:** 20-25 mm (3/4 to 1 inch), though this is less relevant for NB foundation work where exterior exposure is the standard condition

**Why cover matters in New Brunswick.** Concrete cover is the primary defence against chloride-induced reinforcement corrosion. In NB, foundation concrete is exposed to groundwater, de-icing salts from road spray, and coastal salt air in communities like Saint John and Shediac. Insufficient cover allows these chlorides to reach the steel in 10-20 years rather than 50-100 years, initiating corrosion that eventually causes the surrounding concrete to crack and spall from the expansive pressure of the corroding steel.

**Footing cover** is equally important. NB footings sit on undisturbed soil or compacted granular fill, and the 75 mm cover requirement for concrete in direct soil contact means your bottom mat of rebar should be supported on chairs or approved supports — never placed directly on the soil or excavated surface. A rebar sitting on dirt has zero cover at its contact point and is vulnerable to corrosion from the ground up.

Any structural foundation work in NB should be done by an experienced contractor following stamped engineering drawings that specify cover requirements for your specific project. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with foundation contractors and help you find professionals serving Fredericton, Moncton, Saint John, Bathurst, Miramichi, and across the province.

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