

NEW BRUNSWICK CONCRETE

Stamped & Decorative Concrete

Stamped concrete patterns, exposed aggregate,
acid staining, coloured concrete, and decorative
finishes for NB homes

23 Expert Answers from Concrete IQ

newbrunswickconcrete.com/construction-brain

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Can stamped concrete be poured in sections to match an existing stamped patio in Bathurst or will there be obvious seam lines and colour mismatch?

Matching existing stamped concrete with new sections is extremely challenging and rarely produces seamless results. Even with the same contractor using identical stamps and color formulas, you'll likely see noticeable differences in color, texture depth, and joint lines where new meets old.

The primary challenge is **color matching**. Stamped concrete gets its color from integral pigments mixed into the concrete and release agents applied during stamping. Even using the exact same products, several factors create color variations: the age and weathering of your existing patio has likely shifted its color through UV exposure and wear; concrete from different batches can have slight variations in base color; and the release agent application technique affects the final appearance. What looked identical when wet often shows clear differences once cured and weathered.

Texture matching presents additional complications. Stamped concrete texture comes from the depth and pressure of the stamping process. Your existing patio's stamps may have worn slightly, and achieving identical pressure and timing across the seam between old and new sections requires exceptional skill. The stamps must align perfectly at the joint line, which is difficult when working around an existing edge.

In Bathurst's Maritime climate, these challenges are amplified. Your existing stamped concrete has endured multiple freeze-thaw cycles, salt exposure from coastal air, and UV weathering that has likely faded and textured the surface in ways that are impossible to replicate immediately. New concrete will look distinctly "fresh" compared to weathered existing work.

The most successful approach is strategic design. Rather than trying to seamlessly extend the existing patio, consider creating a defined border or transition zone using a different pattern, color, or material like natural stone edging. This makes the addition look intentional rather than like a failed attempt at matching. Some contractors create a decorative saw-cut border between old and new sections, turning the necessary joint into a design feature.

If you must attempt matching, hire a contractor who has worked extensively with your specific stamp pattern and can show you examples of successful additions. They should be able to identify the original stamp manufacturer, color system, and release agent used. Even then, expect some visible difference that may become more pronounced as the new section weathers differently than the old.

For best results in Bathurst's coastal conditions, ensure any new stamped concrete uses air-entrained mix (essential for freeze-thaw resistance) and plan for regular sealing every 2-3 years to protect both old and new sections from salt air and freeze-thaw damage.

Need help finding a stamped concrete specialist familiar with matching existing work? New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with experienced contractors who can assess your specific situation and recommend the best approach for your Bathurst patio project.

Q2

How often does stamped concrete need to be resealed in New Brunswick's climate, and what happens if you skip a season?

Stamped concrete in New Brunswick should be resealed every 2-3 years maximum, with many professionals recommending annual resealing for high-traffic areas like driveways. Skipping even one season can lead to accelerated wear, color fading, and moisture penetration that compromises both appearance and durability.

New Brunswick's punishing freeze-thaw cycles make regular sealing absolutely critical for stamped concrete. Unlike plain concrete that can sometimes go 3-4 years between sealings, stamped concrete has textured surfaces and often contains integral color or color hardeners that are more vulnerable to weathering. The sealer acts as the primary defense against moisture penetration, and once that protection fails, deterioration accelerates rapidly.

What happens when you skip resealing becomes apparent within 6-12 months in NB conditions. The most immediate effect is color fading as UV rays break down the pigments in the concrete surface. Stamped concrete that was once rich brown or slate gray begins looking washed out and patchy. More seriously, moisture begins penetrating the unprotected surface. During NB's 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles, this trapped moisture expands by 9% each time it freezes, creating microscopic cracks that grow larger with each cycle.

The textured surface of stamped concrete actually works against it during freeze-thaw cycles. Water pools in the stamped impressions and joints, creating concentrated freeze-thaw stress in these areas. Without sealer protection, you'll see spalling (surface concrete flaking off) starting in the deepest impressions first, then spreading across the surface. This damage is permanent and expensive to repair - often requiring complete resurfacing or replacement of affected areas.

Salt exposure compounds the problem significantly in NB. Road salt and de-icing chemicals lower the freezing point of water, creating more freeze-thaw cycles at the concrete surface than ambient temperature alone would produce. Unsealed stamped concrete exposed to salt-laden slush from November through April will show severe scaling and spalling by spring. The decorative surface that cost \$15-20 per square foot becomes an eyesore that actually detracts from your property value.

For resealing timing, plan on every 2 years for moderate-traffic areas like patios and pool decks, and annually for driveways and high-traffic walkways. The best time for resealing in NB is late spring (May-June) or early fall (September) when temperatures are consistently above 10°C and rain is less frequent. The concrete must be completely dry and clean before sealer application.

Use a penetrating sealer specifically designed for decorative concrete - typically a silane/siloxane blend that repels water while allowing vapor transmission. Acrylic sealers enhance color and add sheen but are less durable in NB's harsh conditions and may require annual reapplication. Budget \$1-3 per square foot for professional resealing, or \$40-80 per gallon for quality sealer if you're doing it yourself.

This is definitely a hire-a-professional situation for most homeowners. Proper surface preparation (pressure washing, etching if needed), choosing the right sealer for your specific stamped pattern and color, and applying it evenly without streaks or bubbles requires experience. A poorly applied sealer can look worse than no sealer at all, and stripping failed sealer to start over doubles your cost.

Need help finding a concrete professional experienced with decorative concrete maintenance? New Brunswick Concrete can match you with contractors who specialize in stamped concrete care and restoration.

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Q3

What sealers work best on stamped concrete in New Brunswick to protect colour and texture through multiple freeze-thaw cycles?

For stamped concrete in New Brunswick, penetrating sealers (silane/siloxane blends) provide the best long-term protection against freeze-thaw damage, while film-forming acrylic sealers offer superior colour

enhancement but require more frequent maintenance.

The key challenge with stamped concrete in NB is balancing colour enhancement with durability under our punishing 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles. Unlike regular broom-finished concrete, stamped surfaces have texture variations and often integral colour or colour hardener that homeowners want to preserve and enhance.

Penetrating sealers are your best choice for maximum durability in NB conditions. Silane/siloxane blends like Prosoco Consolidateck LS, Foundation Armor SX5000, or similar products penetrate 2-4mm into the concrete surface and chemically bond to create a water-repellent barrier. They don't change the appearance significantly but provide excellent protection against water penetration — the root cause of freeze-thaw damage. These sealers typically last 3-5 years in NB conditions and cost \$50-\$80 per gallon, covering 150-200 square feet per gallon on textured stamped surfaces.

Acrylic sealers offer the visual enhancement most homeowners want — they deepen colours, add a subtle sheen, and make the stamped texture more pronounced. However, they form a film on the surface that's more vulnerable to NB's freeze-thaw cycles. Quality acrylic sealers like ChemMasters Stampseal or SureCrete's StampGuard can last 2-3 years with proper application, but cheaper acrylics may peel, flake, or turn white (blushing) after one harsh NB winter. Expect to pay \$40-\$70 per gallon, covering 200-300 square feet.

The hybrid approach works well for many NB homeowners: apply a penetrating sealer first for deep protection, then follow with a thin coat of acrylic for colour enhancement. This gives you the durability of penetrating protection with the aesthetics of film-forming enhancement. The acrylic may need refreshing every 2-3 years, but the underlying penetrating sealer continues protecting the concrete.

Application timing is critical in NB. Never seal new stamped concrete for at least 30 days — it needs time to cure and release moisture. Apply sealers during dry weather when temperatures will stay above 10°C for 24-48 hours. Late spring through early fall is ideal. Avoid sealing in direct sunlight or when rain is forecast within 24 hours.

Surface preparation determines success. Clean the stamped concrete thoroughly with a concrete cleaner to remove efflorescence, dirt, and any previous sealer residue. Power washing is often necessary, followed by complete drying for 24-48 hours. Test the sealer on an inconspicuous area first — stamped concrete with integral colour can react differently than expected.

For stamped concrete exposed to de-icing salt (driveways, front walkways), prioritize penetrating sealers and reapply every 2-3 years religiously. The salt-water solution that penetrates unsealed concrete creates additional freeze-thaw cycles within the surface itself, leading to rapid deterioration of both the colour and texture that makes stamped concrete attractive.

Professional application is often worth the investment for stamped concrete — the surface is typically highly visible, expensive to replace, and the sealer application technique affects both appearance and performance. A

professional can ensure even coverage in the texture variations and proper film thickness for optimal durability.

Need help finding a concrete sealing professional? New Brunswick Concrete can match you with experienced contractors who understand both stamped concrete maintenance and NB's challenging climate conditions.

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Can stamped concrete be poured in phases for a large patio in Fredericton, or will you see seam lines where sections meet?

Stamped concrete can be poured in phases, but visible seam lines where sections meet are almost inevitable. The key is planning those seams strategically so they look intentional rather than like construction joints.

When concrete is poured in separate phases, you create what's called a "cold joint" where the new concrete meets the previously cured section. Even with careful preparation — cleaning the existing edge, applying bonding agent, and matching the concrete mix exactly — there will be a visible line. The stamping pattern may not align perfectly across the joint, and slight colour variations between pours are common, especially with integral colour or colour hardeners that can vary batch to batch.

The best approach is designing the seams as decorative elements. Plan your pours so the joints fall along natural pattern breaks — between different stamp patterns, along planter edges, or where you'd naturally want a border strip. Some contractors use contrasting borders or saw-cut decorative lines that incorporate the construction joints into the overall design. This way, the seams become part of the aesthetic rather than obvious construction limitations.

For a large patio in Fredericton, **timing becomes critical with our Maritime climate.** You'll want to complete the entire project within the optimal pouring season (May through October) to ensure consistent curing conditions. If you pour one section in July and another in September, the different ambient temperatures and humidity levels during curing can create noticeable colour variations even with identical mixes. The 150+ freeze-thaw cycles we experience in New Brunswick will also affect each section slightly differently as they age.

Practical considerations for phased pours include maintaining consistent concrete specifications — same supplier, same mix design, same air entrainment (essential for NB exterior concrete), and ideally the same truck driver who knows your project. The stamping crew needs to be experienced with matching patterns across joints, which requires precise timing and often custom-cut stamp edges.

For most residential patios in the Fredericton area, a single pour is preferable if the size allows it. A typical large patio (400-600 square feet) can usually be handled in one pour with proper crew size and equipment. However, if your patio exceeds 800-1000 square feet or has complex shapes that make a single pour impractical, phased construction becomes necessary.

This is definitely professional territory. Stamped concrete requires precise timing between placement, initial set, colour application, stamping, and release agent removal — all within a narrow window measured in minutes.

Adding the complexity of matching patterns and colours across multiple pours requires experienced crews who do this regularly. A poorly executed joint on a highly visible patio is a permanent reminder of the attempt to save money on a single pour.

Need help finding a stamped concrete professional in the Fredericton area? New Brunswick Concrete can match you with experienced contractors who regularly handle large decorative projects and understand the challenges of Maritime climate conditions.

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Q5

How much does stamped concrete cost per square foot compared to regular concrete in New Brunswick?

Stamped concrete in New Brunswick typically costs \$12-\$20 per square foot fully installed, compared to \$8-\$15 per square foot for standard broom-finished concrete. This means you'll pay roughly 50-60% more for stamped concrete, but you're getting a premium decorative finish that mimics stone, brick, or tile patterns.

The price difference reflects the additional materials, specialized tools, and skilled labour required for stamped concrete. **Standard concrete** involves placing, screeding, floating, and broom finishing — a straightforward process that most concrete contractors can execute well. **Stamped concrete** requires colour hardeners (\$2-4 per sq ft), release agents, specialized stamping mats, and precise timing to achieve professional results.

For a typical 300 square foot patio, you're looking at \$2,400-\$4,500 for standard concrete versus \$3,600-\$6,000 for stamped concrete — a difference of \$1,200-\$1,500. For a 500 square foot driveway, expect \$4,000-\$7,500 for standard versus \$6,000-\$10,000 for stamped.

New Brunswick's Maritime climate makes proper execution critical for stamped concrete. The freeze-thaw cycles that plague all NB concrete are especially hard on decorative surfaces. Stamped concrete must use air-entrained mix (essential for NB's 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles), proper reinforcement, and quality sealers reapplied every 2-3 years. The textured surface of stamped concrete can trap water and de-icing salt, accelerating deterioration if not properly maintained.

The timing window for stamping is extremely narrow — typically 30-90 minutes after the concrete is placed, depending on weather conditions. If the contractor starts stamping too early, the concrete will stick to the mats and tear. Too late, and the concrete is too hard to accept a clean impression. This precision timing is why stamped concrete is definitely a job for professionals with daily experience.

Additional factors affecting stamped concrete pricing in NB:

- **Complex patterns** (ashlar slate, random stone) cost more than simple patterns (running bond brick)
- **Multiple colours** add \$1-3 per square foot
- **Borders and accent bands** increase labour time and material costs
- **Site access** — difficult access requiring wheelbarrows or pumping adds \$2-5 per square foot

When to Choose Stamped Concrete: If you want the look of natural stone or brick pavers but prefer the durability and low maintenance of a monolithic concrete surface. Stamped concrete won't shift, settle, or grow weeds like individual pavers can.

When to Stick with Standard Concrete: If budget is tight or the area isn't highly visible. A well-executed broom finish with proper air entrainment and regular sealing will last 25-40 years in NB conditions and costs significantly less upfront.

Need help finding a professional concrete contractor experienced with decorative stamped concrete? New Brunswick Concrete can match you with local contractors who specialize in stamped work and understand NB's challenging climate conditions.

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Q6

How long will a stamped concrete patio last in New Brunswick?

A properly installed stamped concrete patio in New Brunswick will last 25-40 years structurally — but the decorative surface (colour and texture detail) requires regular sealing maintenance to stay looking its best through NB's demanding climate.

Stamped concrete's lifespan in NB is essentially the same as regular concrete — the underlying slab is the same material, subject to the same forces. What differs is the decorative surface layer, which is more vulnerable to the effects of NB's freeze-thaw cycles, UV exposure, and de-icing products than a simple broom-finished slab. The colour and texture stamped into the surface are only as durable as the sealer protecting them.

The sealer is the key maintenance variable. Stamped concrete in NB must be resealed every 1-3 years depending on the sealer type and the severity of exposure. Acrylic sealers (the most common type used on stamped concrete) form a protective film over the surface that highlights colour and texture but tends to wear, yellow, and peel faster in NB conditions — plan on resealing every 1-2 years. Higher-quality polyurethane or polyaspartic sealers last 3-5 years between applications but cost more upfront. A patio that is regularly sealed as recommended will maintain its appearance for decades. A stamped patio that is neglected — no sealing for 4-5 years in NB conditions — will fade, chalk, and begin to show surface scaling that is more visually obvious on a decorative finish than on plain concrete.

What causes early failure in NB stamped concrete. The most common premature failures are: using non-air-entrained concrete (causes surface scaling under freeze-thaw stress), allowing de-icing salts onto an unsealed or under-sealed surface, and poor control joint placement that lets cracking occur across visible panel surfaces rather than along joint lines. A stamped patio with a crack running diagonally through an expensive slate or cobblestone pattern is both costly and difficult to repair invisibly — prevention through proper jointing is essential.

Realistic expectations for NB homeowners. A well-installed and well-maintained stamped concrete patio in Moncton, Fredericton, Dieppe, or Saint John will look excellent for 10-15 years with regular sealing, and remain structurally sound and functional for 30-40 years. Some fading and surface wear is normal over that timeline and is part of what you accept with a decorative finish in a four-season climate. Think of the resealing cost (\$1-\$3 per sq ft every 1-3 years, or a DIY weekend project) as the maintenance budget for what is otherwise a long-lasting outdoor surface.

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What are the most popular stamped concrete patterns in NB?

The most popular stamped concrete patterns in New Brunswick are ashlar slate, cobblestone, and wood plank — all chosen for their classic appearance that complements NB's traditional home styles and holds up well under regular sealing and maintenance.

Ashlar slate is consistently the top-selling pattern in NB and across Atlantic Canada. It creates the look of cut natural stone in an irregular, offset block pattern — similar to what you see in high-end landscaping but at a fraction of the cost. The irregular lines and textured surface hide minor wear and re-sealing touchup areas well, and the pattern works equally well for driveways, patios, and front walkways. It pairs with virtually any NB home style, from traditional Maritime farmhouses to contemporary builds in Moncton's newer subdivisions.

Cobblestone and European fan patterns are popular for driveways and entryway areas, particularly for older homes in heritage neighbourhoods in Fredericton, Saint John, and Bathurst where the stone-and-brick aesthetic fits the architectural character. These patterns create a bold visual statement and photograph beautifully, but the more intricate the pattern, the more critical the stamper's skill and timing are — small alignment errors across a 500 sq ft driveway are noticeable.

Wood plank (board form) patterns have grown significantly in popularity as NB homeowners create outdoor living rooms on their patios. The linear plank pattern creates a deck-like appearance without the maintenance of actual wood or composite decking. It works particularly well for covered patio areas and connects visually to wood or composite trim on the home. The pattern direction should be considered relative to the patio's primary viewing angle for maximum effect.

Flagstone and random stone patterns are popular alternatives for homeowners who want a natural look with less rigid geometry than ashlar slate. Random stone patterns are forgiving to install and maintain, and they translate well at almost any scale.

Brick and running bond patterns remain a steady choice, particularly for front walkways and pool surrounds. They are clean, classic, and pair well with red or grey brick homes — common in Saint John and Fredericton.

Colour matters as much as pattern in the finished appearance. Most NB contractors offer 20-40 integral colour options, plus accent colour options applied during stamping. Earth tones — tans, grays, charcoals, and warm browns — are the most popular in NB because they complement the natural landscape and show less surface wear between sealings. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with stamped concrete contractors who can bring sample boards and colour chips to your consultation.

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Q8

Stamped concrete vs pavers for NB winters — which is better?

Both stamped concrete and pavers can perform well through New Brunswick winters, but they handle the climate differently — and your maintenance commitment, budget, and long-term priorities should guide the choice more than climate performance alone.

Stamped concrete is a monolithic slab with a decorative surface. When properly specified (air-entrained concrete, 25-32 MPa), formed with adequate control joints, and sealed on a regular schedule, it handles NB's 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles without structural failure. Its weakness is the decorative surface — the colour and texture are vulnerable to freeze-thaw scaling if the sealer degrades, and any cracking that does occur is more visually jarring on a decorative pattern than on plain concrete. Resealing every 1-2 years is non-negotiable for maintaining the appearance.

Pavers handle frost heave differently — individual units can move slightly without cracking because they are not bonded together. This flexibility means a heaved paver can often be relevelled without replacement. The tradeoff is that poorly installed paver patios with inadequate base preparation heave unevenly, creating a lumpy, trip-hazard surface over time. Polymeric joint sand, required between pavers to resist weed growth and unit shifting, needs to be replaced periodically as it breaks down. NB's clay-heavy soils in areas like the Saint John River Valley and Moncton's south-end older neighbourhoods are particularly prone to paver heaving when the sub-base is not built deep enough.

Cost comparison. Stamped concrete runs \$12-\$20 per square foot fully installed in NB. Concrete pavers run \$15-\$28 per square foot; natural stone pavers \$22-\$40 per square foot. On a 300 square foot patio, stamped concrete costs \$3,600-\$6,000 versus \$4,500-\$8,400 for concrete pavers. The initial cost difference may be recovered in

lower repairs over time with pavers (easier spot releveling vs. concrete slab repairs), but this assumes quality installation of both.

Snow removal considerations. Stamped concrete is smooth and shovel-friendly, though the decorative texture provides some traction. Pavers have joint gaps that can trap ice, and metal-edged shovels can chip paver corners over years of aggressive snow clearing. Both surfaces require avoiding sharp-edged metal shovels for best long-term appearance.

The honest comparison: Well-installed stamped concrete with consistent sealing maintenance wins on initial cost and provides a seamless high-end appearance. Well-installed pavers win on repairability and forgiveness for gradual soil movement. For NB homeowners who are meticulous about maintenance, stamped concrete is an excellent value. For those who want lower-maintenance or prefer a product where individual sections can be swapped out, pavers are worth the premium.

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Q9

Does stamped concrete crack easily in New Brunswick's climate?

Stamped concrete is no more likely to crack than any other concrete slab — the cracking risk comes from how the slab is designed, specified, and installed, not from the decorative stamping process itself. NB's climate does put additional demands on all concrete, but a properly installed stamped patio can remain crack-free for decades.

Concrete cracks for two main reasons: shrinkage during curing (unavoidable in all concrete) and structural movement from load, frost heave, or settling. Stamping does not weaken the concrete or make it more brittle — the

stamps are pressed into the surface during the finishing window and do not affect the internal structure of the slab. What matters for cracking resistance is the same for stamped concrete as for any flatwork: air-entrained mix, proper reinforcement, adequate base preparation, and well-placed control joints.

Control joints are more critical — and more challenging — in stamped concrete. In plain concrete, control joints are visible saw-cut or tooled lines. In stamped concrete, the joint locations must be planned to align with the pattern — for example, placing a joint along a grout line in a slate pattern so the joint is hidden rather than running across a stamped stone face. An experienced stamped concrete contractor plans the joint grid before pouring, stamps the pattern around the joint locations, and cuts or tools the joints to blend with the design. A contractor who does not plan for this will place joints where they are structurally needed but visually disruptive, or — worse — skip joints to preserve the pattern and allow uncontrolled cracking later.

The freeze-thaw factor. NB's 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles put every exterior concrete slab through stress that concrete in milder climates does not experience. The concrete mix must be air-entrained (4-7% air content) to survive this environment. Stamped concrete without air entrainment will scale at the surface — and on a decorative finish, surface scaling damages the pattern texture and colour in a way that is both visually obvious and difficult to repair invisibly. Never accept a stamped concrete quote that does not specify air-entrained concrete.

If cracking does occur, hairline cracks along control joints are normal and expected — that is the system working as designed. Cracks that run across panel faces, particularly on decorative patterns, are visible and detract from the appearance. They can be repaired with flexible concrete crack filler or coloured sealant, but colour-matching is difficult and the repair is rarely invisible. This is why up-front quality — experienced contractor, proper mix, proper jointing — matters more with stamped concrete than with plain flatwork.

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How do you maintain stamped concrete in New Brunswick?

Maintaining stamped concrete in New Brunswick comes down to one primary task: keeping the sealer in good condition. Everything else — colour retention, texture preservation, surface integrity — follows from that. Plan for an annual inspection and resealing every 1-3 years depending on sealer type and exposure.

Annual inspection in spring. After the final freeze-thaw cycles of NB's winter, examine the stamped surface closely. Look for areas where the sealer has worn thin (the surface looks dull or chalky rather than having the uniform sheen of fresh sealer), any peeling or bubbling of the sealer film, hairline cracks at joint lines or elsewhere, and any surface scaling or colour fading. Catching these early — before another full season of UV exposure and freeze-thaw cycling — lets you address them at low cost.

Resealing schedule. Acrylic sealers (the most common on stamped concrete) typically need reapplication every 1-2 years in NB conditions. The combination of UV exposure in summer, freeze-thaw stress in winter, and physical wear from foot traffic wears acrylic sealers down faster than in milder climates. Polyurethane and polyaspartic sealers are more durable and can last 3-5 years but cost more. To test whether resealing is needed: sprinkle water on the surface — if it beads, the sealer is still working; if it absorbs, it is time to reseal.

Resealing process. Clean the surface thoroughly before applying a new coat of sealer. A light pressure wash removes dirt, mildew, and salt residue. If there is old sealer buildup from multiple applications (the surface looks thick, cloudy, or is peeling), use a chemical sealer stripper before applying a new coat. Applying fresh sealer over failing old sealer creates an adhesion problem and will peel faster. Apply the new sealer with a low-pressure sprayer or roller in cool, dry conditions above 10 degrees Celsius with no rain forecast for 24-48 hours.

Winter care. Avoid using sodium chloride (road salt) on stamped concrete at any time, but especially on a surface where the sealer is worn. Salt accelerates scaling and bleaches colour. Use sand for traction. If you must use a de-icer, calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is the least aggressive option for concrete surfaces. Keep downspouts directed away from the stamped area — salt-laden snowmelt draining across an unsealed section causes rapid colour damage.

Crack and chip repair. Small chips at pattern edges can be filled with a colour-matched concrete caulk or flexible repair compound. Colour matching is imperfect, but a careful repair is far less visible than leaving the chip exposed through another NB winter. For larger repairs or significant cracking, a stamped concrete contractor can assess whether a localized repair is feasible or whether a panel needs to be resurfaced.

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Q11

Can stamped concrete be repaired if it cracks or chips in NB?

Yes, stamped concrete can be repaired in New Brunswick — but the honest reality is that repairs are rarely invisible. The nature of decorative concrete makes colour and texture matching difficult, and NB's climate means repairs must be done with care to hold up through freeze-thaw cycles. Understanding the options helps you set realistic expectations.

Hairline cracks at or near control joints are the most common and most manageable. If the crack runs along a tooled or saw-cut joint line, inject or fill with a flexible polyurethane caulk in a colour that matches the stamped surface grout lines. These joint cracks are essentially the system working as designed — the crack followed the weakened plane — and filling them prevents water infiltration while remaining minimally visible within the existing joint pattern.

Cracks across panel faces (running through the middle of a stamped stone, brick, or plank pattern rather than along a joint) are more problematic visually. Fill with a flexible concrete crack filler or colour-matched epoxy crack filler, then apply a sealer tinted to match the surrounding area. The repair will be visible up close but fades into the overall pattern from a normal viewing distance. In a darker colour scheme (charcoal, slate grey, dark brown), repairs blend more easily than in light tan or beige schemes.

Chipped edges and surface spalling. Small chips at raised edges of stamped patterns — a common point of stress in NB's freeze-thaw environment — can be built up with polymer-modified concrete repair mortars or vinyl concrete patching compound. The trick is colour: standard grey patching compound on a coloured surface is immediately obvious. Tint the patching compound with concrete pigment to match, or work with a stamped concrete contractor who has integral colourants available. After patching, apply sealer over the repaired area to blend sheen.

Major cracking or surface scaling over large areas. If a stamped patio has widespread surface deterioration — scaling across multiple panels, cracks forming a map or grid pattern — a bonded overlay is the most practical repair. A stamped concrete overlay is a polymer-modified cement topping (3/8 to 3/4 inch thick) applied over the existing slab, then stamped and coloured to match or update the original pattern. Cost in NB runs \$8-\$15 per square foot for overlays, compared to \$12-\$20 for full replacement. Overlays require good bonding of the existing slab and proper base conditions — a contractor assessment is needed to confirm suitability.

Frost-related spalling near the surface that reveals aggregate cannot be invisibly repaired — the texture and colour difference is too significant. This situation points to a concrete specification problem (likely non-air-entrained mix) and typically indicates the slab will continue to deteriorate. Overlay or replacement is the path forward. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with experienced stamped concrete contractors who can assess your specific situation.

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Q12

Is stamped concrete slippery in winter in New Brunswick?

Stamped concrete can become slippery when wet or icy, and this is a genuine safety consideration in New Brunswick winters — but the right product choices and finishing decisions can make a stamped surface as safe as plain concrete under winter conditions.

The slip resistance of stamped concrete depends primarily on two factors: the texture depth of the stamp pattern, and the type of sealer applied. Freshly stamped concrete with a deep-texture pattern (cobblestone, slate, or rough stone) naturally has more grip than a fine-texture or smooth pattern. The sealer applied over stamped concrete creates a film on the surface that can be slippery when wet — this is especially true of high-gloss acrylic sealers,

which are popular for enhancing colour but reduce traction significantly when damp.

Add anti-slip additive to the sealer. This is the standard solution and should be specified for any stamped surface in a high-traffic or safety-critical area — front walkways, steps, pool surrounds, and anywhere elderly family members or children regularly walk. Anti-slip additives (polymer grit, aluminum oxide, or sand particles) are mixed into the sealer before application and create a textured surface that maintains traction even when wet. Most NB concrete sealers can accept an anti-slip additive at a modest additional cost — ask your contractor or the sealer manufacturer for the compatible product. The additive slightly reduces the gloss level of the sealer, which some homeowners consider a fair trade-off for safety.

Pattern choice affects safety. Smooth or low-profile stamp patterns — like worn brick or smooth flagstone — have less inherent texture than deep-profile patterns like cobblestone or rough-cut stone. For stamped surfaces in high-use areas during NB winters, specify a deeper-texture stamp pattern and apply sealer with anti-slip additive from the first coat.

Ice management on stamped surfaces. Avoid sodium chloride (rock salt) — it attacks sealer and accelerates scaling on coloured concrete. Use sand for traction, calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) for de-icing, or a calcium chloride-based de-icer sparingly and only on sealed surfaces. A snow blower with a rubber-edged auger is gentler on stamped surfaces than a metal-edged shovel. Keeping the surface well sealed is itself a safety measure — a sealed surface sheds water and ice faster than an unsealed surface, reducing the window of icy conditions after a freezing rain event.

For stamped steps, concrete front porches, and pool decks in Moncton, Fredericton, Riverview, and across NB, the anti-slip sealer approach is considered standard practice by experienced stamped concrete contractors.

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What colours are available for stamped concrete in NB?

Stamped concrete in New Brunswick is available in virtually any colour through integral pigments and surface release agents — in practice, experienced local contractors typically offer 20-50 standard colour options with the ability to custom-blend for specific projects.

Colour in stamped concrete comes from two sources. **Integral colour** is pigment added directly to the ready-mix concrete before the pour, tinting the entire slab body. If a chip or crack occurs, the colour runs through the thickness of the slab rather than just sitting on the surface — this improves the appearance of minor wear and damage. Integral colour runs the full spectrum from light buff and tan through mid-tones of red, brown, slate blue, and charcoal to dark colours including graphite and near-black. Cost adds roughly \$15-\$30 per cubic yard to the ready-mix price.

Release agents (also called powder release or liquid release) are applied to the stamp tools before pressing them into the concrete surface. They prevent the stamps from sticking and leave a complementary accent colour in the recessed grout lines and texture details, creating the two-tone effect that makes stamped concrete look like natural stone or brick. Release agents come in a wide range of colours and are selected to complement or contrast with the base colour. The combination of integral base colour and release accent colour is what gives stamped concrete its realistic multi-tonal appearance.

The most popular colour combinations in NB lean toward earth tones and neutrals that complement the Maritime landscape and the region's traditional home styles. Warm tans with brown or charcoal accents are the consistent bestsellers — they pair well with the stone foundations, wood siding, and brick exteriors common across Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and Bathurst. Cool slate greys and charcoal with lighter grout lines suit contemporary home designs. Warmer terracotta and red-brown combinations work beautifully for front walkways on heritage homes.

Colour fading is a reality in NB conditions. UV exposure over multiple summers and the bleaching effect of salt and freeze-thaw cycling gradually fade surface colour — most noticeably in vibrant reds and blues. Earth tones and grey-based colours are more stable and retain their appearance longer between resealing applications. Keeping the sealer in good condition is the primary way to protect colour — quality sealers include UV inhibitors that slow fading significantly. When your stamped contractor brings colour samples, view them both fresh and also after 2-3 years of typical NB outdoor exposure if possible — asking to see an existing installation from a few years ago is a great way to see long-term colour performance firsthand.

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Q14

How often do I need to reseal stamped concrete in New Brunswick?

Stamped concrete in New Brunswick should be resealed every 1-3 years — on the shorter end for acrylic sealers on high-traffic or exposed surfaces, and on the longer end for premium polyurethane or polyaspartic sealers on protected surfaces.

NB's climate is harder on concrete sealers than most of Canada. The combination of 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles, UV exposure through long summer days, and physical wear from foot traffic, snow clearing, and salt exposure means sealers degrade faster here than in milder regions. A sealer applied in southern Ontario or BC might last 3-5 years — the same sealer on a Moncton or Fredericton patio exposed to full sun and winter conditions may need attention in 1-2 years.

Acrylic sealers are the most common type applied to stamped concrete and the most affordable (\$30-\$60 per gallon, covering 150-300 sq ft per gallon). They provide good colour enhancement and a wet-look sheen, but form a surface film that is vulnerable to NB's freeze-thaw stress. Plan for resealing every 1-2 years. The first sign of acrylic sealer breakdown is a chalky, white haze on the surface, followed by peeling or flaking of the sealer film.

Polyurethane sealers are significantly more durable, with better UV resistance and flexibility through freeze-thaw cycling. They typically last 2-4 years in NB conditions. Higher initial cost (\$60-\$120 per gallon) is offset by less frequent reapplication. Better for high-traffic areas like driveways and front walkways.

Polyaspartic sealers are the premium option — faster cure time (driveable in hours rather than days), excellent UV resistance, and 4-6 year resealing intervals. Cost runs \$120-\$200 per gallon, making professional application the practical route. For a low-maintenance stamped patio where long sealing intervals are the priority, the higher upfront cost pays off over the life of the surface.

How to test whether resealing is needed. Sprinkle a small amount of water on the stamped surface in an inconspicuous area. If the water beads and rolls off, the sealer is still working. If it absorbs into the surface within 30-60 seconds, the sealer is depleted and reapplication is overdue. Conduct this test each spring after the last freeze-thaw cycles of the NB winter.

Before resealing, clean the surface thoroughly with a pressure washer (low pressure — 1,500-2,000 PSI maximum) and a concrete cleaner to remove dirt, mould, and salt residue. Allow the surface to dry completely for 48-72 hours before applying new sealer. If old sealer has built up and is peeling, strip it with a chemical sealer remover before starting fresh — applying new sealer over failing old sealer creates an adhesion failure and a peeling problem within one season. Resealing is a manageable DIY project with the right products and timing.

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Q15

What is exposed aggregate concrete and is it good for NB driveways?

Exposed aggregate concrete is a decorative finish technique where the smooth cement paste surface is washed away to reveal the natural stone aggregate underneath — and yes, it is an excellent choice for New Brunswick driveways, offering durability, traction, and visual appeal that holds up well through NB winters.

The process is straightforward: concrete is poured and levelled normally, then a chemical surface retarder is applied (or the surface is water-washed) to expose the top 3-6 mm of aggregate before the cement paste fully hardens. The result is a textured surface with natural pebble or stone aggregate embedded throughout — the final appearance depends on the aggregate selected. Standard ready-mix aggregate produces a mixed grey-and-brown stone look. Premium exposed aggregate finishes use washed river stone, coloured quartz, or decorative pebbles mixed into the concrete for more vibrant colour and texture. In NB, river stone aggregates in warm browns and

greys are a popular, natural-looking choice.

Why it works well for NB driveways. The textured aggregate surface provides inherently better traction than a smooth broom finish — a meaningful safety benefit in NB winters when driveways are subject to ice and packed snow from November through March. The texture also hides minor surface wear and salt damage that would be visible on a smoother finish, so exposed aggregate driveways tend to look good longer with less maintenance than stamped concrete. The aggregate surface has no film to peel or chip (unlike stamped sealers or epoxy coatings), which is an advantage in NB's freeze-thaw environment.

Specification requirements are the same as any NB driveway. Air-entrained concrete (25-32 MPa, 4-7% air content) is essential. Driveway thickness should be 5-6 inches with rebar or welded wire mesh reinforcement. A compacted 6-inch granular base is required. Control joints should be saw-cut or tooled at 10-12 foot intervals. The same freeze-thaw durability rules that apply to broom-finish concrete apply to exposed aggregate.

Sealing is still recommended. While exposed aggregate is more durable than stamped concrete without sealing, a penetrating silane-siloxane sealer applied every 2-3 years protects the aggregate-paste bond from salt intrusion and freeze-thaw damage. This is especially important in the first 1-2 years after placement when the surface is most vulnerable. An acrylic sealer gives exposed aggregate a wet, enhanced colour look — some homeowners love it, others prefer the natural matte appearance.

Cost in NB. Exposed aggregate driveways run \$10-\$16 per square foot fully installed — more than plain broom finish (\$8-\$15) but less than stamped concrete (\$12-\$20). The premium reflects the additional labour of the surface wash/retarder process and any decorative aggregate upgrades. A typical two-car driveway (400-500 sq ft) runs \$4,000-\$8,000. New Brunswick Concrete can match you with local contractors who specialize in exposed aggregate finishes for a free quote.

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Can you acid stain an existing concrete patio in NB?

Yes, you can acid stain an existing concrete patio in New Brunswick — but the results depend heavily on the condition, age, and history of the concrete. Acid staining is one of the most popular ways to transform a plain grey patio into something with rich, variegated colour, and it works well on sound, clean, uncoated concrete that is at least a few years old.

Acid staining works through a chemical reaction between a metallic salt solution (typically iron, copper, or cobalt compounds in a hydrochloric acid base) and the calcium hydroxide in the concrete. The reaction creates permanent, translucent colour that is essentially part of the concrete itself — it cannot peel or flake the way a coating can. The result is a mottled, marbled appearance unique to each slab, with natural variation based on the concrete's original mix, curing history, and surface texture. No two acid-stained slabs look exactly alike, which many homeowners love.

The critical variable is surface preparation. The concrete must be free of any previous sealers, coatings, paint, oil, grease, tire marks, or curing compounds — all of which will block the acid from reacting with the concrete and create blotchy, uneven results. Old sealers require chemical strippers or mechanical grinding to remove. Areas that have been patched with different concrete or mortar will react differently and show as distinct patches in the finished colour, which can be a design element or an eyesore depending on your expectations.

In New Brunswick's climate, age matters. Concrete that has experienced many years of freeze-thaw cycles may have surface scaling, micro-cracks, or spalling that will show through the stain. **Acid staining does not hide imperfections — it enhances them.** A rough, pitted, or patched surface will look rough, pitted, and patched in a darker colour. The technique works best on smooth, structurally sound, consistently poured concrete.

In terms of timing, plan your acid staining project for the May through September window in NB. The acid-staining process and the subsequent sealer application both require temperatures consistently above 10 degrees Celsius for proper chemical reaction and sealer cure. Patios in Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John that catch afternoon sun can be stained well into early October, but watch nighttime temperatures.

Expect to pay \$4-\$8 per square foot for professional acid staining of an existing patio, including surface prep, staining, neutralising and washing, and a quality penetrating or acrylic sealer topcoat. DIY acid staining is possible but carries real risk — the chemicals are hazardous, the timing is unforgiving, and a botched application is difficult to undo. If your patio is large or prominently visible, professional application is strongly recommended.

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Q17

What is the difference between integral colour and colour hardener for concrete?

Integral colour and colour hardener are two fundamentally different approaches to colouring concrete — integral colour goes through the entire slab while colour hardener is applied only to the surface. Both are widely used in New Brunswick for stamped driveways, patios, and walkways, but they have different costs, appearances, durability profiles, and best-use applications.

Integral colour is pigment added directly to the ready-mix concrete at the batch plant or on-site before placement. The colour is distributed throughout the entire slab depth, typically 4-6 inches. The practical advantage is that chips, cracks, and wear reveal the same colour underneath — so a scratched integral-colour patio still looks intentional. The limitation is that integral colour tends to be more muted and earthy compared to colour hardener, and achieving deep, saturated tones throughout an entire cubic yard of concrete requires significant pigment, which adds cost. In NB, expect to pay \$15-\$40 per cubic yard to add integral colour, depending on the shade and pigment loading.

Colour hardener is a dry-shake product — a blend of Portland cement, fine aggregate, and pigment — broadcast onto the surface of freshly placed concrete and worked in during finishing. Because you are applying concentrated colour directly to the surface, the tones achievable with colour hardener are dramatically more vivid and consistent than integral colour. Colour hardener also densifies and hardens the top surface, improving abrasion resistance — which is why it is the preferred choice for stamped concrete driveways and commercial flatwork. The tradeoff is that the colour layer is only 1/8 to 3/16 of an inch thick. Deep chips or gouges can expose grey concrete beneath.

In New Brunswick's stamped concrete market, most professionals use **both methods together** for premium results — integral colour provides a base tone throughout the slab, and colour hardener delivers the vivid surface colour and surface hardness for stamping. A release agent (either liquid or powder) is then applied before stamping to create two-tone contrast in the pattern recesses, which gives stamped NB patios and driveways their realistic stone or brick appearance.

Cost difference: Colour hardener adds \$1-\$3 per square foot to a stamped concrete project in NB. The combination of integral colour and colour hardener on a 400 sq ft patio might add \$600-\$1,500 to the project cost compared to plain grey concrete, but the visual result is dramatically different and the surface is more durable.

For NB's freeze-thaw conditions, a properly placed colour-hardened surface with a quality penetrating sealer actually performs very well — the densified surface layer resists moisture penetration better than standard concrete. Reapply your sealer every 2-3 years to maintain both colour vibrancy and freeze-thaw protection.

Browse decorative concrete contractors serving Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and across New Brunswick through the New Brunswick Construction Network directory.

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Q18

Is decorative concrete worth the extra cost in New Brunswick?

For most NB homeowners, decorative concrete is worth the premium — provided it is properly installed and maintained. The gap between plain broom-finish concrete and stamped or exposed aggregate concrete is roughly \$4-\$8 per square foot, but that investment pays back in curb appeal, property value, and the fact that a well-maintained decorative concrete surface can last 25-40 years in New Brunswick conditions.

Plain concrete driveways and patios in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John are functional and durable, but grey concrete is not going to win compliments from neighbours or impress buyers when you eventually sell. A stamped concrete patio that mimics flagstone or a slate-pattern driveway is a genuine visual upgrade that photographs well, enhances outdoor living space, and sets a property apart in a competitive real estate market. **In southern NB's housing market, decorative concrete outdoor spaces consistently feature in real estate listings as a selling point.**

The durability question is where NB's climate adds an important caveat. New Brunswick's 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles are relentless on any surface concrete, and decorative concrete is no exception. **The difference between decorative concrete that lasts 30 years and decorative concrete that spalls and fades in 7-10 years comes down to three things: proper mix specification, quality installation, and consistent sealer maintenance.** Any exterior decorative concrete in NB must use air-entrained mix (4-7% air content), proper reinforcement, and correctly spaced control joints. A quality penetrating sealer must be applied before the first winter and reapplied every 2-3 years afterward. Skip the sealer and the freeze-thaw cycles will begin breaking down the surface in 3-5 years.

On the cost side, a typical 400 sq ft stamped concrete patio in NB runs \$5,000-\$8,000 fully installed — versus \$4,000-\$7,000 for premium interlocking stone and \$2,500-\$4,000 for plain concrete. **Stamped concrete has lower long-term maintenance costs than interlocking stone** (no weeds, no resanding, no settling pavers) but requires sealer reapplication that pavers do not. Exposed aggregate is a middle ground — more durable surface texture than stamped, lower maintenance, excellent traction in NB winter conditions, and costs \$10-\$16 per square foot versus \$12-\$20 for stamped.

The answer also depends on how you use the space. A decorative concrete patio on a south-facing yard in Riverview or Dieppe where you entertain regularly is almost certainly worth it. A utilitarian side-yard slab for garbage bins or a utility shed pad probably is not.

Get matched with local decorative concrete contractors through New Brunswick Concrete for competitive quotes on your specific project — the price spread between contractors for the same decorative concrete scope in NB can be 30-40%, so getting three quotes is especially valuable.

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Is a stamped concrete driveway practical in Moncton NB winters?

Yes, a stamped concrete driveway is practical in Moncton — but it requires specific mix specifications, proper sealing, and modified winter maintenance habits to remain looking good over the long term. Done right, a stamped concrete driveway in Moncton can last 20 to 30+ years. Done wrong, it will show significant wear within 5 to 7 seasons.

The key is understanding what makes stamped concrete more vulnerable than plain broom-finish concrete. The texture of a stamped pattern creates many small ridges, valleys, and edges — far more surface area than a smooth or lightly textured finish. All of that extra surface area is exposed to Moncton's 150+ freeze-thaw cycles per year. Water sits in the low points of the texture, freezes, and expands. If the concrete was not properly air-entrained (4 to 7% air content) and if it is not sealed and maintained, those texture details begin to chip and erode faster than they would on a flat surface.

The sealer question is especially critical for stamped concrete in Moncton. The acrylic or polyurethane sealer on stamped concrete does two jobs: it protects the surface from moisture and freeze-thaw cycling, and it enhances the colour and visual depth of the stamped pattern. In NB's climate, that sealer degrades faster than in milder regions. An unsealed stamped driveway in Moncton will show significant colour fade and surface wear within 3 to 4 years. A properly sealed and re-sealed surface maintains its appearance and protection. Plan to reseal every 2 to 3 years — or every year if the driveway sees heavy vehicle traffic.

Winter maintenance changes are the other major consideration. You cannot use standard road salt (sodium chloride) on a stamped concrete driveway — ever. Salt accelerates the deterioration of the sealer, penetrates into the concrete, and creates additional freeze-thaw cycles at the surface. Use sand for traction. If you need a de-icing chemical, use sand-and-salt blend sparingly once the concrete is at least one year old and freshly sealed, or better yet use calcium magnesium acetate. This is a real lifestyle change for Moncton homeowners used to dumping ice melt on their driveways in January.

Budget-wise, expect to pay \$14 to \$22 per square foot for a stamped concrete driveway in Moncton — substantially more than the \$8 to \$15 for plain concrete. The extra cost covers the labour for stamping (which must be done within a precise timing window), the colour hardener or integral pigment, release agent, and the initial sealer application. A 500 square foot two-car driveway runs \$7,000 to \$11,000 stamped, versus \$4,000 to \$7,500 plain.

For a curb-appeal upgrade that adds visual interest to your Moncton home, a stamped concrete driveway is a worthwhile investment when specified and installed correctly. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with experienced stamped concrete contractors in the Moncton area.

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Q20

What is the best decorative concrete finish for a front porch in NB?

For a front porch in New Brunswick, the most durable decorative concrete finishes are exposed aggregate and textured broom or brush finishes — both provide slip resistance, stand up well to freeze-thaw cycling, and require less intensive maintenance than stamped concrete in NB's climate. Stamped concrete is beautiful but demands more upkeep, which is why many NB homeowners and contractors recommend exposed aggregate for porches specifically.

Exposed aggregate is achieved by seeding decorative stone into the surface of freshly poured concrete and then washing away the surface paste to reveal the stone. The aggregate choices available in NB include natural river pebbles, crushed granite, and various coloured stones that can complement your home's exterior. The result is a naturally textured, slip-resistant surface that looks attractive year-round. Exposed aggregate hides surface wear well as it ages — minor weathering actually enhances the stone-in-concrete look rather than detracting from it. It costs \$10 to \$16 per square foot for a porch application.

Stamped concrete for a porch offers the most dramatic visual impact — patterns like flagstone, slate, cobblestone, or tile can transform the appearance of a plain concrete porch into something that looks custom-built. The trade-off in NB is maintenance: the sealer must be refreshed every 1 to 2 years on a porch that faces the elements, and the stamped texture requires more care in winter. A porch that is under a covered overhang is a better candidate for stamped concrete than a fully exposed one. Expect \$14 to \$22 per square foot.

Troweled concrete with integral colour is an underrated option for NB porches. A smooth steel-troweled finish with integral colour pigment (added directly to the mix) gives you consistent colour throughout the slab — so

scratches and chips do not expose grey concrete beneath. The smooth finish is easier to clean, and integral colour is more durable than colour hardener applied to the surface. Add a broom or broomed-slate texture for slip resistance. This runs \$12 to \$18 per square foot.

Whatever finish you choose, two things are non-negotiable for an NB porch. First, the concrete mix must be air-entrained (4 to 7% air content) at 32 MPa minimum — porches see direct weather, road salt splash, and snow shovelling. Second, proper drainage slope (minimum 1/8 inch per foot away from the house) must be designed into the porch from the start — water pooling on a porch surface accelerates deterioration of any finish.

For front porches in exposed locations in Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John, exposed aggregate tends to deliver the best combination of durability, low maintenance, and visual appeal over the 20 to 30 year life of the slab. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with decorative concrete specialists who can show you samples and discuss what works best for your specific home.

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Q21

Can you stamp existing concrete in New Brunswick?

Stamping existing concrete is not possible — stamped concrete requires freshly poured concrete that is at the precise consistency to accept a stamp impression. Once concrete has hardened, no stamping process will create the deep, clean impressions of true stamped concrete. What you can do with existing concrete is apply a stamped overlay — a thin cement-based or micro-topping product that is stamped as it is applied — but this comes with significant caveats for NB's climate.

A **stamped concrete overlay** (sometimes called a micro-stamp or decorative overlay) involves applying a 1/8 to 3/8 inch thick polymer-modified cement topping to the prepared existing slab, then stamping it while it is in its plastic state. The result looks similar to true stamped concrete, at a fraction of the excavation and concrete cost. Labour and materials typically run \$6 to \$12 per square foot for an overlay, versus \$14 to \$22 per square foot for a full stamped concrete replacement.

Here is the honest NB assessment of overlays: **they are a significantly higher-risk investment in New Brunswick than in milder climates.** Overlays are thin — sometimes as little as 3 to 4 mm. In NB's 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles, the bond between the overlay and the existing substrate is constantly stressed. If there is any moisture beneath the overlay (water migrating up through the slab, which is common in older NB slabs without proper vapour barriers), it will freeze, expand, and delaminate the overlay from below. Even perfectly applied overlays on structurally sound, dry concrete in NB tend to have shorter lifespans than those in warmer Canadian cities.

Overlays only make sense on existing concrete that is:

- Structurally sound (no heaving, settling, full-depth cracks, or movement)
- Dry — no moisture transmission through the slab
- Firmly bonded with no delaminated sections (test by dragging a chain — hollow sounds indicate delamination)
- Clean and free from oil, paint, or sealers that would prevent bonding

If your existing concrete fails any of these criteria, an overlay will not last. An existing driveway or patio that has widespread cracking, surface spalling, or freeze-thaw damage is not a good candidate for overlay — you are applying a cosmetic product over a structurally failing substrate.

For most NB homeowners who want the stamped concrete look on a surface that is aging but functionally sound, a full replacement with proper stamped concrete is a better 20+ year investment than an overlay that may need replacement in 5 to 10 years. Get a professional assessment to determine whether your existing concrete is a realistic overlay candidate.

New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with decorative concrete specialists in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and beyond who offer both overlays and full stamped concrete installations.

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How do I choose between stamped concrete and exposed aggregate in NB?

For most New Brunswick homeowners choosing between these two decorative concrete options, **exposed aggregate edges out stamped concrete on durability and maintenance requirements in our climate — but stamped concrete wins decisively on visual impact and design flexibility.** The right choice depends on how you weigh those factors, where the concrete is located, and how much time you want to spend on maintenance.

Durability in NB conditions favours exposed aggregate. The finish on exposed aggregate is created by removing the surface paste to reveal stone — there is no sealer required to maintain the visual appearance of the stone itself, and the stone does not fade or peel. The texture is inherent to the slab, not a surface coating. Compare this to stamped concrete, where the colour (applied as hardener or through integral pigment) and the sealer that enhances it are surface-dependent. In NB's 150+ annual freeze-thaw cycles, an exposed aggregate surface weathers gracefully. A stamped surface requires proactive sealer maintenance to look good over time.

Maintenance requirements are significantly lower for exposed aggregate. The stone surface does not need annual or biennial sealing to maintain its functional performance — though a penetrating silane/siloxane sealer every 3 to 4 years still benefits exposed aggregate by reducing water absorption. Stamped concrete must be resealed every 1 to 2 years in NB conditions, especially in high-traffic or weather-exposed locations. If you are the type of homeowner who will keep up with maintenance on a schedule, stamped concrete is perfectly viable. If you want to pour it and largely forget it, exposed aggregate is the more forgiving choice.

Winter maintenance favours exposed aggregate. Both surfaces should avoid sodium chloride de-icing salt. But the exposed aggregate texture is rougher and provides better natural traction in winter. The acrylic sealer on stamped concrete can become slippery when wet or icy, which is a safety concern for front steps, porches, and driveways with a slope.

Visual impact and design flexibility strongly favours stamped concrete. You can choose from dozens of patterns (flagstone, cobblestone, slate, wood plank, ashlar), multiple colour combinations, and add borders and accent bands. The customization possibilities are essentially unlimited. Exposed aggregate is more limited — your choices are primarily the aggregate colour and size — but it has a timeless, natural quality that ages beautifully.

Cost is similar — exposed aggregate runs \$10 to \$16 per square foot installed, versus \$14 to \$22 for stamped concrete. The price gap reflects the additional labour for stamping, the colour hardener or integral pigment cost, release agent, and sealer.

For driveways and patios in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and elsewhere in NB, either option can look excellent for decades when properly installed. The deciding factor for most NB homeowners is maintenance

commitment versus aesthetic ambition. New Brunswick Concrete can connect you with decorative concrete contractors who can show you real local examples of both finishes.

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Q23

What are the pros and cons of coloured concrete in New Brunswick?

Coloured concrete adds significant visual appeal to NB driveways, patios, steps, and porches — but colour in an NB climate comes with maintenance realities that homeowners should understand before committing to it. Both integral colour (pigment added to the mix) and surface-applied colour hardener are viable options, and they behave quite differently over time.

Integral colour — pigment added directly to the concrete mix — is the more durable option for NB. Because the colour goes through the full depth of the slab, chips and surface wear expose the same colour rather than grey concrete beneath. The pigment is iron oxide-based, which is highly stable and UV-resistant. Integral colour costs \$3 to \$6 per square foot additional over a standard finish and is available in a practical range of earth tones (tans, buffs, terracotta, browns, grey-blues). True bright colours (fire engine red, bright yellow) are difficult to achieve with concrete and tend to fade significantly. Stay with earth tones and you will be much happier with how integral colour ages in NB.

Colour hardener is a dry shake powder broadcast onto the surface of freshly poured concrete and worked into the top 1/8 to 1/4 inch. It produces more vibrant, consistent colour than integral pigment and is the standard for stamped concrete. The trade-off is that it is a surface treatment — scratches, chips, and wear will expose the grey concrete beneath. In NB, shovelling snow, sand spread for traction, and vehicle traffic all contribute to surface

abrasion that will eventually show through colour hardener without a maintained sealer.

Fading is the most common complaint with coloured concrete in NB. UV exposure fades surface colour over time, especially south and west-facing surfaces that get maximum sun. Salt contact accelerates colour leaching. An acrylic or polyurethane sealer (reapplied every 1 to 2 years in NB conditions) dramatically slows fading and maintains the vibrancy of the colour. Unsealed coloured concrete in NB will look noticeably faded within 3 to 5 years.

Pros of coloured concrete in NB:

- Enhances curb appeal significantly
- Complements home exterior, landscaping, and stone features
- Can distinguish your driveway, patio, or walkway from typical grey concrete
- Integral colour adds no maintenance beyond standard sealing
- Increases perceived property value

Cons of coloured concrete in NB:

- Requires sealer maintenance to maintain appearance
- Surface-applied colour hardener is susceptible to wear
- Colour is difficult to match exactly for future patch repairs
- Bright or saturated colours fade significantly in NB's UV and freeze-thaw conditions
- Adds \$3 to \$8 per square foot to project cost

For an NB home, earth tones with integral colour plus a quality siloxane or polyurethane sealer is the formula for coloured concrete that holds up well and ages gracefully. Talk to a decorative concrete contractor in your area — New Brunswick Concrete can make that connection for free.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- C&A Masonry Inc.
- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations
- Happy Home Enterprises Inc
- alka masonry

[View all contractors ?](#)

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by New Brunswick Concrete. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any concrete project. Information is current as of April 19, 2026 and may change. Visit newbrunswickconcrete.com for the latest answers.