

NEW BRUNSWICK KITCHENS

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# General Kitchen Questions

General kitchen renovation questions, trends, and  
advice for NB homeowners

19 Expert Answers from Kitchen IQ

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## What should I know about hiring a kitchen renovation contractor in Sussex or Woodstock NB vs a larger city?

**Hiring a kitchen renovation contractor in smaller NB communities like Sussex or Woodstock involves longer lead times, fewer contractor options, and potentially higher travel costs, but you'll often get more personalized service and competitive pricing once you find the right renovator.**

The contractor pool in Sussex and Woodstock is significantly smaller than in Moncton, Saint John, or Fredericton. You might find 3-5 kitchen specialists versus 20+ in larger cities. This means **booking 2-3 months earlier** than you would in urban areas, especially for spring and summer projects. Many homeowners in these communities end up hiring contractors from larger centers who travel out for projects.

**Travel and logistics** add complexity to rural kitchen renovations. Contractors from Fredericton (45 minutes from Woodstock) or Moncton (1 hour from Sussex) typically charge travel time and may require minimum project sizes (\$25,000+) to justify the drive. Material deliveries also take longer — cabinet installers might batch multiple jobs in your area, and countertop fabricators often schedule templates and installations on specific "route days" for smaller communities.

The **permit process differs significantly** between these locations. Sussex falls under Kings County RSC, while Woodstock has its own municipal building department. RSC areas typically take 2-4 weeks longer for permit approval and inspections compared to municipal systems. Plan accordingly if your renovation involves electrical panel upgrades (common in older rural homes) or structural changes requiring engineered drawings.

**Electrical infrastructure** in rural NB homes often needs more extensive upgrades. Many Sussex and Woodstock area homes still have 60-amp panels, knob-and-tube wiring, or inadequate grounding — issues less common in newer suburban developments. Budget an extra \$2,000-\$5,000 for electrical upgrades that urban kitchens might not need.

**Material access and pricing** can work in your favor. Local lumber yards in Sussex and Woodstock often provide more personalized service and competitive pricing on basic materials. However, specialty items like custom cabinet hardware, high-end tile, or unique appliances require ordering from larger centers with longer lead times.

**Quality of work** in smaller communities often exceeds urban standards. Rural contractors typically have established reputations they protect carefully, and word-of-mouth referrals matter more. You're also more likely to work directly with the business owner rather than project managers or subcontractors.

**Seasonal considerations** are more pronounced in rural areas. Winter renovations (November-March) offer better contractor availability and 10-15% lower pricing, but material deliveries become more challenging during storms.

Rural contractors also tend to book solid from May through October with outdoor projects, making kitchen work harder to schedule.

**Get at least three quotes** even in smaller markets — pricing can vary 30-40% between local contractors and those traveling from larger centers. Ask specifically about travel charges, minimum project requirements, and whether they'll handle permit applications for RSC areas (some contractors avoid the extra paperwork).

**Verify insurance and WorkSafeNB coverage** especially carefully with rural contractors, as some smaller operators may not carry adequate coverage. The New Brunswick Construction Network can help you find properly licensed kitchen renovators who service Sussex, Woodstock, and surrounding rural areas with verified credentials and local references.

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Q2

## How should I expect my kitchen renovation contractor in Moncton or Fredericton to communicate progress, delays, and decisions throughout the project?

**Professional kitchen renovation contractors in Moncton and Fredericton should provide regular updates, transparent communication about delays, and involve you in key decisions throughout your project.** Clear communication expectations should be established upfront in your contract to avoid frustration and ensure your renovation stays on track.

**Weekly Progress Updates** are standard practice among reputable NB contractors. Expect a scheduled check-in every week (often Friday afternoons) covering what was completed, what's planned for the following week, and any issues that arose. Many contractors now send photo updates via text or email showing daily progress, which is especially valuable if you're not home during work hours. This is particularly important in Moncton and Fredericton where many homeowners commute to work and aren't present during renovation hours.

**Delay Communication** should happen immediately when contractors become aware of issues. Common delays in NB kitchen renovations include discovering knob-and-tube wiring that needs upgrading, finding asbestos floor tiles in older homes, or countertop fabrication delays during busy summer months. Your contractor should explain the cause, provide a realistic timeline for resolution, and discuss any budget implications before proceeding. In Maritime Canada's older housing stock, delays for electrical panel upgrades or plumbing surprises are common—good contractors build buffer time into schedules and communicate proactively.

**Decision Points** require your input and shouldn't be made without consultation. These include cabinet hardware placement, outlet locations, tile layout patterns, paint colors, and handling unexpected structural issues. Professional contractors will present options with cost implications and give you reasonable time to decide—typically 24-48 hours for minor choices, up to a week for major changes affecting budget or timeline.

**Documentation Standards** matter for both parties. Request that change orders, material selections, and timeline adjustments be confirmed in writing via email or text. This protects you if disputes arise and helps track budget changes. Many Moncton and Fredericton contractors now use project management apps that allow real-time communication and photo sharing.

**Response Time Expectations** should be reasonable. Contractors should respond to non-urgent questions within 24 hours and urgent issues (water leaks, electrical problems) within 2-4 hours. Remember that during peak renovation season (May through October), contractors are managing multiple projects simultaneously.

**Red Flags** include contractors who disappear for days without communication, make major decisions without consulting you, or consistently provide vague timelines. In NB's tight-knit construction community, reputation matters—contractors who communicate poorly don't stay in business long.

**Establish Communication Preferences** upfront. Some homeowners prefer daily text updates, others want weekly email summaries. Discuss your preferred communication method, frequency, and best times to reach you. Many contractors appreciate homeowners who are responsive to questions, as delays often occur when decisions are needed but homeowners are unavailable.

**Seasonal Considerations** affect communication patterns in New Brunswick. During winter renovations, contractors may have more time for detailed updates, while summer projects often move faster with shorter check-ins. Weather delays are common—expect honest communication about how Maritime storms or extreme cold might affect material deliveries or work schedules.

Need help finding a kitchen renovator who prioritizes clear communication? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with contractors known for professional project management and transparent updates throughout your renovation.

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## What warranty and callback protections should I expect from a kitchen renovation contractor in New Brunswick after the job is complete?

**Reputable kitchen renovation contractors in New Brunswick should provide a minimum 1-year warranty on workmanship, with material warranties varying by component — and they should respond to legitimate callback issues within 48-72 hours during the warranty period.**

Most established NB kitchen contractors offer comprehensive warranty packages that separate workmanship from materials. **Workmanship warranties** typically cover installation errors, poor craftsmanship, and structural issues for 12-24 months. This includes cabinet installation problems (doors not closing properly, drawers binding), countertop seams separating, tile work failing, or plumbing connections leaking. **Material warranties** are manufacturer-backed and vary significantly — cabinet hardware might have 5-10 year coverage, while quartz countertops often carry 10-15 year warranties against defects.

**Electrical and plumbing work** in New Brunswick requires additional considerations. Licensed electricians must warranty their work for a minimum of one year under provincial regulations, and this includes all kitchen electrical upgrades, new circuits, and outlet installations. Similarly, licensed plumbers warranty their connections and rough-in work. However, these trades often subcontract to kitchen renovators, so ensure your contract clearly states who handles electrical and plumbing callbacks — the general contractor or the individual trades.

**Seasonal factors** significantly impact warranty response in New Brunswick. During peak renovation season (May through October), contractors may take 3-5 days to respond to non-emergency callbacks as they're managing multiple active projects. Winter callbacks often get faster attention since contractors have lighter schedules.

**Emergency issues** like major water leaks or electrical problems should receive same-day response regardless of season — this should be explicitly stated in your contract.

**What should be covered** in a comprehensive NB kitchen warranty includes cabinet door adjustments (common as wood settles in our humidity swings), countertop re-sealing if needed, grout touch-ups, hardware tightening, and minor electrical adjustments. Contractors should also address issues caused by normal settling in older NB homes — cabinet doors going out of alignment as the house shifts slightly is common and should be covered.

**Red flags to avoid** include contractors offering no written warranty, warranties shorter than 12 months on workmanship, or vague language about what's covered. Be especially wary of contractors who won't commit to callback response times or who exclude "normal wear and tear" without defining what that means. In New Brunswick's climate, some material movement is normal — solid wood cabinet doors may need seasonal adjustments, and this should be covered, not considered wear and tear.

**Get everything in writing** before work begins. Your contract should specify warranty duration, what's covered versus excluded, response timeframes for different types of issues, and the process for requesting warranty service. Many NB contractors provide a warranty certificate at project completion that summarizes coverage and includes emergency contact information.

**Protect yourself** by documenting the completed work with photos, keeping all material receipts and warranty cards, and maintaining a relationship with your contractor through occasional check-ins during the first year. Contractors who stand behind their work appreciate clients who communicate issues promptly rather than letting small problems become major ones.

Need help finding a kitchen renovator who offers comprehensive warranty protection? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with contractors who guarantee their workmanship and maintain strong callback service records.

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## How do I evaluate contractor reviews and references before hiring for a kitchen renovation in Miramichi or Bathurst NB?

**Checking contractor reviews and references is critical in smaller NB markets like Miramichi and Bathurst, where word-of-mouth reputation carries significant weight and your options may be more limited than in larger centers like Moncton or Fredericton.**

In these communities, start by asking for **at least three recent references** from projects completed within the last two years. Kitchen renovations are complex, so you want references specifically from kitchen work, not just general carpentry or bathroom projects. When calling references, ask detailed questions: Were they on time and on budget? How did they handle unexpected issues like outdated wiring or plumbing? Did they clean up daily? Would you hire them again?

**Online reviews require extra scrutiny in smaller markets.** Google Reviews and Facebook are your best bets for authentic feedback in Miramichi and Bathurst, as these platforms verify real accounts better than anonymous review sites. Look for patterns in reviews rather than focusing on individual complaints. Multiple mentions of the same issue (poor cleanup, cost overruns, communication problems) are red flags. Be wary of contractors with only 5-star reviews or very few reviews total — legitimate businesses accumulate some 4-star reviews over time.

**Local verification is particularly valuable in NB's smaller communities.** Check with your municipality's building department to see if the contractor pulls permits properly and passes inspections consistently. In Bathurst, contact the Regional Service Commission for rural areas. Ask at local building supply stores like Home Hardware or Kent — staff often know which contractors pay bills on time and maintain good relationships with suppliers.

**Essential credentials to verify include WorkSafeNB coverage** (critical if someone gets injured on your property), general liability insurance (minimum \$2 million), and any relevant trade certifications for electrical or plumbing work. In smaller markets, some contractors wear multiple hats, but they still need proper licensing for specialized trades. Don't accept "my buddy does the electrical" — all electrical work requires a licensed electrician and municipal inspection in New Brunswick.

**Drive by recent projects if possible.** In communities like Miramichi and Bathurst, contractors often work in the same neighborhoods repeatedly. Ask to see completed kitchens from the outside, or request photos of recent work. Quality contractors are proud to show their craftsmanship and often have strong relationships with past clients who don't mind a quick reference call.

**Red flags specific to smaller NB markets** include contractors who only accept cash, can't provide local references, or pressure you to sign immediately. Legitimate contractors understand that homeowners need time to

check references and compare quotes. Be especially cautious of door-to-door contractors or those offering deals that seem too good to be true — kitchen renovations in NB typically run \$25,000-\$45,000 for mid-range projects, and quality work costs what it costs.

**Get everything in writing** including timeline, materials specifications, and payment schedule. Never pay large amounts upfront — reputable contractors typically ask for 10-20% down, with progress payments tied to completion milestones. The final payment should be withheld until you're completely satisfied with the work.

Need help finding a kitchen renovator with verified credentials? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with pre-screened contractors in the Miramichi and Bathurst areas who carry proper insurance and have strong local references.

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Q5

## What kitchen renovations add the most value to NB homes?

**A mid-range kitchen renovation in New Brunswick typically returns 60-80% of its cost at resale, with cabinet refacing, countertop upgrades, and modern appliances delivering the strongest return on investment per dollar spent.** The key is matching your renovation scope to your neighbourhood's price ceiling — over-improving beyond what comparable homes sell for is the fastest way to lose money on a kitchen reno.

The renovations that add the most value in NB's market are, in order of return: **countertop upgrades** from laminate to quartz (\$60-\$120 per square foot installed) signal a modern kitchen immediately and appeal to virtually every buyer. **Cabinet refacing or painting** (\$5,000-\$12,000) transforms the look for a fraction of full replacement cost and delivers excellent ROI. **Updated appliances** in stainless steel, particularly an upgraded range and a quiet dishwasher, make a strong impression at moderate cost (\$4,000-\$8,000 for a mid-range package). **New flooring**, especially luxury vinyl plank at \$2,000-\$4,000, is waterproof and modern-looking. Finally, a **tile backsplash** (\$1,000-\$3,000 for ceramic or subway tile) polishes the overall look with minimal investment.

A full gut renovation costing \$75,000 to \$100,000 rarely makes sense purely for resale value in most New Brunswick markets. In Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, where median home prices range from approximately \$275,000 to \$375,000, a \$50,000+ kitchen renovation may push your home's total cost beyond neighbourhood comparables. The sweet spot for a value-adding kitchen renovation in NB is typically \$15,000 to \$35,000 — enough to modernize the space without over-investing.

## Smart Upgrades That Buyers Notice

Beyond materials, certain functional improvements punch above their weight. **Improving the kitchen layout** by adding a small island or peninsula creates work space and social space that NB buyers increasingly expect.

**Upgrading the electrical panel** from 60-amp to 100 or 200-amp (\$1,500-\$4,000) removes a red flag that home inspectors will call out on older NB homes. **Adding proper range hood ventilation** that vents outside rather than recirculating is both a code-smart and value-adding improvement, especially important in NB's humid climate where indoor moisture control matters.

What does not add proportional value: ultra-premium finishes like marble countertops, professional-grade appliances, or fully custom cabinetry in a neighbourhood of modest homes. NB buyers appreciate quality but are price-conscious — a well-executed mid-range renovation consistently outperforms a luxury renovation in terms of percentage return.

Timing matters too. If you are renovating specifically to sell, plan your renovation for late winter or early spring, list the home in May or June when NB's real estate market is most active, and ensure the kitchen photographs beautifully with natural light. Getting three or more quotes from local kitchen renovators ensures you are not overpaying, and NB pricing varies 30-40% between contractors for the same scope of work.

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Q6

## Is a kitchen renovation worth it before selling my NB home?

**A strategic kitchen renovation before selling is often worth it in New Brunswick, but only if you keep the scope targeted — a \$10,000 to \$25,000 cosmetic-to-mid-range update typically returns 60-80% of its cost while helping your home sell faster, whereas a \$50,000+ gut renovation rarely pays for itself at resale.** The real value often lies not in dollar-for-dollar return, but in making your home competitive with updated listings in your price range.

In New Brunswick's housing market, kitchens are one of the first rooms buyers evaluate. A dated kitchen with worn laminate countertops, oak cabinets from the 1990s, and mismatched appliances can cause buyers to mentally subtract \$20,000-\$40,000 from their offer — often more than the cost of a targeted renovation. The most cost-effective pre-sale kitchen updates include painting or refacing existing cabinets (\$5,000-\$12,000), replacing laminate countertops with quartz (\$60-\$120 per square foot), installing new LVP flooring (\$2,000-\$4,000), adding a tile backsplash (\$1,000-\$2,500), and updating to matching stainless steel appliances (\$4,000-\$8,000). These changes can transform a kitchen's appearance for \$15,000-\$25,000 total.

The question of whether to renovate depends heavily on your local market. In **Moncton**, where housing demand has been strong and inventory is relatively tight, even modest kitchen updates help homes sell quickly. In **Saint John**, where the market is more price-sensitive, over-renovating carries more risk — keep it to cosmetic updates. In **Fredericton**, with its mix of older stock and newer subdivisions, matching the finish level of competing listings in your neighbourhood is key.

## **When NOT to Renovate Before Selling**

Skip the renovation if your home is already priced at the bottom of your neighbourhood, if comparable homes are selling quickly without updated kitchens, or if the rest of the house needs significant work (roof, foundation, windows). Renovating the kitchen in a home with a failing roof sends the wrong message. Also avoid renovating if you cannot complete the work at least 4 to 6 weeks before listing — a rushed renovation with visible shortcuts hurts more than a dated-but-clean original kitchen.

If a full renovation is not in the budget, even small updates make a difference. New cabinet hardware (\$100-\$300), a fresh coat of paint on walls and cabinets (\$500-\$1,500 DIY), new light fixtures (\$200-\$500), and a deep professional cleaning can freshen a kitchen for under \$2,000. Many NB real estate agents say these small touch-ups have an outsized impact on first impressions.

Before committing to a pre-sale renovation, consult with a local real estate agent who knows your specific neighbourhood. They can advise whether the investment will translate to a higher sale price or faster sale. Then get three quotes from kitchen renovation contractors to understand actual costs — NB pricing varies 30-40% between contractors for the same work.

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## What kitchen renovation trends are popular in New Brunswick for 2026?

The biggest kitchen renovation trends in New Brunswick for 2026 include two-tone cabinetry, quartz countertops with subtle veining, large-format tile backsplashes, integrated smart appliances, and warm transitional styles that blend modern functionality with the character of NB's older housing stock. New Brunswick homeowners are leaning toward timeless designs with modern conveniences rather than chasing ultra-trendy looks that may feel dated in five years.

**Two-tone cabinets** continue to dominate, with a darker or bolder colour on the lower cabinets (navy, forest green, or charcoal) paired with white or light upper cabinets. This look adds visual depth without the heaviness of all-dark cabinetry, and it works particularly well in NB kitchens that may not have abundant natural light during the shorter winter days. For the NB climate, the smartest cabinet choice remains MDF-core with a high-quality painted finish — it handles the swing between summer humidity and dry forced-air heated winters far better than thermofoil, which continues to delaminate in NB homes after 5-10 years.

**Quartz countertops** remain the most popular surface material in NB for 2026, particularly styles that mimic the look of natural marble with soft grey or gold veining on a white base. At \$60-\$120 per square foot installed, quartz offers the aesthetic of marble without the maintenance concerns — no sealing needed, non-porous surface that resists NB's humidity, and excellent durability. Matte and honed finishes are gaining ground over traditional polished surfaces.

### Design and Layout Trends

**Large-format backsplash tiles** (12x24 or larger) in matte finishes are replacing the classic 3x6 subway tile, creating a cleaner look with fewer grout lines to maintain. Natural stone-look porcelain and textured ceramic in neutral tones are especially popular in the Moncton and Fredericton markets.

**Open shelving mixed with closed cabinetry** appeals to NB homeowners who want to display items while maintaining practical storage. However, experienced renovators in NB caution against going fully open — dust accumulates quickly, and the humid summer air can affect displayed items. A few open shelf sections combined with ample closed storage is the practical approach.

**Kitchen islands** remain the most requested feature in NB kitchen renovations, even in smaller kitchens. Homeowners are opting for islands with waterfall-edge countertops, integrated storage, and seating for 2-3 people. For NB homes with smaller footprints, a moveable butcher block island or a peninsula offers similar functionality.

**Smart appliances and technology** are gaining traction, including induction cooktops (faster, safer, and more energy-efficient), built-in charging stations, and under-cabinet LED lighting with dimming controls. Induction ranges

are particularly well-suited to NB's climate because they produce less ambient heat and moisture than gas cooking, helping manage indoor humidity.

Finally, **warm metals** (brushed gold, matte brass, and copper tones) are replacing cool chrome and brushed nickel for hardware, faucets, and light fixtures. This shift toward warmth reflects a broader NB preference for kitchens that feel inviting and comfortable — especially important in a province where kitchens are the heart of the home during long winters.

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Q8

## How does a kitchen renovation affect home insurance in NB?

**A kitchen renovation can affect your New Brunswick home insurance in several ways — your dwelling coverage limit may need to increase to reflect the higher replacement cost, and unpermitted work could give your insurer grounds to deny a future claim.** It is essential to notify your insurance provider before or during a major kitchen renovation to keep your coverage valid.

The most immediate impact is on your **dwelling replacement cost**. If you invest \$25,000 to \$75,000 in a kitchen renovation with new custom cabinets, quartz countertops, and upgraded appliances, the cost to rebuild your home in the event of a fire or total loss has increased accordingly. If your policy still reflects pre-renovation replacement values, you could be underinsured. Contact your insurer to update your dwelling coverage — the premium increase for a mid-range kitchen renovation is typically modest, often \$50 to \$150 per year, but the protection is critical.

**Permits and code compliance** directly affect your insurance standing. In New Brunswick, electrical changes, plumbing modifications, and structural work all require permits and inspections. If you renovate without proper permits and a claim later arises from that work — an electrical fire from improperly wired circuits, water damage from faulty plumbing — your insurer may deny the claim entirely or reduce your payout. This is especially relevant in older NB homes where kitchen renovations often uncover knob-and-tube wiring, galvanized plumbing, or

undersized 60-amp electrical panels that need upgrading. Get permits for all work that requires them, keep copies of inspection approvals, and store them with your insurance documents.

## During the Renovation

Your home faces elevated risk during active construction. Exposed wiring, disconnected plumbing, construction debris, and workers coming and going all increase the likelihood of damage or injury. Most NB homeowner insurance policies continue to cover your home during renovations, but some have exclusions for homes that are unoccupied during construction or for damage directly caused by renovation work. Review your policy before demolition begins, and inform your insurer about the scope and timeline of the project.

Make sure your contractor carries their own **liability insurance and WorkSafeNB coverage**. If an uninsured worker is injured in your home, you could be liable. Ask for proof of insurance before work begins — reputable NB kitchen renovation contractors will provide this without hesitation. Your insurer may also want to know who is performing the work and whether they are properly licensed and insured.

After the renovation is complete, **document everything** with photographs and keep receipts for materials, appliances, and labour. This documentation speeds up any future claim and ensures you receive full replacement value. Update your home inventory list to include new appliances, fixtures, and finishes with their purchase prices.

One positive effect: a well-renovated kitchen with updated electrical, modern appliances, and proper ventilation can actually reduce certain risk factors that insurers consider, particularly if you have upgraded from an old 60-amp panel to 200-amp service or replaced galvanized plumbing with copper or PEX.

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Q9

## Should I renovate my kitchen or buy a new home in New Brunswick?

**In most cases, renovating your existing kitchen in New Brunswick is more cost-effective than buying a new home, especially when your kitchen is the primary source of dissatisfaction — a mid-range renovation at**

**\$25,000 to \$45,000 costs far less than the \$15,000 to \$30,000 in transaction costs alone that come with selling and buying.** However, the right choice depends on your home's overall condition, your neighbourhood, and how much your needs have changed.

The financial math usually favours renovation. When you sell a home in NB, you pay real estate commissions (typically 4-5% of the sale price, or \$12,000-\$18,000 on a \$350,000 home), legal fees (\$1,000-\$2,000), land transfer tax on the new purchase (0.5% in NB), moving costs (\$1,500-\$4,000), and potential mortgage penalty fees if you break your current term. These transaction costs add up to \$15,000-\$30,000 before you have improved your living situation at all. A full mid-range kitchen renovation at \$25,000-\$45,000 gives you a completely transformed kitchen for roughly the same total outlay, and you keep the equity in your current home.

### **When Renovation Makes More Sense**

Renovate if you love your neighbourhood, your home's bones are solid, and the kitchen is truly the main problem. This is common in New Brunswick where many homes built in the 1970s through 1990s have good structures but original kitchens that are 30 to 50 years old. If the rest of the house suits your family — enough bedrooms, adequate lot size, good location relative to schools and work — investing in the kitchen is the logical choice. Even a high-end kitchen remodel at \$50,000-\$75,000 is typically less than the cost of upgrading to a newer home in the same neighbourhood once you factor in transaction costs.

Renovation also makes sense when you are in a desirable NB location that would be hard to replicate. Waterfront properties along the Saint John River, established Fredericton neighbourhoods, or walkable Moncton communities hold their value well, and moving means competing for limited inventory in those same areas.

### **When Buying Makes More Sense**

Buying a new home makes more sense when your needs have fundamentally changed beyond the kitchen. If you need more square footage, a different floor plan, a bigger lot, or want to change cities entirely, no kitchen renovation solves those problems. If your home also needs a new roof (\$8,000-\$15,000), foundation repairs, window replacements (\$10,000-\$20,000), and a kitchen renovation, the cumulative cost may approach or exceed the price difference of a newer home.

Also consider the age and condition of major systems. Older NB homes with 60-amp electrical panels, galvanized plumbing, poor insulation, and outdated heating systems may require \$30,000-\$50,000 in upgrades beyond the kitchen to bring them to modern standards. In that scenario, a newer home with updated systems may be the better investment.

Before deciding, get three kitchen renovation quotes to understand the actual cost, then compare that against what your home would sell for versus what you would need to spend on a replacement home. A local real estate agent

can help with the buy-versus-renovate comparison specific to your NB market.

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## What are the most common kitchen renovation regrets in NB?

The most common kitchen renovation regrets in New Brunswick are **insufficient storage, choosing trendy finishes over timeless ones, underestimating the budget, skipping proper ventilation, and not getting enough quotes before hiring a contractor.** Many of these regrets are preventable with proper planning, and several are specific to NB's climate and housing stock.

**Not enough storage** tops the list every time. Homeowners get excited about opening up the kitchen, removing upper cabinets for open shelving, or creating a large island, only to realize months later that they have nowhere to store their small appliances, pantry items, and cookware. Before finalizing your layout, inventory everything currently in your kitchen and ensure the new design accommodates it all with room to spare. Pull-out drawers, lazy Susans, and pantry cabinets with internal organizers maximize every inch.

**Choosing thermofoil or rigid laminate cabinets** is a regret specific to New Brunswick. The dramatic swing between humid maritime summers and bone-dry winter air (indoor humidity dropping to 15-25% with forced-air heating) causes thermofoil doors to delaminate and peel within 5 to 10 years. Homeowners who chose thermofoil to save money end up replacing cabinet doors far sooner than expected. MDF-core with a quality painted finish handles NB's climate much better and is worth the modest upcharge.

**Underestimating the budget** by 20-30% is extremely common. Homeowners plan for cabinets and countertops but forget demolition and disposal (\$1,000-\$3,000), electrical panel upgrades (\$1,500-\$4,000 for older NB homes with 60-amp service), plumbing changes (\$1,500-\$4,000 if moving the sink), permit fees (\$75-\$300), and temporary meal costs during the 4 to 8 week renovation period. Build a 15-20% contingency into your budget from the start.

### Functional and Climate Regrets

**Skipping proper range hood ventilation** is a regret that compounds over time in New Brunswick. Recirculating range hoods do not remove moisture or cooking odours from the air — they just filter grease and push humid air back into the kitchen. In NB's already humid summers, this leads to moisture buildup behind cabinets, peeling paint, and even mould growth. Always install a range hood that vents to the outside, even though the ductwork adds \$500-\$1,500 to the project.

**Not getting three or more quotes** leads to overpaying. NB kitchen renovation pricing varies 30-40% between contractors for identical scope. Homeowners who hire the first contractor they speak with frequently discover later that they paid thousands more than necessary. Take the time to get at least three detailed written quotes and compare them line by line.

**Poor lighting planning** is another frequent regret. A single ceiling fixture leaves counter areas in shadow. Layer your lighting with recessed ceiling lights for general illumination, under-cabinet task lighting for work surfaces, and pendant lights over islands or peninsulas. Plan lighting during the design phase — adding fixtures after the renovation means opening up finished ceilings.

Other common regrets include installing hardwood flooring near the sink and dishwasher (water damage is inevitable — use LVP instead), making the island too large for the space so traffic flow suffers, and measuring for countertops before cabinets are fully installed and levelled, resulting in poor fit.

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**Q11**

## How does NB's housing market affect kitchen renovation decisions?

**New Brunswick's housing market directly shapes kitchen renovation decisions — with median home prices ranging from roughly \$250,000 to \$375,000 across major cities, there is a clear ceiling on how much you should invest in a kitchen before the renovation exceeds what the market will return.** Understanding your local market helps you renovate smart, whether you are improving for your own enjoyment or planning to sell.

The general rule in New Brunswick is to keep your total kitchen renovation cost under 10-15% of your home's current market value. For a \$300,000 home in Moncton, that means a \$30,000-\$45,000 kitchen renovation is the practical ceiling for resale value recovery. Spending \$75,000 on a luxury kitchen in a neighbourhood of \$300,000 homes puts you at risk of over-improving — you will enjoy the kitchen, but you will not recoup that investment at sale. In contrast, if you own a \$500,000 home in an established Fredericton or Rothesay neighbourhood, a \$50,000-\$75,000 renovation is proportional and competitive with comparable listings.

### Market Conditions and Timing

New Brunswick has experienced significant housing price appreciation in recent years, driven partly by interprovincial migration from Ontario and BC. This has raised home values across Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint

John, making kitchen renovations more justifiable financially — a higher home value means you can invest more in the kitchen while staying within that 10-15% guideline. However, if the market cools, homes with over-improved kitchens in modest neighbourhoods will be the hardest to sell at full value.

If you are renovating to sell, NB's busiest real estate season runs from April through September. Plan your kitchen renovation for late winter (when contractor availability is better and you may save 10-15% on labour) and have it completed before spring listing season. If you are renovating for yourself and plan to stay 5+ years, market conditions matter less — prioritize the features and materials that improve your daily life.

**Labour costs in NB are 15-20% lower than Ontario or BC**, which means your renovation dollar goes further here. Material costs are similar across Canada since they ship from the same distributors, but lower labour rates bring total project costs down by 10-15% compared to national averages. A mid-range renovation that costs \$35,000-\$50,000 in the GTA might cost \$25,000-\$40,000 in New Brunswick for the same materials and scope.

NB's older housing stock also influences renovation decisions. Many homes built in the 1960s through 1990s have original kitchens that are now 30 to 60 years old with outdated electrical panels, galvanized plumbing, and layouts that do not suit modern living. For these homes, a kitchen renovation is not just cosmetic — it is a necessary infrastructure upgrade that brings the home up to current code and buyer expectations. Upgrading a 60-amp panel to 200-amp service (\$1,500-\$4,000), replacing galvanized pipes, and adding GFCI outlets are investments that protect both your safety and your home's marketability.

Before committing to a scope, research what comparable renovated homes in your neighbourhood have sold for recently. This gives you a realistic target for your investment. Get three or more quotes from local kitchen renovation contractors, as NB pricing varies significantly — 30-40% between contractors for the same scope is common.

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**Q12**

## What kitchen features do NB homebuyers want most?

**The kitchen features NB homebuyers value most are quartz countertops, modern cabinetry with soft-close hardware, and updated appliances.** In today's New Brunswick real estate market, the kitchen is consistently the room that makes or breaks a home sale, and buyers across Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John have clear preferences about what they want to see.

Quartz countertops top the list because they are non-porous, require zero sealing, and handle New Brunswick's humidity swings without the maintenance headaches of natural stone. Buyers know this, and a kitchen with laminate countertops in a home priced above \$300,000 is a red flag for most purchasers. Expect to invest \$60 to \$120 per square foot installed for quartz, but the return on resale is strong. Close behind countertops, buyers want **full-height cabinetry** that goes to the ceiling, eliminating dust-collecting dead space above upper cabinets. Shaker-style doors in white, grey, or navy remain the most popular across the province, and soft-close hinges and drawer slides are now considered standard rather than a luxury.

**Functional islands** are another top priority. Buyers want islands with seating for at least two people, ideally with built-in electrical outlets and prep sink plumbing. Open-concept layouts that connect the kitchen to living and dining areas continue to dominate buyer wish lists, though structural wall removal adds \$5,000 to \$15,000 depending on whether an engineered beam is needed. Good lighting is also high on the list, including layered task lighting under cabinets, pendant fixtures over islands, and recessed pot lights throughout.

## What Sets NB Kitchens Apart

New Brunswick's older housing stock means many kitchens on the market are original 1970s or 1980s builds with dated cabinetry, insufficient electrical panels, and galvanized plumbing. Buyers are specifically looking for evidence that these issues have been addressed. A **200-amp electrical panel**, copper or PEX plumbing, and properly vented range hoods signal that the renovation was done right. Luxury vinyl plank flooring is increasingly preferred by buyers over hardwood in kitchens because of its waterproof qualities and ability to handle NB's seasonal humidity changes without warping.

Pantry storage is another feature buyers crave. Walk-in pantries or tall pull-out pantry cabinets rank highly because NB families tend to stock up on groceries, especially in rural areas where the nearest major store may be a significant drive. Energy-efficient appliances with the ENERGY STAR label also appeal to cost-conscious buyers who know New Brunswick's electricity rates.

If you are renovating specifically to increase resale value, focus your budget on countertops, cabinets, and flooring in that order. A mid-range kitchen renovation in the \$25,000 to \$45,000 range typically recoups 60 to 80 percent of its cost at resale in NB markets. Avoid overly trendy finishes and stick with timeless colour palettes that will appeal to the broadest range of buyers. Need help finding a kitchen renovator for your project? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with local contractors for free estimates.

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## Is a farmhouse kitchen style practical for New Brunswick homes?

**Farmhouse kitchens are a natural fit for New Brunswick homes, blending well with the province's character and rural heritage, but some signature elements need to be adapted for NB's Maritime climate.** The warm, lived-in aesthetic of a farmhouse kitchen works beautifully in everything from a century-old Fredericton home to a newer build in Riverview, as long as you make smart material choices.

The core farmhouse look relies on **Shaker-style cabinetry** in white or soft colours, open shelving, apron-front sinks, wood accents, and vintage-inspired hardware. Most of these elements are perfectly practical in NB. Shaker cabinets with an MDF core and painted finish are the ideal choice because they handle New Brunswick's dry winter air and humid summers far better than solid wood, which can shrink and crack when forced-air heating drops indoor humidity to 15 to 25 percent. If you love the look of natural wood, consider using it only for a standalone piece like a kitchen island or a butcher-block prep area rather than for all cabinet doors.

**Open shelving** is the farmhouse feature that requires the most thought in NB. While it looks stunning in magazine photos, New Brunswick's Maritime humidity means dust and kitchen grease will coat open shelves faster than you might expect, especially during humid summer months. A practical compromise is to use open shelving on one accent wall while keeping closed cabinets for the majority of your storage. This gives you the farmhouse aesthetic without the constant cleaning burden.

### Material Considerations for NB

The classic **farmhouse apron-front sink** is an excellent choice and works perfectly in NB kitchens. Fireclay models (\$800 to \$1,500) are the most durable and resist staining, while cast iron with enamel coating (\$400 to \$800) offers a more budget-friendly option. Both handle NB's water conditions well. Pair it with a bridge-style faucet for an authentic look.

Butcher-block countertops are a farmhouse staple, but they need extra care in New Brunswick. The humidity swings between seasons can cause wood to expand and contract, and water exposure near sinks leads to warping and bacterial growth. If you want the warmth of wood, use butcher block on a dedicated prep island and choose quartz (\$60 to \$120 per square foot) for your perimeter countertops where the sink and dishwasher live. For flooring, wide-plank LVP (\$2,000 to \$4,000) that mimics reclaimed wood gives you the farmhouse look without the water damage risk that real hardwood carries near kitchen appliances.

Subway tile backsplash (\$1,000 to \$2,500 installed) is the quintessential farmhouse backsplash and is one of the most affordable options available. A beadboard ceiling or shiplap accent wall adds character for \$500 to \$1,500 in materials. Budget a total of \$30,000 to \$50,000 for a full farmhouse kitchen renovation in NB, depending on the

scope of layout changes and material quality. Book your contractor by March or April for a summer start, or consider a winter renovation when contractors may offer 10 to 15 percent savings. New Brunswick Kitchens can help you find a local kitchen renovator experienced with farmhouse-style builds.

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**Q14**

## How do I choose between modern and traditional kitchen styles for NB?

**The best kitchen style for your NB home depends on three factors: the age and architecture of your house, your personal taste, and your long-term resale plans.** Both modern and traditional kitchens work well in New Brunswick, but each style has practical implications that go beyond aesthetics when you factor in the province's climate and housing stock.

**Traditional kitchens** feature raised-panel or Shaker cabinet doors, crown moulding, decorative hardware, warm wood tones, and natural stone or quartz countertops. This style suits the majority of NB homes because much of the province's housing stock dates from the 1950s through the 1990s, and traditional kitchens complement these architectural styles without creating a visual disconnect. A traditional kitchen renovation in NB typically runs \$25,000 to \$50,000 for a mid-range project. The advantage of traditional design is timelessness: a well-executed traditional kitchen will still look appropriate in 15 to 20 years, which matters for resale value in NB's market.

**Modern kitchens** feature flat-panel (slab) cabinet doors, minimal hardware, clean horizontal lines, integrated appliances, and often high-gloss or matte lacquer finishes. They look striking in newer builds and contemporary homes, but can feel out of place in a 1970s split-level in Moncton or a Victorian-era home in Saint John. Modern kitchens also tend to cost more because they demand tighter tolerances during installation. Flat-panel doors reveal every imperfection in wall alignment, and the handleless push-open mechanisms add cost. Budget \$35,000 to \$60,000 for a modern kitchen in NB.

### Practical Factors for NB Homes

New Brunswick's climate plays a role in this decision. **High-gloss cabinet finishes** popular in modern kitchens show fingerprints and scratches more readily, which can be frustrating in a busy family kitchen. The dry winter air from forced-air heating also affects material choices. Thermofoil doors, sometimes used in modern slab-style cabinets, are prone to delamination when indoor humidity drops to 15 to 25 percent during NB winters. If you choose a modern style, opt for painted MDF or wood-veneer slab doors instead.

A **transitional style** is increasingly popular across Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John because it blends the warmth of traditional design with the clean lines of modern aesthetics. Think flat Shaker doors in a neutral colour, simple bar-pull hardware, quartz countertops, and pendant lighting over the island. Transitional kitchens have the broadest resale appeal and work with virtually any NB home style.

Consider your home's existing flow as well. If your kitchen opens directly into a living room with traditional trim and hardwood floors, a stark modern kitchen will create a jarring transition. Consistency throughout visible sight lines matters to buyers and to your daily enjoyment of the space.

Before committing to a style, visit kitchen showrooms in Moncton or Fredericton to see finishes in person. Bring photos of your existing home so the designer can help you visualize the fit. Get at least three quotes from local contractors, as NB pricing varies 30 to 40 percent for identical scope. New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with experienced local kitchen renovators for free estimates on either style.

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**Q15**

## What eco-friendly kitchen renovation options are available in NB?

**New Brunswick homeowners have a growing range of eco-friendly kitchen renovation options, from salvaged materials and cabinet refacing to energy-efficient appliances and low-VOC finishes.** Going green with your kitchen renovation does not have to mean a bigger budget. Many sustainable choices actually save money both upfront and on long-term operating costs.

The single most impactful eco-friendly choice is **cabinet refacing rather than full replacement**. Refacing keeps your existing cabinet boxes out of the landfill and replaces only the doors and drawer fronts, at a cost of \$5,000 to \$12,000 compared to \$18,000 to \$25,000 for new custom cabinets. If your current cabinet boxes are structurally sound, which many are even in NB's older homes, refacing gives you a completely new look with a fraction of the waste. For new cabinets, look for manufacturers using FSC-certified wood or those that use formaldehyde-free plywood construction. Locally built custom cabinets from NB shops also reduce transportation emissions compared to imported products.

**Low-VOC and zero-VOC paints and finishes** are essential for indoor air quality, especially in NB where homes are sealed up tight for five to six months of winter. Conventional cabinet paints and polyurethane finishes off-gas volatile organic compounds for weeks after application, and in a closed-up winter home, those chemicals have nowhere to go. Benjamin Moore Advance and similar waterborne alkyd paints offer low-VOC options with excellent durability for cabinetry. Expect to pay \$60 to \$80 per gallon compared to \$40 to \$50 for conventional options.

## Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Materials

ENERGY STAR-rated appliances are one of the easiest green upgrades. A modern ENERGY STAR refrigerator uses 40 to 50 percent less energy than a model from the early 2000s, which matters given New Brunswick's electricity costs. An induction cooktop is another excellent choice because it uses 85 to 90 percent of its energy for actual cooking compared to 40 percent for gas and 70 percent for conventional electric, and it eliminates combustion byproducts in your kitchen air. Budget \$4,000 to \$8,000 for a mid-range energy-efficient appliance package.

For countertops, **quartz** is a strong eco-friendly choice because its non-porous surface never needs chemical sealers, unlike granite which requires annual sealing with petroleum-based products. Recycled glass countertops and recycled paper composite surfaces like Richlite are available through NB suppliers, typically at \$70 to \$130 per square foot installed. Butcher block from sustainably harvested wood is another option, though it requires regular oiling and is best used away from sinks in NB's humid climate.

LVP flooring made from recycled content is widely available and is the most practical waterproof kitchen floor in NB. For tile, look for porcelain made with recycled materials. LED lighting throughout the kitchen, including under-cabinet task lighting, uses a fraction of the energy of halogen or incandescent options and lasts years longer. Water-saving faucets with aerators reduce consumption without sacrificing pressure, and a properly vented range hood exhausted to the outside manages indoor air quality far better than a recirculating model, which is important in NB's humidity.

To keep demolition waste out of the landfill, ask your contractor about donating salvageable cabinets, fixtures, and appliances to local Habitat for Humanity ReStores in Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John. Get matched with a

kitchen renovator experienced in sustainable builds through New Brunswick Kitchens for free.

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## How do I childproof a kitchen during renovation planning?

The best time to childproof a kitchen is during the renovation planning phase, when safety features can be built in seamlessly rather than retrofitted with ugly add-on locks and guards. Thinking about child safety before construction starts saves money and results in a kitchen that is both beautiful and safe for young families.

**Cabinet and drawer safety** should be your first priority. Specify soft-close hinges and drawer slides throughout your kitchen, which cost only \$2 to \$5 more per unit than standard hardware and prevent small fingers from getting slammed. For lower cabinets that will store cleaning products or sharp objects, have your contractor install **integrated child locks** that mount inside the cabinet frame. These are invisible from the outside, unlike the plastic strap locks that stick to cabinet faces. Budget an extra \$200 to \$400 for integrated locks on 10 to 15 lower cabinets and drawers. Consider dedicating one low drawer or cabinet specifically as a kid-accessible zone for plastic dishes, snack containers, or toy pots, which gives children a safe space to explore while you cook.

Your **cooktop and oven choices** have significant safety implications. Induction cooktops are the safest option for families with young children because the surface itself does not heat up, only the cookware does, and the surface cools within seconds of removing the pot. If you choose a gas or conventional electric range, specify a model with rear-mounted controls rather than front-mounted knobs that toddlers can reach and turn. A built-in wall oven installed at counter height rather than a floor-level range keeps the hot oven door away from crawling children. Expect to pay \$1,500 to \$3,000 for a quality induction cooktop.

### Layout and Electrical Safety

Plan your kitchen layout with a **clear work triangle** that keeps the cooking zone away from the main traffic path through the kitchen. In NB homes, especially open-concept renovations where the kitchen flows into the family room, children will naturally run through the space. Position the cooktop and oven on a wall or peninsula that is away from the doorway or pass-through. An island with seating on the living-area side creates a natural barrier between children and the cooking zone.

Electrical safety is critical and is covered by NB Building Code requirements. All countertop outlets within 1.5 metres of a sink must have **GFCI protection**, which prevents electrical shock. During your renovation, have your electrician install tamper-resistant receptacles throughout the kitchen, which have internal shutters that prevent children from inserting objects. These are now code-required in new construction and cost the same as standard outlets. If you are upgrading from a 60-amp panel, common in older NB homes, to 100 or 200-amp service (\$1,500 to \$4,000), this is the time to add dedicated circuits and properly protected outlets.

For flooring, choose a slip-resistant surface like textured LVP (\$2,000 to \$4,000), which is also forgiving when dishes or sippy cups inevitably get dropped. Avoid polished porcelain tile, which becomes extremely slippery when wet. Rounded countertop edges or bullnose profiles on quartz or granite cost nothing extra when specified during templating and eliminate sharp corner injuries. New Brunswick Kitchens can connect you with local kitchen renovators who understand family-safe design.

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**Q17**

## What are the tax implications of a kitchen renovation in New Brunswick?

**Kitchen renovations in New Brunswick are subject to 15% HST on both labour and materials, and unlike some provinces, NB does not currently offer a provincial renovation tax credit for general kitchen upgrades.** Understanding the tax landscape before you start helps you budget accurately and take advantage of any available savings.

The **Harmonized Sales Tax** of 15 percent (5% federal GST plus 10% provincial) applies to all renovation labour and materials in New Brunswick. On a \$40,000 kitchen renovation, that adds \$6,000 in taxes, bringing the actual cost to \$46,000. This is one of the highest combined sales tax rates in Canada and is an important factor in your budgeting. All legitimate contractors will charge HST and provide receipts. Be cautious of any contractor offering a cash discount to avoid HST, as this is tax evasion, it voids any warranty or liability protection, and it signals the contractor may not carry proper insurance or WorkSafeNB coverage.

There is a **federal GST/HST New Housing Rebate** available if your renovation is classified as a substantial renovation, meaning you have gutted and rebuilt the interior to the point where the home is essentially new. A standard kitchen renovation, even a high-end gut renovation, typically does not qualify on its own because the rebate requires that at least 90 percent of the home's interior has been substantially renovated. If your kitchen is part of a whole-house renovation, consult your accountant about eligibility for the rebate, which can return a portion of the federal GST component.

## When Renovations Have Tax Benefits

If you work from home and have a dedicated home office, and your kitchen renovation includes changes to a space that qualifies as a workspace, a portion of the costs may be deductible as a business expense. This is a niche situation and requires proper documentation and guidance from a tax professional.

For **rental properties**, kitchen renovations are treated as capital improvements rather than current expenses, meaning you cannot deduct the full cost in the year of renovation. Instead, the cost is added to the property's adjusted cost base and depreciated over time using the Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) system. This reduces your taxable capital gain when you eventually sell the property. Keep all receipts, invoices, and before-and-after photos for your records.

The **federal Canada Greener Homes initiative** previously offered rebates for certain energy-efficient home upgrades, though kitchen-specific items were limited. ENERGY STAR-rated appliances and certain insulation improvements done during a kitchen renovation that involves exterior walls may qualify for current or future programs. Check Natural Resources Canada for the latest available programs.

For homeowners aged 65 and older or those with disabilities, the **federal Home Accessibility Tax Credit** allows a non-refundable tax credit on up to \$20,000 of eligible renovation expenses per year. Kitchen modifications like lowering countertops for wheelchair access, installing lever-handle faucets, improving lighting, or widening doorways for mobility aids can qualify.

Keep detailed records of every expense including contractor invoices, material receipts, and permit fees. Even if no immediate tax benefit applies, these records establish the adjusted cost base of your home and reduce capital gains tax if the property is ever sold as a non-primary residence. For specific tax advice about your situation, consult a New Brunswick accountant or tax professional.

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**Q18**

## What kitchen renovation red flags should NB homeowners watch for?

**The biggest red flags in NB kitchen renovations are contractors who demand large upfront payments, refuse to pull permits, cannot provide proof of insurance, or pressure you to sign before you have compared quotes.** Knowing these warning signs can save you thousands of dollars and months of stress on a project that typically represents one of the largest investments in your home.

**Unreasonable payment demands** are the most common red flag. A reputable NB kitchen contractor will typically structure payments as 10 to 15 percent deposit at contract signing, a progress payment when cabinets are delivered or demolition is complete, another at the midpoint (rough-in complete), and the final 10 to 15 percent upon satisfactory completion and final inspection. Any contractor asking for 50 percent or more upfront before work begins is a serious concern. In New Brunswick, there have been cases of contractors collecting large deposits and then disappearing or becoming unresponsive — protect yourself with a structured payment schedule tied to completed milestones.

**Refusing to pull permits** is a deal-breaker. If your kitchen renovation involves electrical changes, plumbing modifications, or structural work, permits are legally required in every NB municipality and RSC area. A contractor who says "we don't need a permit for this" or "permits just slow things down" is either cutting corners or not qualified. Unpermitted work can void your home insurance, create problems when selling your home, and result in unsafe installations. Permit fees are only \$75 to \$300 — there is no legitimate reason to skip them.

**No proof of insurance or WorkSafeNB coverage** is another critical warning sign. Ask every contractor for their current certificate of general liability insurance (minimum \$2 million is standard) and their WorkSafeNB clearance letter. If a contractor is injured in your home without WorkSafeNB coverage, you could be held personally liable. This is not negotiable.

## Other Warning Signs

**Vague or verbal-only quotes** should concern you. A professional kitchen renovation quote should be detailed in writing — itemized costs for cabinets, countertops, labour, demolition, permits, and any allowances. "It'll be about \$30,000" written on the back of a business card is not a quote. Get everything in writing with a clear scope of work, timeline, and payment schedule.

**No references or portfolio** is suspicious. Any established NB kitchen renovator should be able to show you photos of completed kitchens and provide references from past clients in your area — whether that is Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, or smaller communities. Ask to see recent work and speak to at least two past clients.

**Extremely low bids** are often more dangerous than high ones. If one quote comes in 30 to 40 percent below the others for the same scope, question what is being left out. Common tactics include quoting cheap materials without specifying brands, excluding demolition and disposal costs (\$1,000 to \$3,000), not including permit fees, or planning to use uninsured subcontractors.

**Pressure to start immediately** without a signed contract is a manipulation tactic. Take time to review the contract, understand the warranty terms, and verify the contractor's credentials. A good contractor in NB books three to eight weeks out during peak season (May through October) — if someone can start tomorrow, ask why their calendar is empty.

Always get a minimum of three quotes from different contractors. NB pricing varies 30 to 40 percent between contractors for identical work, so comparison shopping is essential. New Brunswick Kitchens can help you connect with vetted local kitchen renovators for free estimates.

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## What are the most common kitchen renovation scams to watch out for in NB?

The most common kitchen renovation scams in New Brunswick involve large upfront payment demands, unlicensed or uninsured operators, bait-and-switch pricing, and contractors who disappear mid-project — and while most NB contractors are honest professionals, knowing these warning signs protects your investment. A kitchen renovation typically costs \$25,000 to \$75,000, which makes it one of the largest purchases a homeowner makes outside of buying their home, so due diligence is essential.

**Excessive upfront deposits** are the single biggest red flag. A legitimate contractor may ask for 10 to 15 percent upfront or a deposit to order materials, with subsequent payments tied to project milestones (demolition complete, cabinets installed, countertops done, final walkthrough). Anyone demanding 50 percent or more before work begins is either poorly capitalized or may not return once they have your money. Structure your payment schedule so the final 10 to 15 percent is held until you've completed a thorough walkthrough and all punch list items are addressed.

**No insurance or WorkSafeNB coverage** is dangerously common with low-ball operators. In New Brunswick, any contractor with employees must be registered with WorkSafeNB, and all contractors should carry minimum \$2 million commercial general liability insurance. Ask for proof — a certificate of insurance and a WorkSafeNB clearance letter — before signing anything. If a worker is injured on your property and the contractor has no WorkSafeNB coverage, you could face personal liability. Verify the documents are current by calling the insurance company and checking with WorkSafeNB directly.

### Pricing and Contract Red Flags

**Bait-and-switch quotes** start with an unrealistically low estimate to win the job, then pile on change orders once demolition begins. "We found something unexpected" is sometimes legitimate — older NB homes built in the 1960s through 1980s can hide galvanized plumbing, knob-and-tube wiring, asbestos floor tiles, or inadequate framing behind walls. But a reputable contractor accounts for these possibilities in their original scope and discusses contingency budgets (typically 10 to 20 percent of total project cost) upfront. Get everything in writing — a detailed contract should specify materials, brands, model numbers, quantities, timelines, and the exact process for approving change orders.

**Door-to-door solicitation** or unsolicited offers from contractors who "happen to have materials left over from another job" are almost always scams. Legitimate kitchen contractors in NB have enough work through referrals and reputation that they don't need to cold-call homeowners. Similarly, be wary of contractors who pressure you to sign immediately, offer "today only" discounts, or refuse to provide references from past kitchen projects in your area.

**Permit avoidance** is another warning sign. If your renovation involves electrical changes, plumbing modifications, or structural work, permits are required by the NB Building Code. A contractor who says "we don't need permits for this" when the work clearly requires one is either uninformed or deliberately cutting corners. Unpermitted work can void your home insurance, create safety hazards, and cause major problems when you sell your home.

To protect yourself, always get **three or more written quotes** from different contractors — NB pricing varies 30 to 40 percent for identical scope, so comparing helps you identify outliers on both ends. Check references by actually calling past clients and asking about timeline adherence, communication, and quality. Never pay cash without a receipt, and ensure your contract includes a clear start date, completion date, and penalty clause for significant delays. New Brunswick Kitchens can help you connect with reputable, insured kitchen renovation contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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