

NEW BRUNSWICK KITCHENS

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# Permits & Building Codes

NB building permits, electrical and plumbing codes, inspections, and regulatory requirements for kitchen work

17 Expert Answers from Kitchen IQ

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## What are the New Brunswick gas code clearance requirements for gas ranges, gas cooktops, and gas dryers in kitchens — including minimum distances from combustibles and ventilation requirements enforced by the Technical Safety Authority of NB?

New Brunswick follows the National Gas Code of Canada with specific enforcement through WorkSafeNB's Technical Safety Division (not a separate Technical Safety Authority). Gas appliance installations require licensed gas fitters and must meet strict clearance requirements to prevent fire hazards.

### Gas Range and Cooktop Clearances

**Minimum clearances from combustible materials** are critical for safety. Gas ranges require **6 inches minimum** from sidewalls to combustible surfaces like wood cabinets. If you have less clearance, you must install **heat shields** (non-combustible materials like stainless steel or ceramic tile) extending at least 6 inches above the cooktop surface.

**Above the cooktop**, you need **30 inches minimum clearance** to combustible surfaces like wood cabinets or range hoods. Many NB kitchens violate this with cabinets mounted too low — a dangerous fire hazard that inspectors will flag. Range hoods can be mounted closer (typically 24-30 inches) because they're designed for heat exposure, but check manufacturer specifications.

**Behind the range**, maintain **6 inches from combustible walls** or install appropriate heat shielding. Many older NB homes have ranges pushed directly against wood-paneled walls — this violates code and creates fire risk.

### Ventilation Requirements

**All gas cooking appliances in NB must have adequate ventilation** to remove combustion byproducts. Range hoods must be **ducted to the exterior** — recirculating hoods don't meet code for gas appliances. The fan must provide adequate CFM (cubic feet per minute) based on BTU output of your cooktop.

**Gas dryers** (though not typically in kitchens) require **4-inch rigid metal ducting** vented directly outside with **no more than 25 feet total duct length** including elbows. Flexible vinyl ducting is prohibited — it's a fire hazard.

### NB-Specific Considerations

**Older NB homes** (pre-1980) often have gas appliances installed before current codes. During kitchen renovations, you must **bring everything up to current standards** — grandfathering doesn't apply when you're renovating. This commonly adds \$500-\$2,000 to projects for proper clearances and ventilation.

**Maritime humidity** affects gas appliance performance. Ensure adequate fresh air supply — gas appliances need oxygen for proper combustion. Tight, energy-efficient homes may need **combustion air ducting** from outside.

**Licensed gas fitters only** can connect, disconnect, or modify gas lines in NB. DIY gas work is illegal and dangerous. WorkSafeNB requires permits for any gas line modifications, and insurance may void coverage for unpermitted work.

## When Planning Your Kitchen

**Before finalizing your layout**, have a licensed gas fitter review clearance requirements. Moving a gas range often requires extending gas lines (\$300-\$800) and ensuring proper clearances to new cabinet locations. **Plan cabinet heights carefully** — many beautiful kitchen designs fail inspection because upper cabinets are too close to gas cooktops.

**Always hire licensed professionals** for gas work and obtain proper permits. Gas leaks and improper installations can be fatal. Find qualified gas fitters through the New Brunswick Construction Network who understand both gas codes and kitchen renovation requirements.

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Q2

## Where are smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors required relative to kitchens under the New Brunswick Fire Prevention Act and the National Building Code as adopted in NB, and what are the interconnection requirements?

Under the New Brunswick Fire Prevention Act and National Building Code as adopted in NB, smoke detectors are required in all sleeping areas, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home, while carbon monoxide detectors are mandatory within 5 meters of any sleeping area in homes with fuel-burning appliances or attached garages.

The **National Building Code requirements** adopted by New Brunswick specify that smoke detectors must be hardwired with battery backup in new construction and major renovations. In existing homes, battery-operated units are acceptable but hardwired is preferred. All smoke detectors installed in the same dwelling must be **interconnected** so when one activates, they all sound — this is critical for alerting occupants throughout the home.

For **kitchen-specific considerations**, smoke detectors should be placed at least 3 meters (10 feet) from cooking appliances to prevent false alarms from normal cooking activities. However, don't place them too far away — the hallway leading to bedrooms from the kitchen area typically provides the best balance. **Photoelectric smoke detectors** work better near kitchens than ionization types because they're less sensitive to cooking smoke while still detecting smoldering fires effectively.

**Carbon monoxide detector placement** becomes crucial in NB kitchens with gas ranges, gas wall ovens, or homes with attached garages below kitchen areas. The detectors must be within 5 meters of sleeping areas, but many NB homeowners also install them in kitchen areas with gas appliances as an extra safety measure. Like smoke detectors, CO detectors should be hardwired with battery backup and interconnected in new installations.

**NB's older housing stock** presents unique challenges — many homes built before 1990 have inadequate detector coverage. During kitchen renovations involving electrical work, it's an excellent opportunity to upgrade to hardwired, interconnected systems throughout the home. If you're adding new circuits for kitchen appliances, your electrician can easily add detector circuits at the same time.

**Interconnection requirements** in NB specify that all detectors must communicate through hardwired connections or wireless technology that meets CSA standards. The wireless interconnected systems have become popular in renovation projects because they don't require running new wiring between floors — particularly helpful in older NB homes with plaster walls and limited access.

**During kitchen renovations**, temporary detector coverage is required if construction disrupts existing units. Contractors must ensure smoke and CO detection remains functional throughout the project. Many NB municipalities require this as part of the renovation permit process.

**Professional installation** is recommended for hardwired interconnected systems, especially during kitchen electrical upgrades. Licensed electricians understand NB code requirements and ensure proper circuit protection and interconnection. The additional cost during a kitchen renovation is minimal compared to retrofitting later.

Need help finding a kitchen renovator who understands NB fire safety requirements? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with contractors experienced in code-compliant renovations.

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Q3

## Do I need a building permit for a kitchen renovation in Moncton NB?

**It depends on the scope of your renovation.** Cosmetic updates like painting cabinets, replacing countertops on the same layout, installing new hardware, flooring, or adding a backsplash do not require a building permit in Moncton. However, any work involving electrical changes, plumbing modifications, or structural alterations requires the appropriate permits from the City of Moncton's building inspection department.

**Electrical permits** are required whenever you add, move, or modify circuits — and this comes up in almost every kitchen renovation beyond a cosmetic refresh. Adding countertop outlets, installing under-cabinet wiring, upgrading your panel from 60-amp to 100 or 200-amp, or adding a dedicated circuit for a new dishwasher or range all require an electrical permit and inspection. The NB Building Code requires a minimum of two 20-amp small appliance circuits for countertop receptacles, plus dedicated circuits for the refrigerator, dishwasher, range, and microwave. Many older Moncton homes built in the 1960s through 1980s do not meet these requirements, so electrical upgrades are common during renovations.

**Plumbing permits** are needed if you are moving your sink, adding or relocating a dishwasher supply and drain line, or doing any gas line work for a gas range. Simply replacing a faucet on existing supply lines does not require a permit.

**Building permits** are required for structural work — removing or modifying load-bearing walls (common in open-concept conversions), adding a kitchen island with plumbing or electrical, or any work that changes the building's structure. Structural changes also require engineered drawings, which typically cost \$500 to \$2,000 from a licensed engineer.

### Moncton's Permit Process

Moncton has its own building inspection department, which generally processes residential kitchen permits within 1 to 3 weeks — faster than the Regional Service Commissions that handle rural areas. Permit fees typically range

from \$75 to \$300 depending on the scope of work. Your contractor should handle the permit application, but as the homeowner, you are ultimately responsible for ensuring permits are obtained.

The inspection process involves a rough-in inspection after electrical wiring and plumbing supply and drain lines are in place but before walls are closed up, followed by a final inspection once the work is complete. Skipping inspections is a code violation that can cause serious problems when you sell your home — a home inspector or buyer's lawyer will flag unpermitted work, potentially requiring you to tear out finished walls to prove code compliance.

A good kitchen renovation contractor in Moncton will know exactly which permits are needed and will factor the fees and inspection timeline into your project schedule. When getting quotes, ask specifically whether permit costs and inspection coordination are included. If a contractor suggests skipping permits to save time or money, that is a red flag — find a different contractor.

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## What building codes apply to kitchen renovations in New Brunswick?

Kitchen renovations in New Brunswick are governed by the NB Building Code, which adopts and adapts the National Building Code of Canada, along with the Canadian Electrical Code and the National Plumbing Code. These codes set minimum safety standards for electrical, plumbing, ventilation, structural, and fire safety requirements in residential kitchens.

**Electrical requirements** are among the most prescriptive for kitchens. The code requires a minimum of two 20-amp small appliance circuits dedicated to countertop outlets, which is a common deficiency in older NB homes. All countertop receptacles within 1.5 metres of a sink must have GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) protection. Dedicated circuits are required for the refrigerator, dishwasher, range or oven, microwave, and garbage disposal. In many NB homes built before the 1990s, you will find 60-amp electrical panels that simply cannot support a modern kitchen's electrical load — upgrading to a 100-amp or 200-amp panel costs \$1,500 to \$4,000 and is often the first step in a major kitchen renovation.

**Plumbing code requirements** cover supply lines, drain configurations, venting, and fixture placement. If you are moving a sink or adding plumbing for a pot filler or island sink, the work must comply with the National Plumbing Code as adopted by New Brunswick. Older NB homes frequently have galvanized steel supply pipes that corrode internally over time — the code does not force replacement during a renovation unless you are touching those lines, but any licensed plumber will strongly recommend upgrading to copper or PEX while the walls are open.

**Ventilation is a critical code area** for NB kitchens. The code requires kitchen exhaust ventilation, and best practice in our Maritime climate is a range hood that vents directly to the exterior — not a recirculating hood. Recirculating hoods filter grease but do not remove moisture, which is a real concern in NB where summer humidity already promotes mold growth behind cabinets and in wall cavities. Range hoods should be rated at minimum 100 CFM, with 300-600 CFM recommended for standard residential cooking. If you install a range hood rated above 400 CFM, the code may require makeup air to prevent negative pressure in the home.

### Structural and Fire Safety

**Structural requirements** come into play when you remove or modify walls, particularly load-bearing walls during open-concept conversions. Any structural modification requires a building permit and engineered drawings showing the beam sizing, post locations, and load path to the foundation. This applies whether you are in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, or a rural area under a Regional Service Commission.

**Fire safety** requirements include proper clearances between the cooktop and combustible materials (cabinets, range hoods), fire-rated separations where required, and smoke detector placement. The code specifies minimum

clearances between a cooktop and overhead combustible cabinets — typically 30 inches for a standard range, though microwave-range hood combos have their own specifications.

All permit-required work must pass a rough-in inspection before walls are closed and a final inspection once complete. Working with a qualified kitchen renovation contractor who understands NB code requirements saves time, avoids costly rework, and ensures your renovated kitchen is safe and code-compliant.

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Q5

## Do I need an electrical permit for adding outlets during a kitchen reno in NB?

**Yes, you absolutely need an electrical permit for adding outlets during a kitchen renovation in New Brunswick.** Any work that involves adding, moving, or modifying electrical circuits requires a permit and inspection through your local municipality or Regional Service Commission. This is not optional — it is a requirement under the NB Building Code and the Canadian Electrical Code.

Adding kitchen outlets is one of the most common electrical upgrades during an NB kitchen renovation because older homes frequently lack the circuits and receptacle spacing that modern kitchens require. The NB Building Code mandates a minimum of two 20-amp small appliance circuits for countertop receptacles, and countertop outlets must be spaced so that no point along the counter is more than 900mm from a receptacle. Many NB homes built in the 1960s through 1980s have only one or two outlets along the entire kitchen counter run, which does not meet current code and creates overloaded circuits when today's appliances are plugged in.

Beyond countertop outlets, any dedicated circuits for major appliances — refrigerator, dishwasher, range, microwave, garburator — also require permits when being added or modified. If your existing panel is a 60-amp service, which is common in older New Brunswick homes, your electrician will likely recommend upgrading to a 100-amp or 200-amp panel to support the additional circuits. That panel upgrade alone costs \$1,500 to \$4,000, but it is a critical investment that prevents overloaded circuits and potential fire hazards.

## The Permit and Inspection Process

In cities like Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, electrical permits are processed through the municipal building inspection department, typically within 1 to 3 weeks. In rural areas governed by Regional Service Commissions, expect 2 to 5 weeks. Permit fees for residential electrical work generally range from \$75 to \$200.

The inspection process has two stages. First, a **rough-in inspection** after the wiring is run but before walls are closed up — the inspector checks wire gauge, circuit breaker sizing, box placement, GFCI protection, and code compliance. Second, a **final inspection** after everything is connected and finished. Your contractor should schedule these inspections as part of the project timeline.

Skipping the electrical permit is risky on multiple levels. Unpermitted electrical work voids your home insurance if a fire occurs. It creates problems when you sell your home, as home inspectors and lawyers will flag it. And most importantly, improperly wired kitchen circuits are a genuine fire hazard — kitchens draw more power than any other room in the house.

The electrical work should always be done by a licensed electrician. This is not an area where DIY makes sense, regardless of your skill level. A licensed electrician will pull the permit, coordinate inspections, and ensure the work meets code. When getting quotes for your kitchen renovation, make sure electrical permit fees and inspection coordination are included in the contractor's scope.

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Q6

## What are the NB building code requirements for kitchen ventilation?

**The NB Building Code requires exhaust ventilation in kitchens, and best practice in New Brunswick's Maritime climate is a range hood that vents directly to the exterior rather than a recirculating unit.** Proper kitchen ventilation is especially important in NB because our high summer humidity combined with cooking moisture creates ideal conditions for mold growth in wall cavities and behind cabinets.

The code requires kitchen exhaust ventilation capable of removing cooking byproducts — grease, moisture, smoke, and odours — from the space. For residential kitchens, a range hood rated at a minimum of 100 CFM (cubic feet per minute) meets the baseline requirement, but most kitchen professionals in New Brunswick recommend 300 to 600 CFM for a standard 30-inch residential range. The general rule is 100 CFM per linear foot of range width, so a 30-inch range calls for at least 250 CFM, and a 36-inch professional-style range needs 300 CFM or more.

**Exterior venting versus recirculating** is the most important ventilation decision for NB homeowners. A recirculating hood passes air through a charcoal filter and returns it to the kitchen — it captures some grease but does nothing to remove moisture. In our Maritime climate, where summer humidity already pushes indoor moisture levels high, a recirculating hood leaves all that cooking steam in your home. This moisture migrates into wall cavities, behind cabinets, and into ceiling spaces where it promotes mold growth. An exterior-vented hood exhausts both grease and moisture completely out of the building through rigid or semi-rigid ductwork to an exterior wall or roof cap.

## Makeup Air Requirements

If you install a range hood rated above approximately 400 CFM, the NB Building Code may require a **makeup air system** to replace the exhausted air. Without makeup air, a powerful range hood can create negative pressure inside the home, which backdrafts combustion appliances (furnace, water heater), pulls cold air through gaps in the building envelope, and makes exterior doors difficult to open. Makeup air systems can be passive (a motorized damper that opens when the hood runs) or active (a powered unit that tempers incoming air). This adds \$500 to \$2,000 to the installation cost but is essential for safety and comfort, particularly in NB's cold winters when you do not want raw outdoor air flooding the kitchen.

**Ductwork specifications** matter for performance. Use rigid metal duct (smooth-wall galvanized or stainless) rather than flexible duct, which restricts airflow and collects grease. The duct run should be as short and straight as possible, with a maximum of two 90-degree elbows. Each additional elbow or foot of duct reduces effective CFM. The exterior termination must have a backdraft damper to prevent cold winter air from flowing back into the kitchen when the hood is off — a critical detail in New Brunswick where winter temperatures regularly drop well below minus 20 degrees Celsius.

Installing a new exterior-vented range hood typically costs \$800 to \$2,500 including the hood unit, ductwork, and exterior cap, depending on the complexity of the duct run and whether you are cutting through an exterior wall or running to the roof. This is professional-level work that involves cutting through the building envelope, properly sealing and insulating the penetration, and ensuring the duct pitch prevents condensation from pooling — all important details in NB's freeze-thaw climate.

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## How much do kitchen renovation permits cost in Fredericton NB?

**Kitchen renovation permits in Fredericton typically cost between \$75 and \$300, depending on the scope of work involved.** The City of Fredericton has its own building inspection department that processes residential permits, which generally moves faster than the Regional Service Commissions that handle rural areas around the city.

The permit fee is based on the type and value of the work being done. A straightforward **electrical permit** for adding countertop outlets and dedicated appliance circuits — one of the most common kitchen renovation permits — typically runs \$75 to \$150. A **plumbing permit** for relocating a sink or adding dishwasher connections falls in a similar range. A **building permit** for structural modifications like removing a load-bearing wall for an open-concept layout runs higher, often \$150 to \$300, because it requires plan review including engineered drawings. If your renovation involves all three — electrical, plumbing, and structural changes — you will need separate permits for each, and the combined fees could total \$250 to \$500.

Beyond the permit fees themselves, factor in the associated costs that come with permitted work. Engineered drawings for structural modifications cost \$500 to \$2,000 from a licensed New Brunswick engineer. Your electrician and plumber should include permit costs in their quotes, but always confirm this upfront. Some contractors include permit fees in their overall price, while others list them as a separate line item.

### Timeline and Process

Fredericton's building inspection department generally processes residential kitchen permits within 1 to 3 weeks for straightforward applications. More complex projects involving structural changes with engineered drawings may take a bit longer during the busy spring season when contractors are submitting permits for summer projects. To avoid delays, submit permit applications by March or April if you are targeting a May or June start date — this is when Fredericton contractors are booking their busiest season.

The inspection process requires a **rough-in inspection** after electrical wiring and plumbing are installed but before walls are closed, followed by a **final inspection** once everything is complete. Coordinate these inspections into your project timeline — an inspector typically visits within a few business days of being called, but during peak season there may be a one-week wait.

One important note: the permit fees are a tiny fraction of your overall kitchen renovation budget. A mid-range Fredericton kitchen renovation runs \$25,000 to \$45,000, so spending \$100 to \$300 on permits is negligible. What matters far more is the protection permits provide. Permitted and inspected work ensures your kitchen meets NB Building Code requirements for safety, validates your home insurance coverage, and avoids problems when you

sell the home. Unpermitted renovations that are discovered during a home sale can require you to open up finished walls to prove code compliance — a costly and frustrating process that far exceeds any permit savings.

A reputable kitchen renovation contractor in Fredericton will handle the permit application and inspection scheduling as part of their project management. If a contractor suggests skipping permits, look for a different contractor.

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**Q8**

## Do I need a plumbing permit to move my kitchen sink in NB?

**Yes, moving a kitchen sink in New Brunswick requires a plumbing permit.** Any work that involves extending, relocating, or modifying supply lines and drain pipes falls under the plumbing code and requires a permit and inspection through your municipality or Regional Service Commission.

Moving a sink is one of the most common layout changes during a kitchen renovation, whether you are relocating it from an exterior wall to a new island, shifting it along the same wall to create a better work triangle, or moving it to the opposite side of the kitchen entirely. Each of these scenarios involves extending or rerouting hot and cold water supply lines and the drain and vent system, which is regulated work that must be done by a licensed plumber and inspected for code compliance.

The cost of moving a kitchen sink in New Brunswick typically ranges from **\$1,500 to \$4,000** depending on how far the sink is moving and the complexity of the drain and vent routing. A short move of a few feet along the same wall is on the lower end because the existing drain stack and vent are nearby. Moving the sink to an island in the middle of the kitchen is on the higher end because it requires running supply lines through the floor, installing a drain line with proper slope to the main stack, and often adding an island vent (air admittance valve or loop vent) to meet plumbing code requirements.

### What the Permit Covers

The plumbing permit process involves submitting a description of the work to your local building inspection department. In cities like Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, the municipal department handles this and typically processes permits within 1 to 3 weeks. In rural NB areas covered by Regional Service Commissions, allow 2 to 5 weeks. Permit fees for residential plumbing work are generally \$75 to \$200.

The inspection has two stages: a **rough-in inspection** after the supply and drain lines are installed but before the floor or walls are closed up, and a **final inspection** once the sink and faucet are connected and operational. The rough-in inspection is the critical one — the inspector checks pipe sizing, drain slope (1/4 inch per foot minimum), proper venting, supply line materials, and valve placement. If you close up the walls or floor before the rough-in inspection, you may be required to tear out the finished work so the inspector can see the pipes.

While you are opening up the floor and walls for the sink relocation, this is the ideal time to assess the condition of your existing plumbing. Many older NB homes built before 1980 have galvanized steel supply pipes that corrode internally, reducing water pressure and potentially leaching contaminants. Replacing these with copper or PEX while the walls are open adds relatively little cost compared to doing it as a separate project later. Your licensed plumber can advise on whether a full or partial repipe makes sense for your situation.

A qualified kitchen renovation contractor will coordinate the plumbing permit and inspections as part of your project timeline, ensuring the rough-in inspection happens before cabinets and countertops go in.

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Q9

## What happens if I renovate my NB kitchen without a building permit?

**Renovating without a required building permit in New Brunswick creates serious legal, financial, and safety risks that far outweigh any perceived savings in time or money.** The consequences can follow you for years, particularly when you try to sell your home or file an insurance claim.

**Insurance implications** are arguably the most dangerous consequence. If unpermitted electrical work causes a fire, or unpermitted plumbing causes water damage, your home insurance company can deny your claim entirely. Insurers routinely investigate the cause of losses, and if they discover that the work was done without required permits and inspections, they have grounds to void coverage. On a kitchen fire claim that could be worth \$50,000 to \$200,000 or more, losing insurance coverage is financially devastating.

**Selling your home** becomes complicated with unpermitted work. During a real estate transaction in New Brunswick, the buyer's lawyer will search municipal records for permit history. If your kitchen renovation involved obvious electrical, plumbing, or structural changes but no permits were pulled, the buyer or their lawyer may demand that you obtain retroactive permits and inspections — which could mean opening up finished walls and ceilings so an inspector can see the wiring and plumbing. Retroactive permitting and remediation can cost \$5,000 to \$15,000 or more, and it often delays or kills the sale entirely. Some buyers will simply walk away from a home with unpermitted renovations.

**Municipal enforcement** varies across New Brunswick. Cities like Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John have building inspection departments that can issue stop-work orders, fines, and orders to remove unpermitted work. If a neighbour reports the renovation or an inspector notices work being done during a routine visit, you could face penalties. In rural areas under Regional Service Commissions, enforcement may be less proactive, but the legal requirements are identical.

## The Safety Factor

**Safety is the fundamental reason permits exist.** Kitchen electrical and plumbing systems are the most demanding in any home. Improperly wired circuits can cause fires — kitchens have the highest fire risk of any room. Incorrect plumbing can lead to sewage gas leaks, water contamination, or flooding. Structural modifications done without engineering can cause walls, floors, or roofs to sag or fail over time. The rough-in inspection catches these problems before they are hidden behind drywall.

The NB Building Code requires a minimum of two 20-amp small appliance circuits for countertop outlets, GFCI protection near sinks, dedicated circuits for major appliances, proper drain venting, and adequate structural support. Without inspections, there is no independent verification that any of this was done correctly.

**The cost of doing it right is minimal.** Permit fees in New Brunswick range from \$75 to \$300 — a fraction of even a basic kitchen renovation budget. The inspection process adds 1 to 2 weeks to your timeline at most. Compare that to the potential cost of denied insurance claims, failed home sales, or unsafe conditions, and permits are clearly worth the small investment. Any reputable kitchen contractor in New Brunswick will pull the required permits as standard practice.

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## What are the GFCI outlet requirements for NB kitchens?

**All kitchen countertop receptacles within 1.5 metres of a sink must have GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) protection under the NB Building Code, which adopts the Canadian Electrical Code.** In practice, most electricians in New Brunswick install GFCI protection on all kitchen countertop circuits because it is safer, simpler, and meets code regardless of the exact sink distance.

A GFCI device monitors the electrical current flowing through a circuit and trips within milliseconds if it detects a ground fault — which is what happens when electricity finds an unintended path, such as through water or a person. Kitchens are high-risk areas for ground faults because water, wet hands, and electrical appliances are in constant proximity. GFCI protection has prevented countless electrocutions since it became a code requirement, and it is non-negotiable in any kitchen renovation that involves electrical work.

The NB Building Code also requires a **minimum of two dedicated 20-amp small appliance circuits** serving kitchen countertop outlets. These circuits must not serve any other loads — no lights, no refrigerator, no dishwasher. Each of these two circuits should have GFCI protection. The outlets must be spaced so that no point along the countertop is more than 900mm (about 3 feet) from a receptacle, ensuring you always have a nearby outlet for countertop appliances without stretching cords across the workspace.

In addition to the countertop circuits, **dedicated circuits are required** for the refrigerator, dishwasher, range or oven, microwave, and garbage disposal. The dishwasher receptacle should also have GFCI protection given its proximity to water. The refrigerator circuit is sometimes debated — some electricians install GFCI protection on it, while others avoid it because a nuisance trip on a GFCI can shut off your refrigerator while you are away, potentially spoiling food. Discuss this with your electrician to decide the best approach for your situation.

### Older NB Homes and GFCI Upgrades

Many New Brunswick homes built before the mid-1980s have no GFCI protection in the kitchen at all. If your home was built in the 1960s, 1970s, or even 1980s, there is a good chance your kitchen has ungrounded two-prong outlets or grounded outlets without GFCI protection on a single 15-amp circuit shared with other rooms. This does not meet current code and is a genuine safety hazard.

During a kitchen renovation, your electrician will bring the electrical system up to current NB Building Code standards for the work being done. This typically means installing GFCI-protected 20-amp circuits for the countertop, adding dedicated circuits for appliances, and potentially upgrading the electrical panel if it is a 60-amp service that cannot support the additional circuits. Panel upgrades from 60-amp to 100 or 200-amp cost \$1,500 to \$4,000 and are commonly needed in older homes across Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and throughout the

province.

GFCI protection can be provided either at the receptacle itself (GFCI outlet with test and reset buttons) or at the circuit breaker in the panel (GFCI breaker). Both methods are code-compliant. GFCI breakers protect the entire circuit from the panel, while GFCI receptacles protect downstream outlets from that point. Your electrician will recommend the best approach based on your panel type and circuit layout. Any electrical changes require a permit and inspection — this is not a DIY project, and the permit fees of \$75 to \$150 are a small price for verified safety.

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**Q11**

## **Does removing a wall in my NB kitchen require a structural engineer?**

**Yes, if the wall is load-bearing, you absolutely need a structural engineer before any demolition work begins.** Even if you suspect the wall is non-load-bearing, a professional assessment is strongly recommended because getting it wrong can compromise your home's structural integrity. In New Brunswick, removing or modifying a load-bearing wall requires a building permit with engineered drawings, and your municipality will not issue the permit without them.

The difference between a load-bearing and non-load-bearing wall is critical. Load-bearing walls support the weight of the roof, upper floors, or both, and removing one without proper support transfers that load to areas not designed to handle it. In many NB homes built between the 1960s and 1990s, kitchen walls that appear to simply divide rooms are actually carrying structural loads. A structural engineer will assess the wall, determine the loads involved, and design an appropriate beam and post system to replace it. This engineering report typically costs \$500 to \$1,500 in New Brunswick, depending on complexity.

### **The Permit and Inspection Process**

Once you have engineered drawings, you submit them with your building permit application. In Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, the municipal building inspection department handles this directly, with typical

processing times of one to three weeks. If you live in a rural area, your application goes through your Regional Service Commission, which can take two to five weeks. Permit fees generally run \$75 to \$300 depending on scope and municipality.

Your renovation will require at least two inspections: a rough-in inspection after the new beam and posts are installed but before the ceiling and walls are closed up, and a final inspection once everything is finished. Skipping the rough-in inspection is a code violation that could force you to tear out finished work to expose the structure, adding thousands of dollars and weeks of delay.

## What This Adds to Your Budget

The total cost of removing a load-bearing wall in an NB kitchen typically breaks down as follows: structural engineering at \$500 to \$1,500, the permit at \$75 to \$300, and the construction work itself including the beam, posts, temporary shoring, and finishing at \$3,000 to \$8,000 or more depending on span length and load. A standard LVL or steel beam for a typical kitchen opening of 10 to 14 feet can cost \$1,500 to \$3,000 for materials alone.

If the wall contains plumbing, electrical wiring, or HVAC ductwork, those systems must be rerouted before demolition, which adds another \$1,500 to \$4,000 to the project. Older NB homes with knob-and-tube wiring or galvanized plumbing inside the wall will see costs on the higher end because those systems should be brought up to current code standards rather than simply relocated.

The open-concept kitchen layout is one of the most popular renovation goals in New Brunswick, and the results can be transformative. Just make sure you start with the engineer and the permit rather than a sledgehammer. A qualified kitchen renovation contractor will coordinate the engineering, permitting, and construction as part of the project. Need help finding one? New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with local kitchen renovators for free.

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**Q12**

## What are the minimum circuit requirements for NB kitchen electrical?

**New Brunswick's building code requires a minimum of two dedicated 20-amp small appliance circuits for kitchen countertop outlets, plus individual dedicated circuits for major appliances.** These are not suggestions but hard requirements that your electrician must meet and your building inspector will verify. Any electrical changes in your kitchen renovation require a permit and inspection through your local municipality.

The two 20-amp small appliance branch circuits serve all the countertop receptacles where you plug in toasters, kettles, blenders, and other portable appliances. These circuits must be split-wired or alternated so that adjacent outlets are on different circuits, which prevents tripping a breaker when running two appliances at once. All countertop outlets within 1.5 metres of a sink must have GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) protection, which is a critical safety requirement that protects against electrical shock in the wet environment around a kitchen sink.

Beyond the countertop circuits, each major appliance needs its own dedicated circuit. Your refrigerator requires a dedicated 15-amp or 20-amp circuit. The dishwasher needs a dedicated 20-amp circuit. An electric range or oven requires a dedicated 40-amp or 50-amp 240-volt circuit, while a gas range still needs a dedicated 15-amp circuit for the igniter and controls. The microwave, especially if it is an over-the-range model, should have its own dedicated 20-amp circuit. If you are installing a garburator, that also requires a dedicated circuit.

## **The Panel Capacity Problem in Older NB Homes**

This is where many New Brunswick kitchen renovations hit an unexpected cost. A significant number of NB homes built before the 1980s still have 60-amp electrical panels, and some even have older fuse panels. A modern kitchen with all required dedicated circuits simply cannot run on a 60-amp service. You will need a panel upgrade to 100-amp or 200-amp service, which costs \$1,500 to \$4,000 in New Brunswick depending on whether the utility needs to upgrade the service entrance as well.

Have your electrician assess your panel capacity early in the planning process, ideally before you finalize your renovation budget. Discovering a panel upgrade is needed after cabinets are ordered is a budget shock that derails timelines. In Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, electrical permit processing typically takes one to two weeks. Rural areas served by Regional Service Commissions may take longer.

A good kitchen renovator will coordinate the electrical work with the overall project schedule, ensuring the rough-in wiring is done and inspected before walls are closed and cabinets are installed. The electrical rough-in for a kitchen renovation in NB typically costs \$500 to \$2,500 depending on how much existing wiring needs to be replaced or extended, not including any panel upgrade. If your home still has knob-and-tube wiring in the kitchen walls, it must be replaced entirely during the renovation, which is both a code requirement and an insurance issue.

Planning your outlet placement carefully during the design phase will save you money and frustration. Think about where you will use small appliances, where your coffee station will be, and whether you want outlets in your island. Getting the electrical right is one of those invisible investments that makes your kitchen work beautifully for

decades.

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## How do NB building inspections work for kitchen renovations?

**Building inspections for kitchen renovations in New Brunswick follow a two-stage process: a rough-in inspection before walls and ceilings are closed, and a final inspection after all work is complete.** The specific requirements depend on the scope of your renovation and which permits you have pulled. Cosmetic work like painting, replacing hardware, or installing a new backsplash does not require permits or inspections, but any electrical, plumbing, or structural changes do.

The inspection process begins when you or your contractor applies for the appropriate permits. In New Brunswick's larger cities like Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, your local municipal building inspection department handles this directly. Processing typically takes one to three weeks, and permit fees range from \$75 to \$300 depending on the scope of work. If you live outside a municipal boundary in a rural area, your permits go through your Regional Service Commission, where processing can take two to five weeks due to fewer staff covering larger territories.

### What Inspectors Look For

The **rough-in inspection** is the critical one. This happens after your contractor has completed all the behind-the-wall work but before drywall, flooring, or cabinets are installed. The electrical inspector checks that wiring meets code requirements, including the minimum two 20-amp countertop circuits, GFCI protection near sinks, and dedicated circuits for each major appliance. The plumbing inspector verifies that supply and drain lines are properly sized, vented, and connected. If you have structural work, the building inspector confirms the beam, posts, and connections match the engineered drawings.

You must not close up walls before the rough-in inspection is complete and approved. This is one of the most costly mistakes homeowners make in NB kitchen renovations. If you drywall before inspection, the inspector can require you to tear it all out to expose the work, adding thousands of dollars and weeks of delay to your project.

The **final inspection** happens once all work is complete. Inspectors verify that everything is finished to code, all fixtures are operational, GFCI outlets are functioning, and the work matches what was permitted. Once you pass the final inspection, you receive your occupancy approval and the permit is closed.

In practical terms, your contractor should be managing the inspection scheduling as part of the project timeline. Experienced NB kitchen renovators build inspection wait times into their schedules. In busy summer months from May through October, inspection wait times can stretch to one to two weeks in cities and even longer in RSC areas. Winter renovations from November through March often have shorter wait times, which is one more reason some homeowners choose the off-season for their kitchen project.

Keep copies of all permit approvals and inspection reports. They are valuable when selling your home, as buyers and their home inspectors will want to see that renovation work was properly permitted and inspected. If you need help finding a kitchen renovator who handles the full permit and inspection process, New Brunswick Kitchens can match you with experienced local contractors for free.

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Q14

## What WorkSafeNB coverage should my kitchen contractor have?

**Every kitchen renovation contractor working in your New Brunswick home should have active WorkSafeNB coverage, and you should verify it before any work begins.** WorkSafeNB is New Brunswick's workplace health and safety and workers' compensation commission. If a contractor working in your home is not covered and a worker is injured on your property, you as the homeowner could be held financially liable for their medical costs, lost wages, and rehabilitation.

WorkSafeNB coverage means that the contractor has registered their business, is paying premiums based on their payroll and industry classification, and their workers are protected if injured on the job. This is not optional for contractors who employ workers. Sole proprietors can opt for personal optional coverage, but any contractor with employees is required by law to carry WorkSafeNB. When you are getting quotes for your kitchen renovation, ask each contractor for their WorkSafeNB clearance letter or registration number. You can verify their status directly through WorkSafeNB's employer compliance verification.

### Insurance Beyond WorkSafeNB

WorkSafeNB covers workplace injuries to the contractor's workers, but it does not cover damage to your property. For that, your contractor needs commercial general liability insurance, typically a minimum of \$2 million in coverage. This protects you if a contractor accidentally damages your home during the renovation, such as a burst pipe flooding your basement, a dropped countertop cracking your floor, or a fire started by construction equipment.

Ask for a certificate of insurance and confirm it is current.

A properly insured kitchen contractor in New Brunswick should have three things: active WorkSafeNB registration, commercial general liability insurance of at least \$2 million, and if they are doing any vehicle-based deliveries or hauling, commercial auto insurance. Some homeowner insurance policies also require you to verify contractor coverage before renovation work begins, so check with your own insurer as well.

## Why This Matters Especially in NB

New Brunswick's kitchen renovation market includes a wide range of contractors, from well-established companies with full insurance and coverage to individuals working on the side without proper registration. The price difference can be tempting. An uninsured contractor might quote your kitchen renovation 15 to 25 percent lower than a properly covered one. But if something goes wrong, whether it is a worker injury, property damage, or substandard work, you have no recourse and potentially significant personal liability.

The financial risk is real. A serious workplace injury can result in hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical and compensation costs. Without WorkSafeNB coverage, that liability could fall on you. Similarly, a kitchen renovation gone wrong without liability insurance means you are paying twice: once for the original work and again to fix it.

When evaluating quotes from kitchen renovators in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, or anywhere in New Brunswick, make insurance verification your first step before comparing prices, timelines, or design options. A legitimate contractor will have no hesitation providing proof of coverage. If they dodge the question or claim they do not need it, that is a clear warning sign. New Brunswick Kitchens helps connect homeowners with verified local kitchen renovation contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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**Q15**

## Can I renovate a kitchen in a heritage home in Saint John NB?

**Yes, you can renovate a kitchen in a heritage-designated home in Saint John, but you may face additional review requirements depending on the heritage status of your property and the scope of your renovation.**

Saint John has one of the largest collections of heritage buildings in Canada, and the city takes preservation seriously through its Heritage Conservation Areas and individually designated properties.

If your home is located in a **Heritage Conservation Area**, such as parts of the uptown core, or if it has been individually designated under the New Brunswick Heritage Conservation Act, exterior changes require approval from the Heritage Development Board. The good news is that kitchen renovations are primarily interior work, and interior modifications are generally not subject to heritage review unless they affect the building's structural integrity or visible character-defining elements like original plaster mouldings, transom windows, or heritage-era woodwork in public-facing rooms. A straightforward kitchen renovation involving new cabinets, countertops, flooring, and appliances within the existing layout can typically proceed with standard building permits.

However, heritage kitchens in Saint John often come with **unique challenges tied to the age of the building**. Many of these homes date from the 1850s to 1920s and feature knob-and-tube wiring, galvanized or even lead plumbing, plaster-and-lath walls, minimal insulation on exterior walls, and electrical panels as small as 60 amps. A modern kitchen renovation in one of these homes almost always requires electrical panel upgrades (\$1,500 to \$4,000), plumbing replacement, and potentially asbestos abatement if the original flooring contains asbestos tiles, which was common in homes built before 1980. Budget 15 to 25 percent more than you would for the same renovation in a newer home to account for these hidden conditions.

## **Permits and Practical Considerations**

Standard NB building permit requirements apply to heritage homes just as they do to any other property. Electrical changes require an electrical permit and inspection, plumbing modifications require a plumbing permit, and structural changes like removing load-bearing walls need a building permit with engineered drawings. In Saint John, the building inspection department handles these permits directly. Allow 1 to 3 weeks for permit processing.

If your renovation involves **structural changes** such as removing a wall to create an open-concept kitchen, extra care is needed. Heritage homes often have load-bearing configurations that differ from modern framing, including brick masonry load-bearing walls and timber-frame construction. A structural engineer familiar with heritage buildings should assess any wall before removal. This assessment typically costs \$500 to \$1,500 and is money well spent.

For the kitchen design itself, many homeowners in heritage Saint John homes choose to honour the character of the building with period-appropriate details such as Shaker or recessed-panel cabinetry, subway tile backsplash, farmhouse sinks, and traditional hardware, while still incorporating modern functionality like quartz countertops, soft-close drawers, and energy-efficient appliances. This blended approach preserves the home's charm while

delivering a fully functional modern kitchen.

Moisture management is especially important in heritage homes. Exterior walls may lack modern vapour barriers, and NB's Maritime humidity can cause mold behind cabinets installed against these walls. Your contractor should assess insulation and moisture conditions on any exterior kitchen wall and add appropriate barriers before installing cabinetry. Find a kitchen renovator experienced with heritage properties through New Brunswick Kitchens for a free consultation.

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## What kitchen ventilation is required by NB building code?

**New Brunswick Building Code requires kitchen ventilation capable of exhausting cooking contaminants, and for best performance and code compliance, a range hood that vents directly to the exterior is the recommended installation.** Recirculating range hoods (which filter and return air to the kitchen) are permitted in some situations, but they don't remove moisture — a serious concern in New Brunswick's already-humid Maritime climate.

The NB Building Code, which adopts the National Building Code of Canada with provincial amendments, requires that kitchens have mechanical ventilation. For residential kitchens, this means a **range hood or equivalent exhaust fan** installed above the cooking surface. The hood should cover the full width of your cooktop or range and be installed 24-30 inches above the cooking surface for standard residential hoods (check your specific model's installation requirements, as some vary). For gas ranges, an externally vented hood is strongly recommended because gas combustion produces carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and moisture that must be exhausted outside — not recirculated.

### Sizing and CFM Requirements

**Hood capacity is measured in CFM (cubic feet per minute)**, and sizing depends on your cooking equipment and kitchen size. For a standard 30-inch residential range, a hood rated at **250-400 CFM** is adequate. If you have a 36-inch professional-style range or a gas cooktop with high-BTU burners, you'll need 400-600 CFM or more. The general rule for gas ranges is 1 CFM per 100 BTU of burner output — a 60,000 BTU range needs at least 600 CFM.

When your hood exceeds **300 CFM**, NB Building Code requires **makeup air** — a system that replaces the air being exhausted to prevent negative pressure in the home. This is especially important in modern airtight NB homes and in older homes that have been retrofitted with improved insulation and air sealing. Negative pressure can cause backdrafting of gas appliances, fireplaces, and water heaters, which is a safety hazard. A makeup air damper integrated with the range hood is the most common residential solution, adding \$300-\$800 to the installation.

**Ductwork matters as much as the hood itself.** Use rigid metal duct (not flexible vinyl or foil) for fire safety and airflow efficiency. The duct should be as short and straight as possible — every 90-degree elbow reduces effective CFM by approximately 25%. Vent through an exterior wall or roof cap with a dampered termination to prevent cold NB winter air from blowing back in. During New Brunswick winters, cold air infiltration through a poorly sealed vent cap is a common complaint — install a quality backdraft damper at the hood connection and at the exterior cap.

**Permit requirements** vary by scope. If you're replacing a range hood on an existing duct run with the same electrical connection, most NB municipalities don't require a permit. However, if you're running new ductwork through walls, adding a new electrical circuit for the hood, or installing a makeup air system, you'll need building and potentially electrical permits. In cities like Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John, contact your municipal building inspection department. In rural areas, your Regional Service Commission (RSC) handles inspections — expect slightly longer processing times.

Budget \$200-\$600 for a quality residential range hood, \$300-\$800 for ductwork installation, and \$500-\$1,500 for electrical if a new circuit is needed. Professional installation is recommended for ducted hoods to ensure proper sealing, fire safety at wall penetrations, and code-compliant termination. In NB's climate, proper kitchen ventilation is not optional — it protects your cabinets, walls, and air quality from the moisture and grease that cooking generates daily.

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**Q17**

## **What are the insurance requirements for kitchen renovation contractors in NB?**

**Any kitchen renovation contractor working in New Brunswick should carry a minimum of \$2 million in commercial general liability (CGL) insurance and be registered with WorkSafeNB for workplace injury coverage — these are the two non-negotiable protections you need to verify before hiring anyone.** While New Brunswick does not have a mandatory contractor licensing system like some provinces, insurance and WorkSafeNB registration are the baseline standards that separate legitimate professionals from uninsured operators.

**Commercial general liability insurance** protects you if the contractor damages your property, if their work causes injury, or if a defect in their renovation leads to problems down the road. A \$2 million CGL policy is the industry standard in New Brunswick — many reputable contractors carry \$5 million. This coverage pays for repairs if, for example, a plumbing connection fails and floods your kitchen, or if faulty electrical work causes a fire. Without it,

you'd be pursuing the contractor personally through the courts, which is expensive, slow, and often unsuccessful if they don't have assets. Always ask for a **certificate of insurance** naming you as an additional insured for the duration of the project, and call the insurance company to verify it's current.

**WorkSafeNB registration** is required by law for any business with employees in New Brunswick. This covers workplace injuries — if a worker falls off a ladder or cuts themselves during demolition in your kitchen, WorkSafeNB covers their medical costs and lost wages. If a contractor is not registered and a worker is injured on your property, you could face liability. You can verify a contractor's WorkSafeNB status by requesting their **clearance letter** or checking directly with WorkSafeNB. Sole proprietors with no employees may be exempt from mandatory registration, but many choose to register voluntarily, which is a sign of professionalism.

## What to Verify Before Signing

Beyond CGL and WorkSafeNB, there are several other insurance-related checks worth making. **Errors and omissions insurance** (also called professional liability) covers design mistakes — relevant if your contractor is also doing the kitchen design. **Vehicle insurance** with commercial coverage should be in place if they're transporting materials in company vehicles. If they're using subcontractors for electrical, plumbing, or gas work, verify that those trades carry their own insurance and appropriate trade certifications.

For **electrical work** during your kitchen renovation, the electrician must hold a valid NB electrical license. For **plumbing**, a licensed plumber is required for any work involving supply or drain line modifications. Gas line connections for gas ranges must be done by a licensed gas fitter. Each of these trades should carry their own liability insurance and WorkSafeNB coverage independent of the general contractor.

The practical step is straightforward: before signing any contract, request copies of the contractor's CGL insurance certificate, WorkSafeNB clearance letter, and any applicable trade licenses. A legitimate contractor will provide these without hesitation — they deal with this request on every job. If a contractor pushes back, offers excuses, or says insurance "isn't necessary for a small job," that's a major red flag. Even a cosmetic kitchen refresh involving new countertops and backsplash (\$12,000 to \$20,000) involves enough risk to warrant proper coverage.

New Brunswick Kitchens recommends always getting three or more quotes from insured, WorkSafeNB-registered contractors. Pricing in NB can vary 30 to 40 percent between contractors for identical scope, so shopping around protects both your budget and your peace of mind.

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