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# Bathroom Renovation

Bathroom renovation projects including showers, tubs, vanities, tile, plumbing fixtures, and full bathroom remodels in NB

20 Expert Answers from Reno IQ

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## How much does it cost to add a main-floor bathroom for accessibility in NB?

**Adding a main-floor bathroom for accessibility in New Brunswick typically costs \$25,000-\$45,000,**

depending on whether you're converting existing space or building an addition. Converting a closet, laundry room, or portion of another room runs \$25,000-\$35,000, while building a small addition costs \$35,000-\$45,000.

The cost breakdown includes several major components that make accessibility bathrooms more expensive than standard powder rooms. **Plumbing rough-in** represents the largest expense at \$8,000-\$15,000, especially if you're adding the bathroom far from existing plumbing lines. Running new water supply and waste lines through finished walls and floors requires significant demolition and restoration work. **Electrical work** adds \$2,000-\$4,000 for proper lighting, ventilation fan, and GFCI outlets - all requiring TSANB-licensed electricians in New Brunswick.

**Accessibility features** drive costs higher than standard bathrooms. A barrier-free shower with grab bars, fold-down seat, and slip-resistant flooring costs \$6,000-\$10,000 installed. Comfort-height toilets with grab bar reinforcement add \$800-\$1,500. A wheelchair-accessible vanity with knee clearance runs \$2,000-\$4,000. The 5-foot turning radius required for wheelchair accessibility often necessitates a larger footprint than a standard powder room, increasing construction costs.

New Brunswick's climate creates specific challenges for accessibility bathroom additions. **Moisture management** is critical - these bathrooms see heavy use and need robust ventilation systems to handle Maritime humidity swings. A proper exhaust fan rated for the room size costs \$300-\$800, plus installation. **Heating considerations** are important since accessibility bathrooms are often located on exterior walls or in additions where heat loss is significant. In-floor radiant heating (\$8-\$15 per square foot) provides comfortable, even warmth that's especially beneficial for users with mobility challenges.

**Foundation and structural work** varies dramatically by approach. Converting existing space may require removing non-load-bearing walls (\$1,500-\$3,000) and potentially reinforcing floors for grab bar mounting. Building an addition requires a full foundation below NB's 4-5 foot frost line, adding \$8,000-\$15,000 to the project cost. Winter construction limitations mean addition-based accessibility bathrooms are best started in late spring for completion before cold weather.

The **permit and inspection process** in New Brunswick requires building permits for structural changes, plumbing rough-in, and electrical work. Municipal permit fees run \$200-\$500, while TSANB inspections for plumbing and electrical are mandatory. Factor in 2-4 weeks for permit approval before construction can begin.

**Timeline expectations** run 4-8 weeks for conversions and 8-12 weeks for additions, assuming no weather delays. The critical path involves plumbing rough-in, which must be completed and inspected before any finishing work

begins. Tile work requires 7-10 days for proper curing in NB's variable humidity conditions.

**Professional requirements** include licensed plumbers and electricians for all rough-in work - this is provincial law, not optional. The structural assessment for grab bar mounting should be done by a qualified contractor familiar with accessibility requirements. Many NB contractors have experience with accessibility renovations through provincial aging-in-place programs.

Budget an additional **15-20% contingency** for unexpected issues, especially in older NB homes where hidden plumbing, electrical, or structural surprises are common. Material costs fluctuate, so get current quotes from multiple contractors.

Need help finding an experienced accessibility renovation contractor in your area? New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with local professionals who specialize in barrier-free bathroom installations for free estimates on your specific project.

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Q2

## Should I choose porcelain or ceramic tile for a bathroom renovation in NB?

**Porcelain tile is the better choice for New Brunswick bathroom renovations** due to its superior water resistance and durability in our humid Maritime climate, though ceramic remains a solid budget-friendly option for powder rooms and guest bathrooms.

**Porcelain's advantages in NB bathrooms** make it worth the 20-30% price premium over ceramic. Porcelain absorbs less than 0.5% water compared to ceramic's 3-7%, which matters significantly in New Brunswick's humidity swings from 20% in winter to 70% in summer. This lower absorption rate means porcelain won't crack from freeze-thaw cycles if moisture penetrates through grout lines, and it resists staining from soap scum and hard water minerals common in NB well water. Porcelain also handles thermal shock better when hot shower steam hits cold tile surfaces during winter months.

**For high-use NB bathrooms** — master ensuite showers, family bathrooms with tubs, and any bathroom with poor ventilation — porcelain delivers better long-term performance. Expect to pay **\$4-\$12 per square foot** for quality porcelain tile versus **\$2-\$8 per square foot** for ceramic. Installation costs are identical at **\$8-\$15 per square foot** for professional installation including proper waterproofing membrane, which is essential in NB's moisture-prone climate. A typical 100 square foot bathroom renovation runs **\$1,200-\$2,700** total for porcelain tile and installation versus **\$1,000-\$2,300** for ceramic.

**Ceramic tile works well for lower-moisture applications** like powder rooms, guest bathrooms, and bathroom floors (not shower areas) where budget is the primary concern. Modern ceramic tiles have improved significantly and offer excellent value for areas that won't see daily shower exposure. However, in shower surrounds and high-splash zones, porcelain's superior water resistance prevents the gradual moisture infiltration that leads to grout failure and tile loosening over time.

**Installation considerations for NB bathrooms** are critical regardless of tile choice. Both porcelain and ceramic require proper substrate preparation with cement backer board (never drywall in wet areas), waterproof membrane behind shower areas, and quality grout with proper sealing. Use epoxy grout or high-quality urethane grout in shower areas — traditional cement grout absorbs moisture and fails prematurely in NB's humidity. Plan for **\$200-\$400** additional cost for proper waterproofing materials, but this prevents thousands in water damage repairs later.

**Seasonal timing affects your tile project** since adhesives and grout need consistent temperatures above 10°C to cure properly. Schedule bathroom tile work between May and October for best results, or ensure adequate heating during winter installations. Tiles should acclimate indoors for 24-48 hours before installation to prevent thermal shock cracking.

**Professional installation is strongly recommended** for bathroom tile work involving waterproofing, especially in shower surrounds. Improper waterproofing behind tile leads to rot, mould, and structural damage that costs **\$5,000-\$15,000** to remediate properly. A skilled tile installer will ensure proper slope to drains, waterproof membrane installation, and expansion joints where tile meets tub or shower pan.

For most NB bathroom renovations, porcelain tile in shower surrounds and wet areas with ceramic tile on floors and lower-splash walls offers the best balance of performance and budget. This hybrid approach puts premium materials where moisture exposure is highest while controlling costs in drier areas.

Need help finding an experienced tile installer in your area? New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with local professionals who understand proper bathroom waterproofing techniques for our Maritime climate.

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Q3

## What is the best exhaust fan for a bathroom renovation in NB's humid climate?

**For New Brunswick's humid climate, choose a bathroom exhaust fan rated at least 1 CFM per square foot of bathroom area, with a humidity sensor and timer controls.** The Panasonic WhisperSense or Broan Sensonic series are excellent choices, offering quiet operation (under 1.5 sones), automatic humidity detection, and the reliability needed for NB's demanding moisture conditions.

### Fan Sizing and Performance Requirements

New Brunswick's extreme humidity swings — from 20-30% in winter to 60-70% in summer — put enormous stress on bathroom ventilation systems. A properly sized exhaust fan is your first defense against mould, mildew, and moisture damage that plagues many NB homes. Calculate your minimum CFM requirement by measuring your bathroom's square footage and selecting a fan rated for at least that CFM output. A 5x8 bathroom (40 sq ft) needs minimum 40 CFM, but upgrading to 50-60 CFM provides better moisture removal during NB's humid summers.

### Smart Controls for Maritime Conditions

Humidity sensor fans automatically activate when moisture levels rise, regardless of whether someone remembers to flip the switch. This is crucial in NB homes where shower steam can quickly reach dangerous levels. Timer controls keep the fan running 15-30 minutes after use, ensuring complete moisture removal. Some models like the Panasonic WhisperSense combine both features with adjustable sensitivity settings. These smart controls are particularly valuable during NB's shoulder seasons when outdoor humidity fluctuates dramatically day to night.

### Quiet Operation and Energy Efficiency

Choose fans rated under 1.5 sones for quiet operation — loud fans get turned off, defeating their purpose. Energy Star rated models use 60-70% less electricity than standard fans, important for year-round operation in NB's climate. LED lighting integration eliminates the need for separate light fixtures while providing excellent illumination. Models with DC motors run quieter and more efficiently than traditional AC motors.

### Installation and Ductwork Considerations

**Proper ductwork is critical in NB's freeze-thaw climate.** Exhaust ducts must terminate outside the building — never into attic spaces where moisture will condense and cause rot. Use insulated rigid ducting where possible, or insulated flexible ducting with minimal bends. Install a high-quality exterior wall cap with a spring-loaded damper to prevent cold air infiltration during NB's harsh winters. The ductwork should slope slightly toward the exterior to drain any condensation that forms.

In coastal NB communities, choose exterior caps made from stainless steel or powder-coated aluminum to resist salt air corrosion. Standard galvanized caps will rust within 3-5 years in marine environments around the Bay of Fundy or Northumberland Strait.

### **Professional Installation Requirements**

Bathroom exhaust fan installation requires electrical work that must be performed by a TSANB-licensed electrician in New Brunswick. The fan needs dedicated wiring, proper GFCI protection, and code-compliant installation. If you're adding a new fan where none existed, this involves cutting ceiling or wall openings, running new electrical circuits, and potentially modifying roof or wall penetrations for ductwork.

### **Budget and Timeline**

Quality bathroom exhaust fans cost **\$150-\$400** for the unit itself. Professional installation including electrical work and ductwork runs **\$300-\$600** depending on complexity and access. Total project cost typically ranges **\$450-\$1,000**. Installation takes 3-6 hours for straightforward replacements, or a full day for new installations requiring electrical and ductwork modifications.

### **Maintenance for Long-Term Performance**

Clean fan grilles monthly and replace filters (if equipped) every 3-6 months. Annual professional cleaning of the fan motor and housing prevents buildup that reduces efficiency. In NB's dusty spring conditions and humid summers, regular maintenance extends fan life from 5-7 years to 10-15 years.

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## What size water heater do I need after adding a bathroom during a renovation in NB?

**Adding a bathroom typically requires upgrading to the next water heater size up from your current unit.**

Most NB homes with 2-3 bathrooms need a 50-60 gallon tank or a tankless unit rated for 3-4 simultaneous fixtures.

The standard rule is **10-15 gallons of hot water storage per person in the household**, but bathrooms are the biggest hot water users. A standard bathtub uses 25-30 gallons to fill, while a 10-minute shower consumes 15-25 gallons depending on the showerhead flow rate. Adding that extra bathroom means potential simultaneous use — someone showering while dishes are being washed or laundry is running.

**Current NB water heater sizing typically breaks down as follows:** 40 gallons for 1-2 people in a 1-bathroom home, 50 gallons for 2-3 people with 2 bathrooms, 60-80 gallons for 4+ people with 3+ bathrooms. If you're currently running a 40-gallon unit and adding a second bathroom, upgrading to 50-60 gallons makes sense. If you have a 50-gallon unit and adding a third bathroom, consider 60-80 gallons or switching to tankless.

**Tankless water heaters are increasingly popular in NB renovations** because they don't take up basement floor space and provide unlimited hot water. A whole-house tankless unit costs \$2,500-\$4,500 installed compared to \$1,200-\$2,000 for a tank unit, but the space savings and endless hot water appeal to many homeowners. Tankless units require adequate gas supply (if gas-fired) and may need electrical upgrades for electric models.

**NB's cold incoming water temperature affects sizing calculations.** Our groundwater enters homes at 6-8°C in winter compared to 12-15°C in warmer climates. This means your water heater works harder to reach the 60°C output temperature, effectively reducing capacity. Size up accordingly — what works as a 40-gallon unit in warmer regions may need to be 50 gallons in New Brunswick.

**Installation requires TSANB-licensed plumbers and gas fitters.** Water heater installation involves gas lines (if applicable), water connections, venting, electrical connections, and pressure relief valve installation. This is not DIY work. The installation cost runs \$500-\$1,200 depending on complexity, venting requirements, and whether gas lines need upgrading. Factor this into your bathroom addition budget.

**Consider your renovation timeline carefully.** If you're adding a bathroom as part of a larger renovation, coordinate the water heater upgrade early in the project. Running out of hot water mid-renovation when contractors need to clean up creates delays. Many contractors appreciate adequate hot water for cleanup and testing new fixtures.

**Energy efficiency matters in NB's climate.** Look for ENERGY STAR certified units with high efficiency ratings. Tank units should have thick insulation and electronic ignition (for gas models). Heat pump water heaters work well

in heated NB basements, extracting heat from basement air while providing hot water. They cost more upfront (\$3,000-\$4,500 installed) but can cut water heating costs by 50-60%.

Need help finding a TSANB-licensed plumber for your bathroom addition and water heater upgrade? New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with experienced local professionals who handle both the plumbing rough-in and water heater installation as part of your project.

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Q5

## How much does a bathroom renovation cost in New Brunswick in 2026?

**Bathroom renovation costs in New Brunswick in 2026 range from \$8,000-\$15,000 for a cosmetic update to \$30,000-\$50,000 for a full gut renovation with layout changes, and the wide range comes down to whether you're touching plumbing, electrical, and tile work or primarily swapping fixtures and updating finishes.**

Getting honest about your scope before you start is the single most important budgeting step.

At the cosmetic update level — **\$8,000-\$15,000** — you're replacing the vanity and faucet, adding a new mirror and light fixture, swapping the toilet, painting walls, and possibly adding new accessories. Tile stays, tub stays, layout stays, and plumbing rough-in isn't moved. This scope makes a remarkable visual difference in an older NB bathroom and is the right approach when the bones of the room are fundamentally sound. Labour for this scope is relatively modest because the trades (electrician, plumber) are swapping fixtures on existing rough-in, not doing new rough-in work.

The **mid-range renovation at \$15,000-\$30,000** is the most common scope in NB in 2026. This includes a full tile replacement (floor and shower or tub surround), a new tub or a tub-to-shower conversion, a new vanity with quality fixtures, updated lighting on existing or updated wiring, a new toilet, and often a fresh ventilation fan (which needs to be properly sized and vented to the exterior — an undersized or improperly terminated bathroom fan is endemic in older NB homes and contributes directly to moisture damage and mould). The plumbing rough-in typically stays in the same location even in a mid-range renovation, though fixture connections are all renewed.

**Full gut renovations at \$30,000-\$50,000** involve taking the room to the studs and subfloor, relocating plumbing drains and supply lines, installing in-floor heating, a custom tile shower with a linear drain, a freestanding tub, double vanity with integrated LED mirrors, and premium large-format tile throughout. This scope is appropriate for primary ensuite upgrades in NB homes being prepared for sale at the upper end of their market range, or for homeowners who are committing to staying in their home for 10+ years and want the room to be exactly right.

NB-specific cost factors matter significantly in bathroom renovations. **NB's humidity levels make proper ventilation mandatory**, not optional — a bathroom fan that doesn't adequately clear moisture from an NB shower will lead to mould on the ceiling, grout failure, and drywall deterioration within a few years. The NB building code specifies minimum ventilation requirements, and TSANB inspectors verify them during rough-in inspection. Budget for a properly sized exhaust fan (minimum 1 CFM per square foot of bathroom area, more for steam showers) vented through the roof or wall to the exterior.

**Waterproofing behind tile is non-negotiable in NB.** Modern bathroom renovation best practices call for a fully waterproofed shower assembly — either a sheet membrane system (like Schluter Kerdi or Wedi) or a liquid-applied membrane applied to the substrate before tile. The old approach of cement board alone without a dedicated waterproofing layer fails in NB's humidity conditions and leads to mould behind the tile that doesn't become apparent until the damage is extensive. Any contractor who proposes tiling directly over cement board without a waterproofing membrane should be asked to explain their approach in detail.

Labour rates for tile work — the most significant labour component in a full bathroom renovation — run **\$10-\$18/sq ft installed** in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John. Complex tile patterns, large-format tile (which requires a perfectly flat substrate), or natural stone add to the labour rate. Plumbing rough-in at a new drain location typically costs **\$1,500-\$3,500** per fixture relocation plus the TSANB permit fee. New electrical circuits and GFCI protection (mandatory within 1.5 metres of water sources in NB) add **\$800-\$2,000** depending on panel location and access.

For NB homeowners budgeting a bathroom renovation in 2026, build in a **15-20% contingency** on mid-range projects and **20-25% on full gut renovations**, particularly in homes built before 1990. Water damage discovered behind tile, rusted supply lines, or subfloor rot around a leaking toilet base are common surprises in NB bathroom renovations — and they're always cheaper to address properly when the room is already open than to patch and cover.

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Q6

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

**Whether you need a permit for a bathroom renovation in Moncton depends entirely on what work is being done — cosmetic updates like replacing a vanity, toilet, or fixtures on existing plumbing do not require a permit, but any new plumbing rough-in, electrical circuit work, or structural changes absolutely do, and these are inspected by both the City of Moncton and TSANB.** Getting this distinction right protects your investment, your insurance coverage, and your ability to sell the home without problems.

In Moncton, building permits for structural modifications are issued by the **City of Moncton Building Inspection Department**. If your bathroom renovation involves removing or altering any wall — particularly if there's any question about it being load-bearing — a building permit is required and a site inspection will be conducted at the structural stage. Moncton's building inspection office can be reached directly to confirm permit requirements for your specific scope; most permit questions get a clear answer over the phone without requiring a formal application.

**TSANB (Technical Safety Authority of New Brunswick) has jurisdiction over all electrical and plumbing work in the province**, regardless of whether it's in Moncton, rural NB, or anywhere in between. This is where most bathroom renovation permits are actually required. TSANB licensed plumbers and electricians pull their own permits through TSANB and coordinate inspections — this is their responsibility, not the homeowner's, when you hire a licensed trade. But as the homeowner, you should **confirm that your contractor is pulling the required permits and scheduling inspections**, not assuming they are.

Specifically for a Moncton bathroom renovation, **a plumbing permit is required for:** any new drain rough-in, relocating an existing drain or supply line, adding a fixture where none existed (adding a second sink, adding a shower where there was none), rough-in for a new bathroom, or replacing the bathtub where the drain changes. Swapping a toilet, replacing a vanity faucet, or connecting a new vanity to the existing supply and drain stub-outs does not require a plumbing permit.

**An electrical permit is required for:** any new electrical circuit (such as adding a dedicated circuit for a towel warmer, in-floor heating, or a separate circuit for a steam shower), relocating outlets, installing GFCI protection where it didn't previously exist (though GFCI receptacles and breakers are mandatory within 1.5 metres of water

sources under NB electrical code), adding a new exhaust fan circuit, or upgrading panel capacity. Replacing a light fixture on an existing circuit or swapping an exhaust fan for an identical unit on the same wiring typically does not require a permit, though the new fan must still meet current code requirements for ventilation capacity.

A practical example for a standard Moncton bathroom renovation: if you are replacing the tub surround tile, installing a new tub, replacing the vanity and toilet, and adding recessed lighting — but the drain stays in the same location, the plumbing rough-in doesn't move, and you're adding lights on existing circuits — you are likely in cosmetic update territory with no permit required. If you're converting a tub to a walk-in tile shower with a new linear drain location and adding new circuit capacity for in-floor heating, **both a plumbing permit and an electrical permit are required.**

**The serious risk of skipping required permits** in Moncton is not primarily the fine (though Moncton does enforce permit requirements). The real risk is that unpermitted electrical and plumbing work is not inspected, meaning errors that create fire or flood risk go undetected. When you sell your home, a real estate lawyer or home inspector may identify unpermitted work — requiring either tear-out for inspection or a significant price reduction. Home insurance policies in NB routinely exclude claims resulting from work that required a permit but didn't have one.

Always ask your renovation contractor directly: "What permits are you pulling for this project, and who is scheduling the inspections?" A licensed, reputable contractor will answer this question without hesitation. If a contractor suggests skipping the permit to save money or time, that is a significant red flag about how they operate generally.

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## What is the best tile for a bathroom in a New Brunswick home with high humidity?

**Porcelain tile is the best choice for NB bathrooms**, and specifically a rectified porcelain with a PEI rating of 3 or higher for floors and a Mohs hardness of 7+ for walls — it absorbs virtually no moisture (less than 0.5%), holds up to NB's dramatic humidity swings, and won't harbour mould the way porous materials will.

NB's Maritime climate creates some of the most demanding bathroom conditions in the country. Indoor humidity can swing from 20-30% in deep winter with forced-air heating to 60-70% in summer, and that cycle stresses every bathroom surface. Porcelain handles this swing without warping, cracking, or deteriorating at the grout joints. Ceramic tile is a reasonable budget alternative for wall installations — it performs similarly to porcelain on low-moisture walls — but for floors and shower surrounds, porcelain's density and low absorption rate make it the clear choice.

For the shower itself, large-format tiles (24x24 or 24x48) actually reduce the number of grout lines, which means fewer moisture pathways into the substrate. **Epoxy grout** is worth the premium for any wet area — it resists staining, doesn't absorb moisture, and won't support mould growth the way traditional cement grout does. Standard sanded or unsanded grout in a NB shower will begin showing mould and discolouration within a few years no matter how diligently you clean, simply because of how persistently humid our air is. Epoxy grout applied over a proper waterproofing membrane is the combination that actually lasts.

One of the most important decisions in a NB bathroom tile job isn't the tile itself — it's the substrate and waterproofing behind it. Cement board (HardieBacker or equivalent) rather than standard drywall is the correct substrate for any tiled wet area. Beyond cement board, a sheet-applied or liquid-applied waterproofing membrane (such as Schluter KERDI or RedGard) over the cement board creates a genuine moisture barrier before the tile goes on. Skipping the waterproofing membrane and relying on the tile and grout alone is the single most common mistake in NB bathroom renovations, and it produces mould inside the wall cavity within 3-7 years.

For floor tile in a bathroom where bare feet land on cold mornings, textured or matte-finish porcelain with a slip resistance rating of R10 or higher is both safer and more practical than polished surfaces. Smaller mosaic tiles (1x1 or 2x2) on shower floors create more grout lines for grip — just remember that more grout lines mean more epoxy grout to apply properly.

**Natural stone** (marble, travertine, slate) is beautiful but requires sealing every 1-2 years in NB's humidity, and even sealed stone is more porous than porcelain. If you love the look of stone, large-format porcelain tiles that convincingly replicate marble and travertine are widely available and perform far better in Maritime conditions without the maintenance demands.

For tile installation, any NB bathroom tile job involving a new shower or full floor and wall tile should be done by a qualified tile setter — proper waterproofing membrane installation, correct thinset selection (large-format tiles need a large-format thinset), and precise levelling are skills that make the difference between a bathroom that looks great for 20 years and one that needs regrouting or full tearout in five. Backsplash tile on a vanity wall behind a sink is genuinely DIY-friendly if you have patience and a decent tile saw.

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Q8

## How much does it cost to add a second bathroom in a New Brunswick home?

**Adding a second bathroom to an NB home typically costs \$25,000-\$55,000**, depending on whether it's a full bath or a half-bath, the complexity of running new plumbing, and your chosen finishes. A simple half-bath addition in existing finished space runs \$15,000-\$25,000; a full bathroom with a tub/shower, toilet, and vanity in a space that requires new plumbing rough-in runs \$30,000-\$55,000.

The single biggest cost driver in adding a bathroom is plumbing — specifically, how far the new bath is from your existing drain stack and water supply lines. Plumbing work in NB falls under TSANB (Technical Safety Authority of NB) jurisdiction, which means all rough-in must be done by a licensed plumber and inspected before walls are closed. If you can locate the new bathroom directly above or adjacent to an existing stack, the plumbing rough-in stays manageable at \$5,000-\$10,000. If you're adding a bathroom in a basement corner far from any existing drain, you may need to break concrete and run new drains, pushing rough-in costs to \$12,000-\$18,000 on their own. A sewage ejector pump adds another \$2,000-\$4,000 if gravity drainage isn't possible.

On top of plumbing, electrical work is a required part of every NB bathroom addition — a dedicated 20-amp circuit for the bathroom, GFCI outlets, and exhaust fan wiring all require a licensed electrician and TSANB electrical inspection. Expect \$2,000-\$4,000 for bathroom electrical work. In older NB homes with 60-amp or 100-amp panels that are already near capacity, a panel upgrade may be required, adding \$2,500-\$5,000 to the project.

**A building permit is required** for adding a bathroom anywhere in NB — you're adding plumbing, electrical, and potentially modifying structural elements. In Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, and other incorporated municipalities, apply through the city building department. In rural NB, go through your Regional Service Commission. Budget \$150-\$400 for permit fees and plan for inspections at rough-in and completion stages.

For the bathroom finishes themselves, a mid-range NB bathroom addition might include a standard alcove tub with tiled surround (\$3,000-\$6,000), a vanity with sink (\$800-\$2,500), toilet (\$300-\$700), tile floor (\$1,500-\$3,000), and lighting and accessories (\$500-\$1,500). Premium finishes — walk-in tile shower, floating vanity, heated floors, designer tile — can add \$10,000-\$20,000 to the finish budget alone.

**NB-specific considerations matter significantly here.** If you're finishing a basement bathroom, the spring snowmelt season (April through June) raises hydrostatic pressure against NB foundations — any basement bathroom must include proper floor waterproofing and a reliable sump pump system before any finishing work begins. Mould in a basement bathroom is almost guaranteed if moisture issues aren't addressed first. For second-floor bathroom additions, the floor structure may need reinforcement to carry the weight of tile and a full bathtub — this is a structural assessment your contractor should complete before rough-in begins.

Budget a **15-20% contingency** on any bathroom addition — it's common to open walls and discover outdated knob-and-tube wiring, asbestos pipe insulation in pre-1990 NB homes, or undersized drain lines that need upgrading to current code. These discoveries are genuinely difficult to predict until demolition begins. Getting 3+ quotes from experienced NB renovation contractors and asking each one specifically what they include for plumbing, electrical, and permit coordination will help you compare apples to apples.

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Q9

## What is the average cost to convert a bathtub to a walk-in shower in NB?

**A tub-to-shower conversion in New Brunswick typically costs \$8,000-\$15,000** for a quality mid-range result, or \$15,000-\$25,000+ if you're upgrading to a fully tiled custom shower with premium fixtures, a niche, built-in bench,

and premium shower system. The final number depends heavily on whether you keep the existing drain location, how much tile work is involved, and the quality of the fixtures you choose.

The conversion process involves removing the existing tub, framing out the new shower footprint (which often expands the shower area into the tub alcove space), waterproofing the shower pan and walls, tiling, installing a new drain, and connecting the new shower valve and fixtures. If you can keep the drain close to the existing location, plumbing costs stay modest — \$1,500-\$3,000 for a licensed plumber to reposition the drain, install a new shower rough-in valve, and connect fixtures. If you want to completely relocate the drain or add multiple body jets and a thermostatic system, plumbing costs climb to \$4,000-\$7,000 and the project requires careful planning.

**Waterproofing is the most important investment** in any tub-to-shower conversion, and it's where homeowners often try to cut corners. The shower pan (the floor and lower walls) needs a properly sloped tile bed or a prefabricated shower base, plus a sheet-applied or liquid waterproofing membrane over cement board substrate. Schluter KERDI, RedGard, or Wedi systems are the current standard — they cost more than just laying tile over standard drywall, but they're what prevents water from working its way behind the tile and rotting the framing. In NB's humid Maritime climate, a shower that isn't properly waterproofed will develop mould inside the wall cavity within a few years, requiring complete tearout.

For tile, porcelain is the right choice in a NB shower — low absorption, durable, and mould-resistant with properly applied epoxy grout. A custom-tiled shower walls and floor typically runs \$3,000-\$6,000 for materials and labour depending on tile selection and complexity. Large-format tiles reduce grout lines; mosaic inserts on the floor add grip and visual interest. If budget is a constraint, a quality acrylic or solid-surface prefabricated shower surround (like those from Mirolin or Maax) installed over a prefabricated shower base can deliver a watertight result for \$2,000-\$4,000 in materials — easier to keep clean than tile and fully watertight if properly caulked and maintained.

All shower work involving plumbing or electrical must be permitted and inspected under TSANB regulations. A new shower valve, drain relocation, or exhaust fan upgrade all require licensed trades and inspections — no exceptions in NB. A building permit is also required if you're making plumbing changes. Your contractor should be pulling these permits; if they suggest skipping it, walk away.

**NB homeowners converting a tub because of accessibility needs** should plan for a curbless (zero-threshold) shower design that allows barrier-free access. This requires careful waterproofing engineering since the traditional curb is part of what contains water — but curbless showers can be done right with a proper linear drain and appropriately sloped floor tile. Add \$1,000-\$2,500 for the additional waterproofing and linear drain work over a standard curbless installation.

Plan for **2-3 weeks of work** from demolition through grouting and final installation for a standard conversion. The first week is typically demolition, rough-in plumbing, and substrate prep; week two is waterproofing and tile

installation; the final days are fixtures, grouting, caulking, and cleanup. Budget a 15% contingency — it's common to discover that the subfloor under the tub needs replacement, or that the framing behind the old tile has some moisture damage that needs remediation before the new shower goes in.

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## How long does a full bathroom renovation take in Saint John New Brunswick?

**A full bathroom renovation in Saint John typically takes 2-4 weeks from demolition to completion**, though complex projects involving layout changes, plumbing relocation, and custom tile work can run 4-6 weeks. The timeline is determined by the scope of trades involved, permit inspection scheduling, material lead times, and how many surprises emerge once walls come down.

The standard sequence for a full bathroom gut renovation goes like this: demolition and disposal (2-3 days), rough-in plumbing (2-3 days), rough-in electrical (1-2 days), TSANB rough-in inspections (which need to be scheduled and can add 2-5 business days of waiting time), substrate installation and waterproofing (2-3 days), tile installation (3-5 days depending on complexity), vanity and fixture installation (1-2 days), finish electrical (outlets, fan, lighting) and final electrical inspection (1-2 days), paint and trim (1-2 days), and final plumbing connections and cleanup. When you layer in the mandatory inspection hold points and the reality that trades often can't be on-site back-to-back without gaps, a well-coordinated project hits 3 weeks; a less-coordinated one hits 5-6 weeks.

**Permit timing is a real factor in Saint John.** Building permits for bathroom renovations that involve plumbing, electrical, or structural changes must be obtained from Saint John's building inspection department before work begins. Saint John, like most NB municipalities, has reasonable permit turnaround times — typically 1-2 weeks for straightforward bathroom projects — but that timeline needs to be built into your project schedule, not bolted on as an afterthought. Your contractor should be coordinating the permit application as part of their pre-construction process.

Material lead times can significantly extend the timeline if you choose items that aren't stocked locally. Stock tile from a Saint John supplier can be on-site within days; custom-ordered tile from a specialty supplier may take 4-8 weeks. Prefabricated vanities from big-box stores are usually available within a week; semi-custom or custom-ordered vanities often take 4-8 weeks. If you're ordering anything custom — cabinetry, special-order fixtures, imported tile — order it before demolition begins so materials are ready when the trades are.

Saint John's older housing stock is a wildcard in any bathroom timeline. The city has a significant inventory of Victorian and early 20th century homes, particularly in the South End and Uptown neighbourhoods, where opening bathroom walls commonly reveals knob-and-tube wiring that can't legally be covered without upgrading, galvanized plumbing pipes that are too corroded to connect new fixtures to without replacement, or subfloor rot from decades of minor moisture infiltration. **Budget time and money for these discoveries** — a realistic contingency is 15-20% of the project budget and 1-2 extra weeks on the schedule.

From a **seasonal perspective**, bathroom renovations run year-round in NB since it's interior work. However, Saint John's Maritime climate means that even in January, opening exterior bathroom walls for insulation upgrades can

expose cavities to near-zero temperatures — experienced local contractors know to sequence this work to minimize the exposure window and have heating available during wall work. Material deliveries during winter also need consideration — tile and grout need to be stored in a temperature-controlled space before installation, not sitting in a cold truck or unheated garage overnight.

The most reliable way to get an accurate timeline in Saint John is to have your contractor develop a written schedule with trade sequencing and inspection hold points built in before signing a contract. A contractor who says "four weeks, no problem" without ever having opened your bathroom walls is making a promise they can't fully keep. A contractor who says "we plan for three weeks but we're allowing four given the age of your home and the TSANB inspection scheduling" is being honest with you.

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Q11

## What are the best ventilation options for a bathroom in a humid Maritime climate?

**In a Maritime climate like New Brunswick's, a properly sized exhaust fan vented directly to the exterior is not optional — it's the single most important element of bathroom moisture management,** and most NB bathrooms are underventilated by a significant margin. The baseline recommendation from ASHRAE is 1 CFM per square foot of bathroom floor area, so a 60 sq ft bathroom needs at least a 60 CFM fan — but given NB's persistently humid summers and the tendency for humidity to linger, upgrading to 80-110 CFM for most bathrooms is money well spent.

The most common ventilation mistake in NB homes isn't the fan itself — it's where the duct goes. Exhaust fans that vent into the attic rather than through the roof or exterior wall are a mould factory. Warm, moist bathroom air dumped into a cold NB attic condenses immediately, wetting insulation and creating ideal conditions for mould growth. Every bathroom exhaust fan must be ducted to the exterior with insulated duct — insulated because uninsulated metal flex duct in a cold NB attic will cause condensation inside the duct itself, which eventually drips

back into the fan or soaks the ceiling. **Insulated flex duct with a proper exterior cap** is the correct installation, full stop.

For a bathroom renovation in NB, the upgrade from a basic exhaust fan to a **combination exhaust fan/humidity sensor** is one of the best investments you can make. These units (Broan, Panasonic, and Delta all make excellent models in the \$150-\$350 range) detect when relative humidity rises above a set threshold and run automatically until it drops — which is exactly what's needed in a Maritime climate where people forget to run the fan long enough, or run it while showering but turn it off immediately when stepping out. A humidity-sensing fan typically needs to run for 20-30 minutes after a shower to properly clear moisture from the bathroom air, and manually timed fans are rarely used that long.

**For whole-home context**, NB homes benefit significantly from an HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) or ERV (Energy Recovery Ventilator) as part of a major renovation. An HRV integrated into the HVAC system provides controlled fresh air while recovering heat from outgoing exhaust air — it manages humidity throughout the whole house, not just one bathroom. In a well-sealed modern NB home or after a comprehensive envelope upgrade, an HRV is the correct solution to whole-home moisture management. ERVs are better for climates with hot, humid summers since they also transfer moisture — either can work in NB depending on the heating system configuration, and your HVAC contractor can guide the selection.

For a bathroom specifically, the **three-way combination unit** — exhaust fan, humidity sensor, and LED light — from Panasonic's WhisperFit lineup is a favourite for NB bathroom renovations because it's genuinely quiet (0.3-0.8 sones), Energy Star rated, and reliable long-term. The Broan ENERGY STAR line is similarly solid. Cheap no-name fans from discount retailers consistently fail within 3-5 years and are loud enough to discourage people from using them — a false economy in a climate like ours.

All exhaust fan installations involving new wiring require a licensed electrician and TSANB electrical inspection. If you're replacing a fan on an existing circuit with an identical or smaller unit in the same location, it's a relatively straightforward DIY swap — turn off the breaker, disconnect the old unit, connect the new one, done. But if you're adding a new fan where none existed, running wiring from a panel, or installing a combination fan/heater unit (which draws significant current), hire a licensed electrician. For detailed electrical guidance on bathroom renovations, visit New Brunswick Electrical at [newbrunswickelectrical.com](http://newbrunswickelectrical.com).

The cost of a quality bathroom exhaust fan is \$100-\$400 for the unit, plus \$200-\$500 for an electrician to install and wire it properly with insulated exterior duct work. That investment prevents thousands of dollars in mould remediation and drywall replacement — a clear winner in any NB bathroom renovation budget.

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Q12

## Is it worth installing heated floors in a New Brunswick bathroom?

**Yes — heated bathroom floors are one of the most universally appreciated upgrades in a New Brunswick home**, and they're worth it not just for the comfort factor but because NB winters genuinely make stepping onto cold tile an unpleasant experience from November through April. For most bathrooms under 150 sq ft, the operating cost is modest, the installation adds real value, and the comfort improvement is immediate and lasting.

The two main options are **electric radiant heat mats** and **hydronic (water-based) radiant systems**. For most NB bathrooms, electric radiant is the clear practical choice. Electric mats (Schluter DITRA-HEAT, Nuheat, and WarmlyYours are the leading brands) lay directly beneath the floor tile, connect to a dedicated electrical circuit, and are controlled by a programmable thermostat. Installation costs \$800-\$2,500 depending on bathroom size — typically \$8-\$15 per square foot for the mat and thermostat, plus \$300-\$600 for an electrician to wire the dedicated 120V or 240V circuit. Hydronic systems require a boiler or hot water integration and are practical for whole-home radiant floor heating but not cost-effective for a single bathroom retrofit.

The **Schluter DITRA-HEAT system** has become the standard for NB bathroom renovations because it combines a uncoupling membrane (which prevents tile cracking from subfloor movement — important given NB's significant seasonal wood movement) with embedded heating cables. It adds minimal floor height (about 7mm total), heats quickly, and comes with a 10-year warranty. Nuheat and WarmlyYours offer similar mats that work under any tile type. All of these systems use programmable thermostats with floor temperature sensors so the floor can be set to warm up before your alarm goes off and drop back to a setback temperature during the day — which is how you keep operating costs reasonable.

**Operating costs are modest for a bathroom.** A 100 sq ft bathroom floor with electric radiant running 2 hours in the morning and 1 hour in the evening costs roughly \$25-\$50 per month in NB depending on NB Power electricity rates — less if you use the programmable thermostat intelligently. This is genuinely comfortable heat at a manageable cost for a space you're actively using. The system is not meant to replace the bathroom's primary heat

source, just to take the chill off the tile.

From a **resale perspective**, in-floor bathroom heating is a feature that NB buyers consistently notice and appreciate — it signals a well-done, premium renovation rather than a budget refresh. It's not a feature that adds dollar-for-dollar return in an appraisal, but it meaningfully separates your bathroom from comparable listings when selling.

Installation timing matters: **heated floor mats must be installed before tile goes down**, so they need to be part of the bathroom renovation plan from the start, not an afterthought. If you're already tearing up your bathroom floor for a renovation, adding in-floor heat is the logical time to do it — adding it later requires removing the tile, which negates much of the cost savings. A licensed electrician is required to wire the thermostat and run the circuit; the mat itself can be laid by the tile setter as part of the tile prep sequence. Both the electrical circuit and the floor sensor are required to pass a TSANB electrical inspection before wall closure.

If you're heating a basement bathroom in NB, in-floor electric heat is especially worthwhile — basement floors are in direct contact with ground that stays cold all year, and tile on a concrete slab without radiant heat will be uncomfortable ten months of the year. The cost for a smaller basement bathroom (50-80 sq ft) can be as low as \$1,200-\$1,800 all-in, which is an easy decision when weighed against daily comfort.

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## How much does a small half-bath renovation cost in Moncton NB?

**A small half-bath renovation in Moncton typically costs \$8,000-\$15,000** for a quality mid-range result, or \$5,000-\$8,000 for a straightforward cosmetic refresh that replaces fixtures, flooring, and paint without touching plumbing or electrical. At the upper end, a half-bath gut renovation with a premium vanity, vessel sink, designer tile, and custom millwork can reach \$18,000-\$22,000.

A half-bath (powder room) contains only a toilet and a sink — no shower or tub — which simplifies the scope considerably compared to a full bathroom. The cost breakdown for a mid-range Moncton half-bath renovation looks roughly like this: new vanity and sink (\$800-\$2,000), toilet (\$300-\$700), tile floor (\$1,200-\$2,500 for a small space of 20-35 sq ft), new paint (\$300-\$600), lighting upgrade (\$300-\$800), mirror and accessories (\$300-\$600), and labour for installation and finishing (\$2,500-\$4,500). The wide range on labour reflects the difference between a cosmetic refresh where you're just swapping fixtures versus a more involved project where drywall is replaced, plumbing is slightly relocated, or tile installation requires subfloor prep.

**Where costs escalate** in a half-bath renovation: if the existing plumbing rough-in is in poor condition (galvanized pipes, corroded shut-off valves, a wax ring that hasn't been replaced since the Confederation era), a licensed plumber will need to upgrade connections before new fixtures go on — budget \$500-\$1,500 for this. If you're moving the sink drain or toilet location even a few inches, that becomes a more significant plumbing job at \$2,000-\$4,500 for the rough-in relocation. Any plumbing beyond simple fixture swaps requires a licensed plumber and TSANB inspection in NB.

Moncton's housing stock includes a lot of mid-century homes (1950s-1970s) where half-baths were retrofitted into closets and stairway landings — these spaces sometimes have limited headroom, awkward plumbing chases, and electrical that needs upgrading to meet current code before walls get closed. Opening the walls of a 1960s Moncton half-bath to find knob-and-tube wiring isn't unusual and changes the project budget meaningfully. That's why a 15-20% contingency on any Moncton bathroom renovation is genuinely prudent, not just caution for caution's sake.

**For a purely cosmetic refresh** — new toilet, new vanity and sink swapping out for the existing plumbing rough-in locations, new vinyl plank or ceramic tile floor, fresh paint, new light fixture, new mirror — a confident DIYer can manage most of the finish work themselves, with a licensed plumber handling the toilet and faucet connections and an electrician swapping the light fixture. Materials for this scope run \$2,000-\$4,500; tradespeople for the fixture connections and light fixture run \$500-\$1,500. This is genuinely achievable for a motivated homeowner who's comfortable with basic tools.

For anything beyond a simple swap — tile work, new drywall, moving fixtures, or improving ventilation — a full-service renovation contractor coordinating the trades is worth the project management overhead. A half-bath

renovation is small enough in scope that many general contractors manage the full project efficiently, eliminating the headache of coordinating a tiler, plumber, and electrician independently.

Get 3+ quotes in Moncton for any bathroom project — renovation pricing in the Greater Moncton area (including Dieppe and Riverview) varies significantly between contractors. Ask each bidder whether their quote includes permit fees (a building permit is required if any plumbing or electrical work goes beyond simple fixture swaps), and confirm that all tradespeople carry WorkSafeNB coverage before work begins.

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Q14

## What bathroom upgrades give the best return on investment in New Brunswick?

**The highest-ROI bathroom upgrades in New Brunswick are the ones that modernize the look, fix functional deficiencies, and signal quality construction to buyers** — not necessarily the most expensive finishes. A dated bathroom that looks clean, functional, and fresh is worth significantly more than an untouched original, while a bathroom with a \$40,000 premium renovation in a market where comparable homes sell for \$350,000 typically doesn't recover that full investment at resale.

The upgrades that consistently deliver in NB's market are straightforward: **a new vanity, sink, and faucet** combined with a new toilet is the foundation of any bathroom refresh. Replacing a builder-grade laminate vanity from the 1990s with a modern solid wood or plywood-box vanity with a quartz or cultured marble top transforms the room's feel for \$1,200-\$2,500 in materials. A new toilet (Toto and Kohler are both excellent; avoid no-name imports) runs \$350-\$700 and signals that the bathroom has been maintained. Together these two changes cost \$2,000-\$4,000 in materials and make the biggest visual impact per dollar spent.

**Flooring replacement** ranks closely behind fixtures. Ripping out old vinyl flooring or dated ceramic tile and installing new LVP (luxury vinyl plank) or fresh porcelain tile gives a bathroom a completely refreshed character. For a 60-80 sq ft bathroom floor, materials and labour run \$1,500-\$3,500 depending on material choice — a very solid investment in the overall impression the room makes.

**A quality exhaust fan** is one of those behind-the-scenes upgrades that matters enormously for long-term value. Selling a home with visible mould around the bathroom ceiling or window frame from years of inadequate ventilation is a deal-killer that costs thousands in negotiations. A humidity-sensing fan installed for \$300-\$700 all-in during a renovation pays back disproportionately by preventing the moisture problems that create costly issues in NB's Maritime climate.

**Fresh paint** is the highest ROI item by a wide margin because the labour is DIY-able. Neutral whites and warm greys read as clean and modern to NB buyers. Painting a bathroom, replacing hardware (towel bars, toilet paper holder, robe hook), updating the mirror, and swapping the light fixture can be done for \$500-\$1,500 in materials and completely change the room's impression.

**Walk-in shower conversions** (tub-to-shower) are increasingly valued in NB — particularly in master bathrooms and for buyers in the 45+ demographic. A well-executed tub-to-shower conversion at \$8,000-\$15,000 is a legitimate value-add in most NB markets, though if the home only has one bathroom, keeping a tub is important for buyers with young children. In master ensembles where a separate soaker tub or guest bathroom tub exists, converting the master shower to a walk-in custom tile shower is a genuine selling feature.

**What doesn't deliver proportional ROI:** very high-end imported tile, custom millwork in a modest home, heated floors in a home where comparable properties don't have them (though they're a positive differentiator), and luxury fixtures in a bathroom where the rest of the home doesn't match the quality level. The market values coherence — a bathroom renovation should feel consistent with the overall quality of the home.

The upgrades to avoid from an ROI perspective are anything that dates quickly (trendy colours, ornate patterns that reflect a specific moment in design history) and anything that adds cost without adding function (elaborate built-ins, over-engineered shower systems). Timeless material choices — white subway tile, neutral porcelain, simple Shaker-style cabinetry — hold their appeal through multiple real estate cycles in NB's relatively traditional market.

For a comprehensive look at what moves the needle specifically on kitchen and bathroom renovations in NB, New Brunswick Renovations can connect you with experienced local contractors who renovate homes across the province and understand what today's NB buyers are looking for.

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## Can I DIY a bathroom renovation in New Brunswick or do I need a licensed plumber?

**You can DIY a meaningful portion of a NB bathroom renovation, but plumbing rough-in, drain modifications, electrical work beyond simple fixture swaps, and gas connections are legally required to be done by licensed tradespeople and inspected by TSANB** — this is provincial law, not a suggestion. The division of what's DIY-appropriate and what requires a licensed professional is clear once you understand where the legal lines are.

Here's what a competent DIYer can legitimately handle in a NB bathroom renovation: demolition (removing old tile, pulling out the old vanity, disconnecting and removing a toilet after turning off the water supply, tearing out drywall), painting, installing new LVP or laminate flooring, tiling backsplash areas on properly prepared walls, installing a pre-assembled vanity on existing plumbing rough-in (connecting the supply lines and P-trap), replacing a toilet on the existing drain (a wax ring swap is genuinely DIY-friendly), swapping a light fixture on an existing circuit after turning off the breaker, and installing trim, moulding, mirrors, and accessories. These tasks require care and proper technique but not a licence.

**Where you must bring in licensed trades under NB law:** Any modification to plumbing drains or supply lines beyond simple fixture swaps — running new drain pipe, moving a toilet rough-in, adding a bathroom where none existed — requires a licensed plumber and a TSANB plumbing inspection before walls are closed. Similarly, adding new electrical circuits, upgrading wiring, installing a vent fan where no wiring currently exists, or any electrical work beyond swapping a fixture on an existing circuit requires a licensed electrician and TSANB electrical inspection. All plumbing and electrical work in NB is under TSANB jurisdiction, and TSANB inspections are required at rough-in stage (before drywall closes the walls) for both trades. Skipping inspections doesn't just create safety risks — it creates serious problems at resale when a home inspector or buyer's lawyer asks for inspection records that don't exist.

**Practically speaking**, the most common DIY-appropriate bathroom renovation in NB is a cosmetic refresh: new vanity on existing rough-in, new toilet on the existing drain and floor flange, new mirror, paint, and accessories. If you're installing a new faucet on an existing rough-in, the supply line connections and P-trap installation are plumbing fixture work that homeowners routinely do themselves — these are above the shut-off valve and don't require permits or inspections. Below the shut-off valve (the actual plumbing in the wall) is where TSANB licensing requirements apply.

For **tile work in a shower or tub surround**, proper technique matters enormously and a licensed trade isn't legally required — but proper materials are. Cement board substrate (not standard drywall), a waterproofing membrane,

correctly mixed thinset, and epoxy grout are the difference between a shower that lasts 20 years and one that grows mould inside the wall within five. If you're tiling a shower yourself, invest in proper materials and watch detailed installation videos from Schluter or similar industry sources before starting — the technique is learnable but the waterproofing steps are frequently skipped by DIYers who then face costly tearout.

The **practical middle ground** for most NB homeowners is a hybrid approach: hire a plumber for rough-in inspection (rough-in is a set cost whether you're present or not), hire an electrician for any new circuits or fan wiring, and DIY the tile, vanity installation, toilet installation, painting, and trim. This approach saves \$3,000-\$6,000 in labour while staying fully legal and permitted. Make sure to apply for the building permit yourself or have your plumber apply — the permit is what triggers the inspections, and inspections are what protect you.

For detailed electrical guidance on what specifically requires a licensed electrician in NB bathroom renovations, New Brunswick Electrical at [newbrunswickelectrical.com](http://newbrunswickelectrical.com) covers electrical requirements in depth.

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## What is the cost of installing a new vanity and sink in a New Brunswick bathroom?

**Installing a new vanity and sink in a New Brunswick bathroom costs \$600-\$3,500 for materials depending on what you choose, plus \$300-\$800 for professional installation** if you're hiring a plumber or handyperson for the fixture connections. For a complete supply, installation, and finishing job (vanity, sink, faucet, supply lines, P-trap, and mirror), budget \$1,200-\$5,000 depending on the quality level.

Vanity pricing in NB covers an enormous range. A ready-to-assemble (RTA) stock vanity from a building supply or big-box store runs \$300-\$900 for a 24-36 inch cabinet with a laminate or cultured marble top. Mid-range vanities with solid wood or plywood-box construction, dovetail drawer joints, and soft-close hardware run \$800-\$2,000 in the 24-48 inch range. Semi-custom or fully custom vanities ordered through a kitchen and bath dealer run \$2,000-\$5,000+ depending on size, wood species, and finish. Floating (wall-mounted) vanities have become popular in NB bathroom renovations — they create the illusion of more floor space, are easier to clean under, and look contemporary. They cost \$800-\$2,500 for the vanity unit and require wall blocking or a properly located stud for mounting support.

**Countertop and sink choice** significantly affects the final cost. Cultured marble integrated sink-and-top combinations (common on stock vanities) are functional and affordable, typically included in vanity pricing at the lower end. Quartz countertops with an undermount sink run \$600-\$1,500 for a bathroom-scale slab, custom-cut and installed — a worthwhile upgrade in a master ensuite or a bathroom where the counter sees heavy use. Vessel sinks sit on top of the vanity counter and have become a popular design choice; they run \$150-\$600 for the sink itself but require a taller vanity height and a specific type of faucet (a taller vessel faucet), so budget the full combination together.

**Faucet selection** matters both aesthetically and functionally. A quality single or widespread faucet from Moen, Delta, or Kohler runs \$150-\$500 — these brands offer solid warranties (Moen's lifetime warranty is particularly strong) and replacement parts that will still be available in 10+ years. Budget faucets from off-brand sources frequently have ceramic cartridge failures within 3-5 years in NB's mineral-rich water conditions, so the upgrade to a reputable brand pays for itself.

For **installation**, if your existing plumbing rough-in (the supply lines and drain rough-in in the wall) is already in the right location for your new vanity, installation involves connecting the water supply lines (from shut-off valves to faucet), installing the P-trap from the drain to the wall rough-in, and ensuring everything is sealed and leak-free. A confident DIYer can do this work above the shut-off valves — it's genuinely learnable and doesn't require a licence. If you need to relocate the drain, raise or lower the supply line height, or change the rough-in configuration, that's

licensed plumber territory requiring a TSANB inspection in NB.

If the old vanity has been in place since the 1980s or earlier, it's common in NB homes to find that the shut-off valves are seized, the supply lines are galvanized steel with corrosion buildup, or the drain P-trap is an old chrome trap that crumbles when touched. Budget \$300-\$600 to have a licensed plumber replace shut-off valves and supply lines while the vanity is being changed — this is inexpensive insurance against a leak problem in a finished wall.

**Installation timeline** for a vanity swap is typically a half-day to full-day job once the old vanity is out. Demolition and disposal of the old unit takes an hour or two; setting, levelling, and connecting the new vanity and faucet takes 2-4 hours depending on complexity. If tile work around the vanity needs patching or the backsplash is being updated at the same time, add another half-day. Get 3+ quotes in your NB community if hiring trades — vanity installation pricing varies considerably, and the scope should be spelled out clearly in writing before work begins.

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Q17

## How do I prevent mold in a renovated bathroom in New Brunswick's humid climate?

**Preventing mould in an NB bathroom comes down to three things: proper ventilation, waterproofing wet areas completely, and choosing materials that don't give mould anything to feed on.** New Brunswick's Maritime humidity makes bathroom mould a genuine threat year-round — not just a cosmetic nuisance but a health and structural problem if left unchecked.

The single most important investment in any NB bathroom renovation is an exhaust fan that actually works. The minimum standard is a fan rated for the room's square footage, but in New Brunswick's humid summers, you're better off sizing up. A 100-square-foot bathroom warrants a fan rated at 110-130 CFM minimum. Fan-only units start around \$80-\$150, but combination fan-heat-light units (\$150-\$350) are worth the extra cost in NB bathrooms where winter cold air meets hot shower steam and creates condensation on every surface. The fan must exhaust directly outside — never into an attic or wall cavity, which just moves the moisture problem rather than eliminating

it. Contractors regularly find existing fans venting into attic spaces in older NB homes, which causes severe mould and rot in the attic structure over time.

Beyond ventilation, every wet area needs proper waterproofing — and that means more than just caulking around the tub. A full bathroom renovation should include a proper waterproofing membrane (RedGard, Schluter Kerdi, or similar) applied to all shower and tub surround walls before tile goes on. Cement board (Durock or Hardiebacker) behind tile is essential — regular drywall, even moisture-resistant greenboard, is not adequate for a shower enclosure in NB. Tile grout should be sealed after installation and re-sealed every 1-2 years. The shower floor or tub deck needs a proper sloped mortar bed or prefabricated shower pan to direct water to the drain without pooling.

## Material Choices Matter

Material selection is your long-term mould defence. Solid surface shower surrounds, large-format porcelain tile with minimal grout lines, and glass tile eliminate the porous grout lines where mould colonises. For bathroom flooring, porcelain or ceramic tile is the right choice in NB — avoid solid hardwood or laminate in bathrooms, which swell and harbour mould in Maritime humidity conditions. Exhaust fan grilles, towel bars, and hardware should be chrome, stainless, or powder-coated — bare metal corrodes in NB bathroom humidity and becomes a mould attachment point.

The bathroom ceiling deserves special attention. Hot shower steam rises and dwells at the ceiling, making it the most vulnerable mould surface. Use a mould-resistant drywall product (purple board or cement board) on bathroom ceilings, prime with a mould-inhibiting primer, and paint with a semi-gloss or satin finish bathroom paint that resists moisture absorption. Flat paints on bathroom ceilings hold moisture and develop mould quickly in NB conditions.

For a bathroom renovation budget, plan \$15,000-\$30,000 for a mid-range NB bathroom, which should include proper waterproofing throughout. Cutting corners on the waterproofing membrane to save \$500-\$1,000 during renovation is false economy — a mould remediation and tear-out in a failed bathroom shower surround costs \$5,000-\$15,000 and usually requires a full redo. A licensed NB contractor should perform all tiling, plumbing, and waterproofing work. The exhaust fan wiring and any new electrical circuits require a TSANB-licensed electrician. Get your WorkSafeNB clearance letter from every trade before work begins.

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## What are the best waterproofing methods for a bathroom renovation in NB?

The gold standard for bathroom waterproofing in a New Brunswick renovation is a full liquid membrane system or sheet membrane in all wet areas, combined with cement board substrate and quality grout sealing — this is not optional in NB's climate, it's essential. Maritime humidity, dramatic seasonal humidity swings, and the consequences of water getting behind tile in a cold NB winter make proper waterproofing the most critical investment in any bathroom renovation.

For shower enclosures and tub surrounds, there are two main approaches: liquid-applied waterproofing membranes and sheet membranes. **Liquid membranes** like RedGard (a brushed-on elastomeric coating) or similar products are applied directly to cement board substrate, rolled or brushed on in two coats, and create a seamless waterproof barrier. They're effective, relatively affordable (a shower enclosure application adds \$200-\$500 to material costs), and handle movement and minor substrate flexing well. The key is full coverage including corners, seams, and transitions — any gap or thin spot is a future leak point.

**Sheet membranes** like Schluter Kerdi or Wedi are bonded to the substrate with thinset mortar and create an extremely reliable waterproofing layer. The Schluter system, in particular, is a full integrated system — Kerdi membrane on walls and floor, Kerdi-Drain at the drain, and Kerdi-Band at all inside corners and transitions — that eliminates the weak points where other waterproofing systems fail. The Schluter approach costs more in materials (\$600-\$1,200 for a standard shower enclosure) but the integrated system is arguably the most reliable available for residential use. Many NB renovation contractors who do quality work have moved to Schluter systems as their standard.

Beyond the membrane itself, the substrate matters enormously. **Cement board** (Hardiebacker, Durock, or equivalent) is the correct backer for tile in wet areas — it won't swell, delaminate, or deteriorate when exposed to moisture the way regular drywall or even moisture-resistant greenboard will. All cement board seams should be taped with fibreglass mesh tape and covered with waterproofing membrane. Never use standard drywall behind tile in a shower or tub surround, regardless of how it's been done in older NB homes.

The **shower floor** needs its own waterproofing approach. A traditional mortar-bed shower floor with a liner membrane at the drain transition is time-tested, but prefabricated foam shower pans (Schluter Kerdi-Shower or similar) have become popular because they're pre-sloped, lightweight, and integrate directly with the membrane system. For a NB bathroom with radiant floor heat, the prefabricated foam pan is also compatible with in-floor heating mats.

Don't neglect **transition points** — where the shower meets the bathroom floor, where walls meet floor, and around any penetrations (showerhead, controls, niche shelving). These are the locations where waterproofing systems

most commonly fail. Every penetration through the waterproofing layer needs to be sealed with compatible sealant and a proper escutcheon.

After tile is set, **grout sealing** is the last line of defence. Unsanded grout for joints under 1/8 inch, sanded or epoxy grout for larger joints. Apply a penetrating silicone grout sealer after the grout has cured (typically 72 hours minimum), and plan to re-seal annually in a heavily used NB bathroom. Epoxy grout, while more expensive and harder to work with, is virtually impermeable and doesn't require sealing — a worthwhile upgrade for shower floors.

For a bathroom renovation in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, or anywhere across NB, budget \$15,000-\$30,000 for a mid-range renovation that includes proper waterproofing throughout. The waterproofing materials themselves represent \$500-\$1,500 of that total — a small fraction that protects the entire investment. All tile installation and waterproofing work should be performed by an experienced tile contractor. Plumbing rough-in requires a TSANB-licensed plumber. For detailed bathroom renovation guidance, confirm your contractor's WorkSafeNB coverage and ask specifically how they waterproof — any experienced NB tile contractor should be able to describe their waterproofing system in detail.

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## How much does it cost to re-tile a bathroom in Fredericton in 2026?

Re-tiling a bathroom in Fredericton in 2026 typically costs **\$3,500-\$8,000** for a shower or tub surround, and **\$2,000-\$5,000** for bathroom flooring, depending on tile selection, substrate condition, and whether waterproofing needs to be redone from scratch. A complete bathroom re-tile covering both the shower and floor in a standard 50-75 square foot bathroom runs \$6,000-\$12,000 all-in, including demo, substrate repair, waterproofing, tile, and labour.

Tile material is the biggest variable in your budget. **Basic ceramic tile** (6x6 or subway format) runs \$2-\$5 per square foot for the tile itself — the most affordable option and perfectly serviceable in a bathroom. **Mid-range porcelain tile** in larger formats (12x24 or 24x24) costs \$4-\$10 per square foot and offers better durability, lower water absorption, and a more contemporary look. **Premium natural stone, large-format rectified porcelain, or designer tiles** can run \$15-\$40+ per square foot, pushing material costs significantly higher. A typical 60-square-foot shower surround uses roughly 90-110 square feet of tile accounting for cuts and waste — so tile selection alone can swing your material cost from \$300 to \$3,500 or more.

Labour in Fredericton for experienced tile installation runs \$8-\$15 per square foot for standard tile work, and \$12-\$20 per square foot for complex patterns, large-format tile requiring back-buttering and levelling systems, or natural stone requiring specific setting materials. Diagonal patterns, herringbone, and custom layouts add to labour cost because they require more cuts and precise alignment. Removing existing tile adds \$1-\$3 per square foot to the demo cost, plus disposal fees.

**Substrate condition is what separates a \$5,000 re-tile from a \$10,000 one.** If the existing substrate behind the old tile is in good condition — solid cement board with no water damage — a skilled tile contractor can often work with it. But in many Fredericton homes, particularly those built before 2000, the old tile was installed over regular drywall or greenboard with inadequate waterproofing. Once that tile comes off, you're looking at damaged substrate that must be replaced before new tile can go on. Budget for worst-case: full substrate replacement with cement board (\$800-\$1,500 for a standard shower) and a new waterproofing membrane (\$500-\$1,200) before tiling begins. If your existing shower is leaking or you see any signs of moisture behind the tiles, assume a full substrate replacement is needed.

In Fredericton specifically, getting 3 quotes is important — pricing varies meaningfully between contractors, and the capital-city market has a mix of experienced tile specialists and general renovators who tile occasionally. The best NB tile contractors will inspect your existing substrate before quoting and give you an honest assessment of what they'll find behind the old tile. Be wary of quotes that don't account for potential substrate work — they'll come back with change orders once demolition starts.

**Timing your Fredericton bathroom re-tile** is straightforward — this is an interior project that can proceed any time of year. In winter, ensure tile and grout are stored at room temperature for 24-48 hours before installation (never let tile or thinset freeze). Summer humidity in Fredericton can affect setting times slightly, so good ventilation during installation helps. Plan for 3-5 days without use of the bathroom during the tiling process, plus 24 hours for initial thinset cure before grouting, and another 72 hours before the shower can be used.

All plumbing fixture work (valve replacement, shower head, drain) requires a TSANB-licensed plumber. Confirm WorkSafeNB coverage from your tile contractor before work begins. Budget a 15% contingency on top of your quote for substrate surprises — in Fredericton's older housing stock, they're common.

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## **What accessibility features should I include in a bathroom renovation for aging in place in NB?**

**An aging-in-place bathroom renovation in New Brunswick should prioritize a curbless (zero-threshold) shower, properly anchored grab bars, a comfort-height toilet, and reinforced blocking in walls for future additions — features that cost far less to build in now than to retrofit later.** Planning for aging in place is one of the smartest renovations an NB homeowner can make, given that the costs of retrofitting an unprepared bathroom are typically 40-60% higher than building accessibility in during an initial renovation.

The **curbless shower** is the cornerstone of an accessible bathroom. A traditional tub or stepped shower curb becomes a trip hazard and an insurmountable obstacle for anyone with reduced mobility. A properly designed curbless shower uses a linear drain or centre drain with a sloped tile floor to direct water away, eliminating the barrier entirely. This isn't just for wheelchair users — it's safer for everyone at every age, and it's a feature that adds resale value in NB's growing seniors demographic. A curbless shower renovation costs the same as a standard shower renovation (\$8,000-\$15,000 for a quality installation) when planned from the start, because the plumber sets the drain at the right height during rough-in. Converting an existing shower to curbless after the fact costs

\$3,000-\$6,000 more because the floor structure and drain position must be modified.

**Grab bars** are non-negotiable and must be properly installed — not just mounted to drywall. NB homes with standard 16-inch stud spacing can have grab bars anchored directly to studs, but the best practice during a renovation is to install continuous 3/4-inch plywood blocking behind the finished wall surface at the anticipated grab bar locations: 33-36 inches above the floor beside the toilet, inside the shower at entry height and horizontally along the shower wall, and beside the vanity if needed. Blocking costs almost nothing during renovation but makes future grab bar installation bombproof. Grab bars themselves run \$80-\$250 each for quality stainless or chrome units; professional installation adds \$100-\$200 per bar. Decorative grab bars that look like towel bars are available if aesthetics matter.

A **comfort-height toilet** (17-19 inches from floor to seat, compared to 15 inches for standard) is easier to sit on and rise from for people with knee, hip, or back issues. The price difference between a standard toilet and a comfort-height model is minimal — \$100-\$300 extra. If you're replacing a toilet during your bathroom renovation regardless, always spec comfort height. For maximum accessibility, wall-hung toilets allow the height to be set precisely, though they cost \$500-\$1,000 more to install due to the in-wall carrier frame.

A **roll-in or transfer shower bench** is another valuable addition — either a built-in teak or tile bench integrated into the shower design (\$500-\$1,500 added to tile and labour costs) or a removable shower seat (\$150-\$400). A 36x36-inch shower is functional, but a 36x48 or 60x36 shower gives far more manoeuvrability for a person using a bench or transfer device. If budget allows, a 60x30 or larger roll-in shower with a fold-down bench is the gold standard for aging-in-place accessibility.

Practical details matter in NB's climate. Lever-style faucet handles instead of round knobs are easier to operate with arthritic hands or limited grip strength. Anti-scald thermostatic shower valves (\$400-\$800 for the valve; \$200-\$400 to have a plumber install) prevent burns — particularly important for anyone with reduced sensation. Non-slip tile on shower and bathroom floors is essential; a slip rating of R10 or better is recommended for wet areas. Contrasting tile colours at thresholds and floor transitions improve visual depth perception.

**Lighting** is often overlooked in accessibility planning. Adequate lighting in the shower, at the vanity mirror, and along the path from bedroom to bathroom significantly reduces fall risk at night. Consider adding a night light circuit or motion-activated lighting as part of the electrical rough-in — your TSANB-licensed electrician can add this easily during renovation.

A full aging-in-place bathroom renovation in NB runs \$20,000-\$40,000 depending on size and features. Budget an extra \$3,000-\$6,000 compared to a standard renovation for the accessibility upgrades — money that could prevent a costly injury, delay or eliminate the need for assisted living, and make the home more marketable to NB's aging population. Get your WorkSafeNB clearance from all tradespeople involved. The plumbing and electrical work

require licensed TSANB tradespeople.

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