NEW BRUNSWICK EXCAVATION

Costs & Pricing

What excavation work costs in New Brunswick: machine hours, trucking, gravel, rock and what moves a quote

8 Expert Answers from Dig IQ

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Q1

What is the hourly rate for an excavator around Fredericton?

Excavator Rates Near Fredericton

Published price guides read in September 2026 put a mini excavator with operator at $65 to $150 per hour, and a standard excavator with operator at $150 to $250 per hour. Few New Brunswick prices are published separately, so these figures are the best available starting point for a Fredericton job, and a quote will be built from machine hours plus trucking and materials.

Several things move where a job lands in those ranges, including which machine size the contractor proposes for the job and why. If the contractor hits rock, a hydraulic breaker attachment runs $200 to $300 per hour on top of machine time, and that cost can change a budget quickly. Trucking distance to a dump or fill site, the number of loads, and whether clean backfill has to be brought in all add to the final number. Depth matters too: a trench 1.2 m (about 4 ft) or deeper that workers must enter requires shoring, sloping or benching under WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191, and shoring must be engineer-certified.

Before any machine moves in Fredericton, two separate locate requests are needed. Info-Excavation, reached through Click Before You Dig, requires at least three working days' notice and is valid until the end date written on the request. NB Power runs its own underground locate service, separate from Info-Excavation, and asks for at least five business days' notice; that locate is valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form and covers only NB Power-owned lines. Private lines, drains or anything a past owner installed are the property owner's to find and mark. If the job involves a building permit, the City of Fredericton's Engineering Division reviews water and sewer services and lot grading at the permit stage. Under Regulation 2021-2 of the Building Code Administration Act, a footing and foundation inspection must happen before any backfilling begins; ask the City how to book it. If the dig is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit from the province is required before any ground is disturbed.

Ask any contractor for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate before work starts, because WorkSafeNB notes that a customer can be held responsible for an unregistered employer's premiums. Under the Construction Remedies Act, you must retain 10% of the contract price as a holdback for 60 days after substantial performance is certified.

When you have two written quotes side by side, line up how each one prices rock breaking, what trucking distance and number of loads each assumes, who supplies and pays for backfill material, and whether site clean-up and spoil disposal are included or billed separately.

Q2

Foundation dig for a garage in Quispamsis, what should I budget?

Budgeting a Garage Foundation Dig in Quispamsis

Published price guides read in September 2026 put a whole-house foundation excavation at $7,500 to $30,000 nationally; no separate range for a garage-sized dig was found in those guides, so the best-published figure for this job is machine time. A mini excavator with operator runs $65 to $150 per hour, and a standard excavator with operator runs $150 to $250 per hour. A contractor will build the quote from machine hours, trucking and any material needed, so the total depends heavily on what the ground and the site require.

A few things move the price on a job like this. If the contractor hits rock, a hydraulic breaker attachment adds $200 to $300 per hour on top of machine time, so make sure the quote says how it is priced. Haul distance matters too: spoil has to go somewhere, and a longer drive to a disposal site adds trucking cost. Access to the garage footprint, depth of the dig set by the designer, and whether backfill material needs to be brought in rather than reused on site all affect the final number.

On the permit and safety side, the Town of Quispamsis requires a Site Work Development Permit for the grubbing, clearing or preparation of a lot for development; ask the Town whether your garage project triggers that permit. Ask whether a building permit is needed: Regulation 2021-2 exempts an accessory building of 55 square metres or less that is not intended for overnight accommodation, though a development permit may still apply. Where there is a building permit, Regulation 2021-2 under the Building Code Administration Act requires at least one inspection on completion of the footings and foundations before any backfilling begins. Ask the Town how to book that inspection, because the machine cannot backfill against the new foundation until it is done. Before the excavator starts, the contractor must determine the location of underground utilities under WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191. Info-Excavation, reached through Click Before You Dig, needs three working days notice; NB Power runs its own separate underground locate service and asks for at least five business days notice. NB Power's locate covers only NB Power-owned lines and is valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form. Any private lines, such as wiring run to an existing garage or shed, are yours to find and mark before the machine moves.

If the dig site is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, measured horizontally from the top of the bank, a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit from the province is required before any ground disturbance. Ask the contractor to show both locate tickets before work begins, and ask your insurer about coverage during construction. Under the Construction Remedies Act, you must retain 10% of the contract price as a holdback for 60 days after the certificate of substantial performance is signed. Ask for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate before hiring.

Contractors listed in the New Brunswick Construction Network directory can receive your request through the form on this page. Before you agree to a price, ask the contractor exactly how rock removal and spoil hauling are priced, because those two lines are where a garage foundation quote can grow well past the original number.

Q3

Would $150 an hour be fair for a standard excavator in Saint John?

$150 an hour sits at the lower end of the published range for a standard excavator with operator, which runs $150 to $250 per hour according to price guides read in September 2026. So the rate itself is not out of line, but the hourly rate is only one part of what makes a quote fair or expensive.

What moves the total cost is worth thinking through before you compare numbers. A job that hits rock may need a hydraulic breaker, priced separately at $200 to $300 per hour in the same guides. Trucking spoil off site, haul distance, the number of loads and whether clean fill comes back for backfill all add to the bill and may not be included in a bare hourly rate. Depth of the dig, site access for the machine, and how much time is spent waiting on inspections or locates can all stretch the hours.

Saint John context

In Saint John, the City issues building permits, and if your job involves a water, sanitary or storm sewer installation, renewal or repair, a Water and Sewerage Permit Package is required. A Driveway Culvert Permit and a Street Excavation permit exist for work touching the street. Ask the City which of these apply to your job before the machine arrives. WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 puts the locate obligation on the employer: ask the contractor to show you both locate tickets before digging starts. Info-Excavation (Click Before You Dig) needs three working days' notice, and its locate is valid until the end date written on the request. NB Power runs its own separate underground locate service, valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form and covering only NB Power-owned lines. Private lines, such as wiring to a garage or shed, are the owner's to find and mark. If your dig is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a provincial Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit is required before any ground is disturbed.

A fair written quote for a Saint John excavation job should spell out the hourly rate, the estimated machine hours, how rock is priced if it is encountered, trucking and disposal costs, whether backfill material is included or extra, and what site clean-up covers. Ask for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate to confirm the contractor is registered and in good standing. Under the Construction Remedies Act you must retain 10% of the contract price as a holdback for 60 days after substantial performance.

When you put two written quotes side by side, line up exactly how each one handles rock, trucking distance, backfill source and clean-up, because those four items are where quotes that look similar on the hourly rate can end up far apart in total cost.

Q4

Price of a water line trench to a detached garage in Oromocto?

Water Line Trench to a Detached Garage in Oromocto

Few published New Brunswick prices exist for trenching specifically, so machine time is the best-published figure: a mini excavator with operator runs $65 to $150 per hour, and a standard excavator with operator runs $150 to $250 per hour, based on published price guides read in September 2026. The quote builds from hours plus trucking and material.

Several things move the total. Rock in the trench line may need a hydraulic breaker, priced at $200 to $300 per hour, and that is separate from the excavator rate. The distance from the house to the garage matters, as does whether the trench crosses a driveway, a concrete pad or landscaping that has to be cut and restored. Depth affects time; ask what depth the quote assumes and who set it. Spoil has to go somewhere, so ask whether haul-away is included or whether the excavated material stays on site for backfill. Backfill compaction and surface restoration are worth confirming too.

For locates, the contractor has a duty under WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 to determine the location of underground utilities before digging. Ask the contractor to show you both locate tickets before the machine starts: one from Info-Excavation, requested at least three working days ahead through Click Before You Dig, and one from NB Power, requested at least five business days ahead through NB Power's own separate service. NB Power's locate is valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form and covers only NB Power-owned lines. Any private lines, such as wiring run to the garage by a previous owner, are yours to find and mark. If you are unsure what is buried between the house and the garage, raise that with the contractor before work starts.

On permits, the Town of Oromocto's Planning and Compliance office issues building permits and does site inspections. Whether a water line connection to a detached garage triggers a permit in Oromocto is something to confirm directly with that office before work begins. If the trench runs within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit from the province is required before any digging, clearing or machine work starts. That 30 metres is measured horizontally from the top of the bank on the ground, not from a map.

Before the quote is signed, ask the contractor how rock is priced if it is encountered mid-trench, because a fixed-price quote that is silent on rock can become a dispute once the machine hits it.

Start with the Town of Oromocto's Planning and Compliance office to confirm what permits apply to your job, then request your locates, because those two steps set the conditions every contractor will need to price the work accurately.

Q5

Is $22,000 too much to excavate for a new home in Sussex?

A whole-house foundation dig runs $7,500 to $30,000 based on published price guides read in September 2026, so the quote you have sits in the middle of that range. It is not obviously high, but whether it is fair depends entirely on what the quote includes and what the ground turns out to be.

A few things can push a foundation dig toward the top of that range. If the contractor hits ledge or boulders, breaking rock with a hydraulic attachment runs $200 to $300 per hour on top of the digging time, and that cost can climb quickly. Haul distance matters too: spoil trucked a long way costs more than spoil dumped nearby, and whether the site has room to stockpile material changes the trucking plan. A standard excavator with operator runs $150 to $250 per hour; a mini runs $65 to $150 per hour. The machine size the job needs, the number of hours it takes, and what happens to the spoil are the three levers that set the final number.

Before the machine arrives, two separate locate requests go out. Info-Excavation, reached through Click Before You Dig, needs three working days' notice; that locate is valid until the end date written on the request. NB Power runs its own underground locate service, separate from Info-Excavation, and asks for at least five business days' notice; that locate is valid for 60 days from the date on the form and covers only NB Power-owned lines. Private lines, fuel lines and anything a past owner installed are yours to find and mark before digging starts. If the lot is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a provincial Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit is required before any machine work begins.

For the permit side in Sussex, check with the Town of Sussex on what building and development permits are needed and how to book the footing and foundation inspection. Under Regulation 2021-2, at least one inspection must happen after the footings and foundation are complete and before any backfilling starts. WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 requires that any trench 1.2 m (about 4 ft) or deeper that workers enter be shored, sloped or benched, or cut in solid rock, and shoring must be engineer-certified.

Ask the contractor to show you both locate tickets, confirm how rock is priced if it is encountered, and ask for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate. Under the Construction Remedies Act you must retain 10% of the contract price as a holdback for 60 days after substantial performance is certified. Ask your insurer about coverage during construction.

The line in a quote most worth reading closely is the one that says what happens if rock is found, how far the spoil travels, and who supplies the backfill material, because those three items are where an estimate and a final invoice can part ways.

Q6

How much does it cost to dig a basement in Moncton?

What Does a Basement Dig Cost in Moncton?

Published price guides read in September 2026 put a whole-house foundation dig at $7,500 to $30,000. That range is national; few New Brunswick prices are published, so a local quote is the only reliable number for your lot.

Machine time is the best-published figure. A mini excavator with operator runs $65 to $150 per hour and a standard excavator with operator runs $150 to $250 per hour. The hours add up once you factor in trucking spoil away, any backfill material brought in, and time spent working around existing services.

Several things move the price within that range. Depth matters: a full basement takes more digging than a crawl space. Access to the site affects how the machine is positioned and how trucks get in and out. The volume of spoil and how far it travels to disposal affects trucking cost. If the machine hits rock, a hydraulic breaker attachment runs $200 to $300 per hour, and that work is priced separately from the digging. Soil conditions and groundwater are judged on site; ask the contractor what they saw in any test pits or neighbouring digs nearby.

In Moncton, the City issues a building and development permit before work starts. Regulation 2021-2 under the Building Code Administration Act requires at least one inspection on completion of the footings and foundations, before any backfilling begins. Backfilling against a new foundation cannot happen until that inspection is done; ask the City of Moncton's building department how to schedule it. If the dig is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit from the province is required before any machine work or clearing begins.

Before the excavator arrives, two separate locate requests are needed. Info-Excavation, reached through Click Before You Dig, requires three working days' notice; the locate is valid until the end date written on the request. NB Power runs its own separate underground locate service and asks for at least five business days' notice; that locate is valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form and covers only NB Power-owned lines. Ask the contractor to show you both locate tickets before the machine moves. Ask for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate as well, because WorkSafeNB recommends confirming a business is registered and in good standing before work starts.

WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 requires that a trench 1.2 m (about 4 ft) or deeper that workers enter be shored, sloped or benched, or cut in solid rock, and any shoring must be certified as adequate by an engineer. Excavated material must be kept at least 1.2 m from the edge of the dig.

A fair quote names the machine rate, estimated hours, trucking and disposal, any rock-breaking rate, backfill material if needed, and site clean-up. Under the Construction Remedies Act, you must retain a holdback of 10% of

the contract price for 60 days after the certificate of substantial performance is signed.

Get one answer in writing: who is responsible for marking private lines, such as wires to a garage or shed, and what their process is if the machine strikes something that was not on any locate ticket.

Q7

Septic system all-in price for a new cottage near Shediac?

A full conventional septic system for a new cottage near Shediac runs roughly $10,000 to $25,000 based on published price guides read in September 2026, with excavation alone accounting for $3,000 to $12,000 of that. Those are national figures; few New Brunswick prices are published, so a local quote is the only reliable number for your lot.

Several things move the price. If rock turns up, a hydraulic breaker on the excavator runs $200 to $300 per hour. Haul distance matters too: if the spoil has to travel far, trucking adds to the bill. The licensed installer chooses the system type and field size after a test pit inspection, and that design drives how much excavation is needed before anyone picks a machine.

What the province requires here

A licensed installer must apply for provincial approval before any work starts. The application includes soil conditions from a test pit, separation distances and a flow estimate, and carries a $150 application fee. A provincial inspector assesses and approves the design first; the installed system must be available for inspection before it is covered. The excavation contractor can dig the test pits, the tank hole and the field once the licensed installer arranges it, but the installer is responsible for the system. Hire the licensed installer for the system itself.

If the cottage is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit from the province is required before any clearing, machine work or ground disturbance. That 30 metres is measured horizontally from the top of the bank on the ground, not from a map. The WAWA permit fee is $25 for a single alteration. For the building and development permit, check with Plan 360, the Southeast Regional Service Commission, as they issue permits for Shediac.

Before the machine arrives, request a locate through Info-Excavation (Click Before You Dig) at least three working days ahead, and make a separate request to NB Power at least five business days ahead. NB Power checks only for NB Power-owned underground lines; private lines run to a garage, shed or existing structure are yours to find and mark. Ask your municipality whether Info-Excavation covers the municipal water and sewer lines on your lot.

A fair quote names the machine rate (a mini excavator runs $65 to $150 per hour; a standard machine $150 to $250 per hour), how rock is priced if it is hit, where the spoil goes and who pays trucking, and what backfill material is included. Ask for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate before work starts. Under the Construction Remedies Act, hold back 10% of the contract price for 60 days after substantial performance is certified.

The line worth pinning down in writing is how rock, haul distance and backfill material are priced, because those three items are where a low headline number can grow.

Q8

Quote for digging and replacing weeping tile around a Fredericton house?

Weeping Tile Replacement in Fredericton: What to Expect

Few New Brunswick prices are published for a weeping tile dig, so machine time is the figure to read a quote against: in price guides read in September 2026 a standard excavator with operator runs $150 to $250 per hour, and a mini excavator with operator runs $65 to $150 per hour. The total moves with what the crew finds.

Several things push the price up or down. Rock along the footing line may need a hydraulic breaker, which runs $200 to $300 per hour on top of machine time. Depth to the footing matters: a walkout basement sits deeper on one side, adding excavation time. Tight access along a fence line or beside a deck may require a mini excavator where a standard machine would be faster. How far the spoil travels to a staging area or truck, and whether the contractor hauls it away or leaves it for you to deal with, changes the trucking cost. Crushed stone for the new drainage bed runs $40 to $75 per cubic metre, plus $75 to $200 per delivery load. None of those costs are in the labour rate, so a quote that bundles them is easier to compare than one that does not.

On the Fredericton side, check with the City's building department on whether a permit is needed for this scope of work. The City's Engineering Division reviews lot grading at the permit stage, so if the drainage work changes how water leaves the lot, that conversation is worth having before the machine arrives. For the trench itself, WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 requires that any trench 1.2 m (about 4 ft) or deeper that workers enter be shored, sloped or benched, or cut in solid rock, and that any shoring be engineer-certified. Stay back from the edge and out of the trench entirely; that rule is the contractor's obligation, not yours to manage, but you should know it applies.

Before any digging starts, two separate locate requests are needed. Info-Excavation, reached through Click Before You Dig, requires three working days' notice, and its locate is valid until the end date written on the request. NB Power runs its own separate underground locate service and asks for at least five business days; it is valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form and covers only NB Power-owned lines. Private lines, including anything a past owner ran to a shed, garage or garden, are yours to find and mark.

A fair quote for this job names the hourly machine rate, estimated hours, trucking and haul-away, the type and volume of drainage stone, and what happens if rock is encountered. Ask for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate before work starts, and hold back 10% of the contract price for 60 days after substantial performance, as the Construction Remedies Act sets out; ask a lawyer about the details for your contract.

The line to pin down is how rock will be priced if the breaker goes on, and whether that rate is capped or open-ended.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by New Brunswick Excavation. It does not constitute professional advice. Always book your locates, check with your municipality or Regional Service Commission, and follow WorkSafeNB rules before starting any excavation project. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **newbrunswickexcavation.com** for the latest answers.