NEW BRUNSWICK EXCAVATION

Foundation & Basement Digs

Excavating for new homes, additions, garages and basements

4 Expert Answers from Dig IQ

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Q1

Digging a basement for a home addition in Sussex, what are the steps?

Digging a Basement Under a Home Addition in Sussex

Before a machine arrives, two things need to happen: the permits your addition needs are in place, and the locates are in hand. The dig itself follows a short sequence, but the permit and locates are not optional steps you can run in parallel with the excavation.

Permits and notice first. We found no Sussex rule specific to excavation, so ask the Town of Sussex which building and development permits your addition needs. Under Regulation 2021-2 of the Building Code Administration Act, before work starts you give the local building department written notice of the start date and the names of the constructors, engineers and designers involved. That notice goes to the Town of Sussex or the Regional Service Commission serving your area.

Locates before any digging. Info-Excavation, reached through Click Before You Dig, requires three working days' notice; the locate is valid until the end date written on your request. NB Power runs its own separate underground locate service, and that request needs to go in at least five business days before digging. 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 to a garage or shed, are yours to find and mark before the machine moves. Ask the contractor to show you both locate tickets before work starts.

The dig sequence. Once permits and locates are confirmed, the excavation contractor cuts into the ground beside the existing foundation, removes the spoil, and brings the walls down to the depth your engineer or designer has specified. Where workers need to enter the excavation, WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 requires that any trench or excavation 1.2 m (about 4 ft) or deeper be shored, sloped or benched, or cut in solid rock, and any shoring must be certified as adequate by an engineer. Stay back from the edge and out of the trench; that is the contractor's controlled work zone.

The inspection that stops backfilling. Regulation 2021-2 requires at least one inspection on completion of the footings and foundations, before any backfilling begins. Ask the Town of Sussex how that inspection is booked. Backfill does not go in until the inspector has signed off.

What a solid quote covers. Ask the contractor to spell out:

- How rock is priced, whether by the hour with a hydraulic breaker ($200 to $300 per hour, based on published price guides read in September 2026) or as a separate line item
- Where the spoil is trucked and how far, since haul distance moves the machine-time cost

- Whether clean backfill material is included or billed separately
- Who is responsible for marking private lines before the machine starts
- A WorkSafeNB clearance certificate confirming the contractor is in good standing

A standard excavator with operator runs $150 to $250 per hour; a mini-excavator runs $65 to $150 per hour. Few New Brunswick-specific prices are published, so machine hours plus trucking and material is the most reliable way to read a quote.
The most useful request to make of any bidder: break out rock removal, spoil trucking distance and backfill material as separate line items, because those three are where the gap between an estimate and a final invoice tends to open up.

Q2

Is it cheaper to build on a slab than dig a basement in Dieppe?

Slab vs. Basement: What the Dig Costs in Dieppe

We found no published New Brunswick comparison of slab and basement costs. A basement means digging and hauling more material; price guides read in September 2026 put a whole-house foundation dig at $7,500 to $30,000. Few New Brunswick excavation prices are published, so those figures are the best available benchmark, not a guarantee.

Several things move the cost gap between the two approaches. The depth of a basement dig means more machine hours, more spoil to haul away, and more trucking. If the contractor hits rock, a hydraulic breaker runs at $200 to $300 per hour on top of the excavator rate, and a standard excavator with operator runs $150 to $250 per hour while a mini runs $65 to $150 per hour. Haul distance to a disposal site, site access, and what the ground turns out to be once the machine is in it all affect the final number, and none of that can be judged without someone standing on the lot.

On the permit side, we found no excavation-specific rule published by the City of Dieppe, so ask the City directly whether your project needs a development permit, a building permit, or both, and what inspections are required. Under Regulation 2021-2 of the Building Code Administration Act, a footing and foundation inspection must happen before any backfilling begins, regardless of whether you are building on a slab or a full basement. Ask the City how to book that inspection. If the lot 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 starts.

Before the excavator arrives, two separate locate requests are needed. Info-Excavation, reached through Click Before You Dig, requires 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. Any private lines, drains or buried cables that a past owner installed are the owner's to find and mark before digging starts.

A fair quote for either job should spell out how rock is priced if it is encountered, where the spoil goes and who pays trucking, what backfill material is used and where it comes from, and the timing around the foundation inspection. Ask the contractor for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate before work starts, and under the Construction Remedies Act you must retain 10% of the contract price as a holdback for 60 days after substantial performance. Before you commit to either foundation type, your first call should be to the City of Dieppe, because the permit requirements and inspection process will shape the schedule and the contractor's scope from day one.

Q3

What if the foundation hole fills with water in Shediac?

Water in the Foundation Hole: What to Do in Shediac

Ask the excavator how they will deal with water in an open foundation hole, and make sure the cost of keeping it dry is written into the quote before work starts.

We found no public data on the water table for any Shediac lot or neighbourhood, so how much water you will deal with can only be judged on site.

WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 requires an employer to keep an excavation reasonably free of water, so the contractor has a legal obligation here, not just a practical one. The same regulation requires a trench 1.2 m (about 4 ft) or deeper that workers enter to be shored, sloped or benched, or cut in solid rock, and any shoring must be engineer-certified. Stay back from the edge of any open excavation.

Before any digging begins, locates are required. Submit a request to Info-Excavation through Click Before You Dig at least three working days ahead; that locate is valid until the end date written on the request. Request NB Power's separate underground locate service at least five business days before digging; it covers NB Power-owned lines only and is valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form. Mark any private lines, pipes or drains on the property yourself; NB Power says those are the owner's to have checked. If the lot is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit from the province is required before the

machine moves.

In Shediac, building and development permits come from Plan 360, the Southeast Regional Service Commission. Under Regulation 2021-2 of the Building Code Administration Act, a footing and foundation inspection must happen before any backfilling begins. Ask Plan 360 how to book that inspection so the hole does not sit open longer than necessary while you wait. Backfilling before that inspection breaks the inspection requirement.

Ask any excavator you speak with how they price pumping, whether it is included in a flat quote or billed by the hour, and what their plan is if inflow exceeds what a single pump can handle.

Start with Plan 360 to confirm your permit and inspection process, because the inspection timing directly controls when the contractor can backfill and close the job.

Q4

Can I live in the house during a basement lowering dig in Fredericton?

Can You Stay in the House During a Basement Lowering in Fredericton?

Possibly, but it depends on how the work is staged and what the City of Fredericton's building department decides when you pull the permit. A basement lowering is structural work, and Fredericton requires a building permit before significant alterations; the City's Engineering Division also reviews water and sewer services and lot grading at the permit stage. Get that permit in hand before any machine touches the soil.

Whether the house can be occupied while the work goes on is a question for your engineer and the City's building department, not the excavator alone. Regulation 2021-2 calls for a footing and foundation inspection before any backfilling begins, so build that into the schedule.

WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 requires any trench or excavation 1.2 m (about 4 ft) or deeper that workers enter to be shored, sloped or benched, or cut in solid rock, and any shoring must be certified as adequate by an engineer. Inside a basement lowering, workers may well be working at or below that depth. That shoring requirement is the contractor's obligation, but you should ask how they plan to meet it before signing anything.

Before the machine arrives, two separate locate requests are needed. Info-Excavation, reached through 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 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, such as wiring run to a garage or a subpanel, are yours to find and mark. The City of Fredericton's Engineering Division also reviews water and sewer services at the permit stage, so bring any existing service drawings to that conversation.

A few things worth confirming with the contractor before work starts:

- How rock, if encountered, is priced (hourly with a hydraulic breaker runs $200 to $300 per hour, and that can shift a budget quickly)
- Where the spoil goes and whether trucking is included in the quote
- The exact sequence for underpinning and how long each section is exposed
- A WorkSafeNB clearance certificate, confirming the contractor is in good standing with their workers' compensation account
- The 10% holdback under the Construction Remedies Act, kept for 60 days after substantial performance

We found no provincial excavation-contractor licence, so credentials are yours to check directly. Ask your insurer

whether your home policy covers the structure while this kind of work is underway.

After the job is done, keep the locate records, your building permit, the engineer's shoring certification, the inspection sign-off from the City, and the written quote and final invoice together in one place in case a question about the work comes up later. A contractor match request through the form on this page goes to excavation contractors listed in the New Brunswick Construction Network directory.

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.