NEW BRUNSWICK EXCAVATION

Hiring & Quotes

Choosing an excavation contractor in New Brunswick: WorkSafeNB clearance certificates, what a written quote should name, rock clauses, the holdback and comparing quotes

4 Expert Answers from Dig IQ

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Q1

Who books the footing inspection on a Rothesay addition?

The Town of Rothesay issues building and development permits, and its building inspector enforces the National Building Code. That means the footing and foundation inspection is booked through the Town of Rothesay's building department. Ask them directly how to schedule it and how much notice they need.

Before the Concrete and Before the Backfill

Regulation 2021-2 under the Building Code Administration Act requires at least one inspection on completion of the footings and foundations, and that inspection must happen before any backfilling begins. This is not optional and it is not the contractor's call to skip. Make sure your contractor knows the inspection is booked and confirmed before the machine touches the spoil pile.

The same regulation requires the owner or their agent to give the local government written notice of the start date and the names of the constructors, engineers, designers and any inspection or testing agencies before work begins. Check with the Town of Rothesay on exactly how they want that notice submitted.

A few other things to have in order before the machine arrives on your lot:

- Info-Excavation (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, which must be requested at least five business days before digging; it is valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form and covers only NB Power-owned lines.
- Any private lines, drains or tanks a past owner installed are yours to find and mark before digging starts.
- If the addition 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 you both locate tickets before the excavator moves, and ask your insurer whether your policy covers the construction period.
Before you sign the contract, ask the excavator exactly how rock will be priced if the machine hits it, where the spoil is going, and whether backfill material is included or billed separately.

Q2

Excavator gave a price over text in Oromocto, enough?

A price over text is a starting point, not a contract. Before you treat that number as a real quote, you need to know what it actually includes, because excavation pricing has several moving parts that a text message may not cover.

What a Proper Quote Should Spell Out

Published price guides from September 2026 show a mini excavator with operator running $65 to $150 per hour and a standard machine $150 to $250 per hour. A whole-house foundation dig runs $7,500 to $30,000 nationally; few New Brunswick-specific prices are published, so machine hours plus trucking and material is how a real quote is built. A text with one number tells you nothing about which of those components you are paying for.

Ask the contractor to put in writing:

- The machine size and estimated hours
- How rock is handled, because hydraulic breaking runs $200 to $300 per hour on top of dig time
- Where the spoil goes and who pays trucking, since haul distance moves the number considerably
- Whether backfill material is included or extra, and what grade of material
- Site cleanup and any gravel or base material if it is a driveway or pad job

New Brunswick context for Oromocto. The Town of Oromocto's Planning and Compliance office issues building permits and does site inspections. If your job involves a new building or addition, a permit is required before work starts, and Regulation 2021-2 under the Building Code Administration Act requires a footing and foundation inspection before any backfilling begins. Ask the Town of Oromocto how to book that inspection. If the dig is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a provincial Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit is required before the machine moves; the 30 metres is measured horizontally from the top of the bank on the ground, not from a map.

On locates: the contractor has a duty under WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 to determine the location of underground utilities before digging. Ask to see both locate tickets, one from Info-Excavation through Click Before You Dig (requested at least three working days ahead) and a separate one from NB Power (requested at least five business days ahead, valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form, and covering 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 arrives.

On payment: under the Construction Remedies Act, you must retain a holdback of 10% of the contract price for 60 days after substantial performance. A text price with no written contract makes that harder to manage. Ask for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate before work starts, because if the contractor is not registered and paying into their workers' compensation account, you can be held responsible for those premiums.

A text is fine for a first conversation, but ask the contractor to send a written scope before you commit to anything. The one question worth putting to them directly: if you hit rock, how will that be priced, and will I see it in writing

before you break ground?

Q3

Do excavation contractors need a licence in New Brunswick?

We found no provincial licence or certification for excavation contractors or for excavator and backhoe operators doing residential digging in New Brunswick. Several trades that follow the dig do need provincial licences, though.

What Does Require a Licence or Certificate

A few specific situations carry clear provincial requirements:

- **Blasting:** WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 requires that a blasting operation be conducted by a blaster who holds an appropriate certificate of qualification.
- **Septic systems:** Under the On-site Sewage Disposal System Regulation, anyone who installs, constructs, repairs or replaces a conventional system must hold a provincial sewage disposal system licence. An excavation contractor can dig the tank hole and the field when a licensed installer arranges it, but the installer, not the excavator, is responsible for the system.
- **Wells:** The province says new wells must be built by a licensed New Brunswick well contractor and licensed well driller, and the Water Well Regulation requires a well contractor's permit to dig a well on land you do not own.

The excavation contractor who digs your foundation, trench or driveway base is not covered by any of those licences. That does not mean anything goes, though. WorkSafeNB's General Regulation 91-191 binds employers on the site: trench walls 1.2 m (about 4 ft) or deeper that workers enter must be shored, sloped or benched, or cut in solid rock, and any shoring must be engineer-certified. Excavated material must be kept at least 1.2 m from the edge. The employer must also make sure underground utility lines are located before digging begins.

What to Check Before You Hire.

Because no provincial licence exists to look up, the practical checks fall to you. Ask any contractor you are considering for a WorkSafeNB clearance certificate, which confirms they are registered and in good standing with their workers' compensation account. WorkSafeNB notes that a customer can be held responsible for an unregistered business's premiums. For a sole proprietor with no workers, coverage is optional, so ask directly about their insurance before work starts.

Under the Construction Remedies Act, the owner must retain a holdback of 10% of the contract price for 60 days after the certificate of substantial performance is signed or the contract is completed, abandoned or terminated. Get legal advice if you are unsure how that applies to your contract.

Before any machine touches the ground, two separate locate requests are needed: one through Info-Excavation (Click Before You Dig) at least three working days ahead, and one through NB Power's own underground locate service at least five business days ahead. NB Power's locate covers only NB Power-owned lines and is valid for 60 days from the date on the locate form. Private lines, such as wiring run to a garage, shed or pool, are yours to find and mark. If your project is within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland, a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit from the province is required before any digging or clearing begins.

Once you have more than one written quote, check that each one spells out how rock is priced if it is encountered, where the spoil goes and what trucking distance is assumed, when backfill happens relative to any required inspections, and what clean-up and site restoration are included. The form on this page passes your job to local excavation contractors in the New Brunswick Construction Network directory, who can reply with quotes.

Q4

What happens if the excavator's quote in Rothesay leaves out trucking?

What a Missing Trucking Line Means for Your Rothesay Quote

If trucking is not written into the quote, the cost of moving spoil off your lot may not be included, and that gap can be significant. Published price guides read in September 2026 show machine time for a standard excavator with operator running $150 to $250 per hour, and a mini at $65 to $150 per hour, but those figures cover the machine on site. Hauling excavated material away is a separate cost, and few published New Brunswick prices exist for haul-away per load. The honest answer is that trucking distance, dump fees and the number of loads are all variables the quote needs to name.

What drives trucking cost on a Rothesay job includes how much material comes out of the ground, where the nearest accepted disposal site is, how many truck runs that requires, and whether any of the spoil can be stockpiled on the lot for backfill later. Rock adds to this: if the machine hits rock and a hydraulic breaker is needed, the breaker runs $200 to $300 per hour on top of excavator time. A quote that is silent on rock is a second gap worth closing before you sign.

Before any machine arrives in Rothesay, locates are required. 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 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, including wiring to a garage, shed or pool that a past owner ran, are yours to find and mark.

The Town of Rothesay issues building and development permits and its building inspector enforces the National Building Code. Under Regulation 2021-2, if this is a new foundation or addition, an inspection of the footings and foundations must happen before any backfilling begins; ask the Town of Rothesay how to book it. Backfilling before that inspection is a compliance problem, not a scheduling shortcut. For anything near a stream, lake or wetland, the province's Watercourse and Wetland Alteration permit applies to any ground disturbance within 30 metres of the water, measured horizontally from the top of the bank.

When you go back to the excavator, ask for a revised quote that lists machine hours, trucking and disposal separately, states how rock will be priced if it is encountered, confirms which material stays on site for backfill and which leaves, and specifies who is responsible for cleanup. 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.

Before you sign, ask the excavator directly who is responsible for marking private lines on your lot, and what the plan is if the machine hits something that was not on any locate.

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.