

NEW BRUNSWICK GARAGES

Permits & Building Codes

NB building permits, zoning bylaws, setback requirements, fire separation codes, and inspection processes for garage construction

21 Expert Answers from Garage IQ

newbrunswickgarages.com/construction-brain

Table of Contents

1. Can I build a second detached garage on my property in Saint John NB?
2. Can I appeal a denied garage building permit in my NB municipality?
3. What NB code requirements apply to a garage with floor drains connected to a dry well?
4. Do I need an environmental assessment to build a garage near a wetland in NB?
5. Do I need a building permit to construct a garage in Fredericton New Brunswick?
6. What are the setback requirements for a detached garage in Moncton NB zoning bylaws?
7. Does the New Brunswick Building Code require a garage to have a firewall if attached to a house?
8. What is the maximum garage height allowed in residential zones in Saint John NB?
9. Do I need a permit for a garage under 108 square feet in Dieppe New Brunswick?
10. What are the New Brunswick fire code requirements for an attached garage?
11. How long does it take to get a garage building permit approved in Miramichi NB?
12. What inspections are required during garage construction in New Brunswick?
13. Are there lot coverage limits that affect garage size in Quispamsis New Brunswick?
14. What is the minimum distance a detached garage must be from the property line in Riverview NB?
15. Does New Brunswick require a separate electrical permit for wiring a garage?
16. What are the NB Building Code requirements for garage floor drains in Bathurst?
17. Do I need a variance to build an oversized garage in a Fredericton residential neighbourhood?
18. What NB code requirements apply to a garage with a living space above it in Oromocto?
19. Are there Heritage District restrictions on garage design in downtown Saint John NB?
20. What are the New Brunswick Building Code requirements for garage ventilation?
21. Can I build my own garage in New Brunswick without a licensed contractor?

Can I build a second detached garage on my property in Saint John NB?

Yes, you can typically build a second detached garage on your property in Saint John, but it depends on your lot size, zoning, and how much of your property is already covered by structures. Most residential zones in Saint John allow multiple accessory buildings as long as you stay within the total coverage limits and setback requirements.

Zoning and Coverage Limits

Saint John's zoning bylaw limits how much of your lot can be covered by buildings. In most residential zones (R1, R2, R3), the maximum building coverage ranges from 35% to 50% of your total lot area. This includes your house, existing garage, and any proposed second garage. For example, if you have a 6,000 square foot lot in an R1 zone with 35% maximum coverage, you can have up to 2,100 square feet of total building footprint. If your house and first garage already use 1,800 square feet, you have room for a 300 square foot second garage.

The key is calculating your current coverage and determining what space remains. A typical single-car detached garage (12x20) has a 240 square foot footprint, while a two-car garage (24x24) covers 576 square feet. Many Saint John properties, especially older ones with smaller lots, are already close to their maximum coverage with just the house and one garage.

Setback Requirements

Your second garage must meet the same setback requirements as any accessory building in Saint John. Typically, this means 3-5 feet from side and rear property lines, and the garage cannot be closer to the street than your house. Corner lots have additional restrictions on the flanking street side. The garage also cannot encroach on any utility easements, which are common along rear lot lines in many Saint John neighborhoods.

Building Permit Requirements

Saint John requires a building permit for any new garage construction, regardless of size. You'll need to submit a site plan showing both existing and proposed structures, demonstrating compliance with setbacks and coverage limits. The permit application should include foundation details showing frost protection (4-5 feet deep in the Saint John area), structural drawings for the framing and roof system, and electrical plans if you're adding power to the second garage.

Practical Considerations for Saint John

Many Saint John properties were developed decades ago when vehicles were smaller and single-car garages were the norm. Adding a second garage is often the most practical way to accommodate modern vehicles, create

workshop space, or store recreational equipment. Consider the intended use when planning size and features — a workshop garage benefits from higher ceilings, more electrical circuits, and insulation, while pure storage might be built more economically.

Drainage is particularly important in Saint John due to the city's hilly terrain and Maritime climate. Your second garage must not interfere with existing drainage patterns or direct water toward neighboring properties. The grade around the new garage should slope away on all sides, and you may need to extend or modify existing drainage systems.

When to Hire a Professional

Contact a local contractor experienced with Saint John's zoning requirements and soil conditions. They can assess your lot, calculate coverage limits, and design a second garage that maximizes your available space while meeting all code requirements. The foundation work is especially critical — Saint John's varied soil conditions and frost depth requirements demand professional excavation and concrete work.

Need help finding a garage construction professional familiar with Saint John's requirements? New Brunswick Garages can match you with local contractors who understand the city's zoning bylaws and building standards for your free consultation.

Q2

Can I appeal a denied garage building permit in my NB municipality?

Yes, you can appeal a denied garage building permit in New Brunswick. Most NB municipalities have a formal appeal process through their development or planning appeal board, though the specific procedures, timelines, and fees vary by municipality.

Understanding the Appeal Process

When your garage permit is denied, the municipality must provide written reasons for the denial. Common reasons include setback violations, height restrictions, lot coverage limits, drainage concerns, or incomplete documentation. The denial letter should reference the specific bylaw sections or code requirements that weren't met. This information is crucial for your appeal because you'll need to address each concern directly.

Most NB municipalities require appeals to be filed within **15 to 30 days** of the denial notice. The appeal typically goes to a development appeal board, planning appeal board, or similar body comprised of appointed community members with construction, planning, or legal backgrounds. Some smaller municipalities may have appeals heard

by council directly.

Preparing Your Appeal

A successful appeal requires demonstrating either that the municipality misinterpreted their own bylaws, that your garage design actually does comply with requirements, or that you qualify for a variance based on unique site conditions. Simply disagreeing with the rules isn't grounds for appeal — you need to show the denial was incorrect or that exceptional circumstances warrant an exception.

Gather supporting documentation including a current property survey, detailed garage plans drawn to scale, photos of your lot and neighboring properties, and any professional opinions (engineer, architect, surveyor) that support your position. If the denial was based on setback issues, a survey showing exact property lines and proposed garage location is essential. For drainage concerns, you might need a grading plan or engineer's report showing proper water management.

When Appeals Are Likely to Succeed

Appeals work best when there's clear evidence the municipality made an error. For example, if your garage meets the required 5-foot side setback but was denied for being too close to the property line, a survey proving compliance should overturn the denial. Similarly, if the denial cited incorrect bylaw sections or misinterpreted your plans, the appeal board will typically side with the applicant.

Variance vs. Appeal

If your garage genuinely doesn't meet current bylaws — perhaps your lot is too small for standard setbacks or has unusual topography — you may need to apply for a **variance** rather than appeal the denial. A variance is permission to deviate from specific requirements due to hardship or unique circumstances. This is a separate process from an appeal, though some municipalities allow you to request a variance as part of your appeal.

Costs and Timing

Appeal fees in NB municipalities typically range from \$200 to \$800, and the process takes 30 to 90 days from filing to decision. You may need to present your case at a public hearing where neighbors can voice support or opposition. Having professional drawings and clear documentation significantly improves your chances and demonstrates you're serious about compliance.

When to Hire Professional Help

Consider hiring a local architect, building designer, or planning consultant if your appeal involves complex zoning issues, engineering concerns, or significant neighbor opposition. These professionals understand municipal processes and can often identify solutions you might miss. For straightforward appeals based on measurement

errors or bylaw misinterpretation, homeowners can often represent themselves successfully.

Alternative Solutions

Before appealing, consider whether modifying your garage design might be simpler and faster than fighting the denial. Moving the garage a few feet, reducing its size, or changing the roof height might address the municipality's concerns while still meeting your needs. Sometimes a quick conversation with the building inspector can identify simple modifications that would make your permit approvable.

Need help finding a professional garage builder who understands local permit requirements? New Brunswick Garages can match you with experienced contractors familiar with municipal processes throughout the province.

Q3

What NB code requirements apply to a garage with floor drains connected to a dry well?

Floor drains in NB garages require careful compliance with both the National Building Code and provincial plumbing regulations, and connecting to a dry well (soakaway pit) has specific restrictions that many homeowners don't realize.

Under the **NB Building Code and National Plumbing Code**, garage floor drains are permitted but must meet strict requirements. The drain cannot connect directly to the sanitary sewer system because garage runoff may contain oil, gasoline, antifreeze, and other automotive fluids that contaminate wastewater treatment systems. Instead, garage floor drains must connect to an **oil/water separator** before any discharge, or drain to an approved disposal system like a dry well.

Dry well connections for garage drains are regulated under NB's on-site wastewater disposal regulations. The dry well must be located at least **5 feet from any building foundation, 10 feet from property lines, and 100 feet from any water well or surface water body**. In many NB residential lots, especially in Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, and other urban areas, these setback requirements make dry wells impractical or impossible. The dry well must also be sized appropriately for soil conditions — sandy soils drain well, but NB's common clay soils may not provide adequate infiltration, causing the system to back up or overflow.

Soil percolation testing is typically required before installing a dry well system. The soil must demonstrate adequate drainage capacity to handle the expected volume of water from vehicle washing, snow melt, and precipitation that enters through the overhead door. In areas with high groundwater or poor drainage — common in low-lying areas of the Saint John River valley, Petitcodiac River valley, and coastal communities — dry wells may

not be approved at all.

Municipal requirements vary significantly across NB. Some municipalities prohibit garage floor drains entirely, others require oil/water separators regardless of the discharge method, and some have specific design standards for dry wells. **Fredericton, Moncton, Saint John, and Dieppe** each have different interpretations of how garage drainage should be handled. Rural areas under provincial jurisdiction may have different requirements than incorporated municipalities.

Practical considerations make garage floor drains problematic in NB's climate. The drain and connecting piping must be installed below the frost line (4-5 feet deep) or they'll freeze and crack during winter. This means expensive excavation and the drain line must slope continuously from the garage slab to the dry well without any low spots where water can freeze. Many contractors recommend against floor drains in unheated garages because of freeze risk and maintenance issues.

Alternative approaches are often more practical in NB. A **threshold drain** at the garage door opening captures most water and snow without requiring a floor drain. **Sloping the slab toward the door** (1/4 inch per foot minimum) allows water to drain naturally outside where it won't freeze in the piping system. For heated garages where floor drains are desired, connecting to a **sump pit with pump discharge** to a remote dry well may be more reliable than gravity drainage.

Before installing any garage drainage system, contact your local building inspection department and obtain proper permits. The system must be designed by someone familiar with NB soil conditions, frost depth, and local regulations. Many garage contractors subcontract this work to plumbing professionals who understand the code requirements and can design a system that won't freeze, back up, or violate environmental regulations.

When to hire a professional: All garage drainage work requires professional design and installation. The excavation, piping, dry well construction, and connections involve multiple trades and must comply with building, plumbing, and environmental codes that vary by municipality.

Need help finding a professional garage builder familiar with NB drainage requirements? New Brunswick Garages can match you with experienced contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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Do I need an environmental assessment to build a garage near a wetland in NB?

Environmental assessments for garage construction near wetlands in New Brunswick depend on the proximity to the wetland boundary, the size of your project, and whether any disturbance to the wetland or its buffer zone is involved. Most residential garages built on existing developed lots do not require formal environmental assessments, but wetland setback requirements and municipal development restrictions often apply.

Wetland Protection in New Brunswick operates under both federal and provincial jurisdiction. The federal Fisheries Act protects fish habitat, while the New Brunswick Clean Water Act and Wetland Conservation Policy protect wetland functions. For residential garage construction, the key question is whether your project falls within the **30-metre buffer zone** that typically surrounds protected wetlands. Activities within this buffer zone may require permits and environmental review, even if they don't directly disturb the wetland itself.

Most residential garages on existing developed properties do not trigger environmental assessment requirements unless they involve grading, filling, or drainage work that could affect wetland hydrology. A typical detached garage built on a lot that's already been developed for residential use, with proper setbacks from the wetland boundary, usually proceeds through normal municipal permitting. However, if your garage requires significant excavation for the foundation, changes to site drainage, or any filling of low areas, these activities could impact wetland water flow and require additional approvals.

The critical factor is the 30-metre setback from the wetland boundary. In New Brunswick, this buffer zone is designed to protect wetland functions from adjacent development impacts. If your proposed garage location falls within this setback, you'll likely need to consult with the Department of Environment and Local Government before proceeding. They can determine whether your specific project requires environmental review or can proceed with standard construction practices and erosion control measures.

Municipal zoning often includes additional wetland protections beyond provincial requirements. Many NB municipalities have environmental overlay zones or wetland protection bylaws that restrict development near sensitive areas. Your local planning department can tell you whether your property is subject to these additional restrictions and whether your garage project requires development permits beyond the standard building permit.

Practical steps for garage construction near wetlands include obtaining a property survey that clearly shows wetland boundaries and buffer zones, consulting with your municipal planning department early in the design process, and ensuring your contractor understands erosion and sediment control requirements during construction. Even if no environmental assessment is required, construction near wetlands typically requires silt fencing, controlled drainage, and careful timing to avoid sensitive periods like spring runoff or waterfowl nesting season.

When professional consultation is essential: If your garage will be within 30 metres of a wetland, if your lot has never been developed, if you're planning any site grading or drainage changes, or if you're unsure about wetland boundaries on your property, consult with an environmental consultant before finalizing your garage plans. The cost of this consultation (\$500-\$2,000) is minimal compared to the potential delays, redesign costs, or enforcement actions that can result from proceeding without proper approvals.

Most garage projects proceed smoothly with standard municipal building permits, but wetland proximity adds a layer of complexity that's best addressed early in the planning process. Your municipal planning department is the best first contact — they can tell you immediately whether your specific location and project scope requires additional environmental review.

Need help finding a garage contractor experienced with environmentally sensitive sites? New Brunswick Garages can match you with professionals who understand both construction requirements and environmental compliance in New Brunswick.

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Q5

Do I need a building permit to construct a garage in Fredericton New Brunswick?

Yes, you need a building permit to construct a garage in Fredericton. The City of Fredericton requires a building permit for virtually all new garage construction, whether the garage is attached to your home or built as a detached structure. This applies to both site-built and prefab/kit garages once they are placed on a permanent foundation.

The City of Fredericton's Development and Engineering Services department administers building permits under the **New Brunswick Building Code** and the city's own **zoning bylaw**. To obtain a permit, you will need to submit a

permit application along with construction drawings showing the garage's dimensions, foundation details, framing, and roof structure. You will also need a **site plan** showing the garage's location on your property relative to property lines, the existing house, and any easements or right-of-ways — this is how the city confirms your garage meets **setback requirements**. In Fredericton, typical setback requirements for a detached garage are **3 to 5 feet from side and rear property lines**, though this varies by zone. Attached garages must meet the same setbacks as the main dwelling, which are more restrictive. If you do not have a current property survey, you may need one prepared by a licensed New Brunswick land surveyor, costing **\$1,500 to \$3,000**.

The permit fee itself is relatively modest — typically **\$100 to \$800** depending on the assessed construction value. The real value of the permit is the **inspections** that come with it. For a standard garage build in Fredericton, expect inspections at the **foundation stage** (before backfilling), **framing stage** (before insulation and drywall), and **final completion**. These inspections verify that your garage's foundation extends below the **4-foot frost line**, that framing is adequate for Fredericton's **snow loads (approximately 2.8 to 3.2 kPa)**, and that fire separation requirements are met for attached garages. A separate **electrical permit** is required for all garage electrical work and must be obtained by a licensed electrician — this includes its own inspection process.

Some homeowners wonder whether a **small detached garage** might be exempt from permitting. In Fredericton, the exemption threshold for accessory buildings is very limited — structures under **10 square metres (108 square feet)** may be exempt in some circumstances, but a garage of any practical size for vehicle storage exceeds this threshold. A standard single-car garage starts at approximately 240 square feet (12x20), well above any exemption limit. **Do not assume you are exempt — call the City of Fredericton's building inspection office to confirm requirements before starting any work.**

Building without a permit in Fredericton creates several serious problems. The city can issue a **stop-work order** and require you to obtain a permit retroactively, which may involve exposing completed work for inspection (tearing off drywall to inspect framing, for example). If the unpermitted garage does not meet code — and without inspections, it very likely does not — you may be required to **demolish and rebuild** non-compliant portions at your own expense. When you eventually sell your property, unpermitted structures appear on the property disclosure and can derail real estate transactions, reduce your sale price, or require costly remediation. Your **homeowner's insurance** may also deny claims related to an unpermitted structure — if a fire starts in an unpermitted garage and spreads to your home, the insurance implications can be devastating.

The permit process in Fredericton typically takes **2 to 4 weeks** from application to approval, so factor this into your project timeline. Many experienced garage contractors in the Fredericton area will handle the permit application on your behalf as part of their service — this is standard practice and ensures the application includes all required documentation.

If you are planning a garage build in Fredericton, starting with the permit process early keeps your project on schedule. Need help finding a professional garage builder? New Brunswick Garages can match you with local contractors for free through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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Q6

What are the setback requirements for a detached garage in Moncton NB zoning bylaws?

Setback requirements for a detached garage in Moncton vary by zoning district, but typical requirements are 3 feet (0.9 metres) from side and rear property lines for accessory buildings, with additional restrictions based on the specific zone, lot size, and garage height. You must confirm the exact requirements for your property with the City of Moncton's Planning and Development department before finalizing your garage design or starting construction.

In Moncton's most common residential zones — the **R1 (Single Family Residential)** and **R2 (Two-Unit Residential)** zones that cover the majority of residential neighbourhoods — detached garages are classified as **accessory buildings**. The city's zoning bylaw sets minimum setback distances that your garage must maintain from property lines. The typical requirements are a **minimum 3-foot (0.9-metre) side yard setback** and a **minimum 3-foot (0.9-metre) rear yard setback** for single-storey accessory buildings. However, **if the detached garage exceeds a certain height** — typically around 15 feet to the peak — more restrictive setbacks may apply, similar to those for the principal dwelling.

The **front yard** is generally off-limits for detached garages in Moncton. The bylaw typically requires that accessory buildings be located **behind the front wall of the main dwelling** — you cannot build a detached garage in front of your house. This is both a zoning requirement and a practical consideration for neighbourhood aesthetics. **Corner lots** present additional complexity because they have two front yards (or a front yard and a flanking side yard),

which means the garage must meet setback requirements on multiple street-facing sides. In Moncton, the flanking side yard setback for corner lots is typically **more restrictive than the interior side yard** — often 10 to 15 feet from the flanking street property line.

Lot coverage is another zoning restriction that affects garage planning. Moncton's zoning bylaw limits the total percentage of your lot that can be covered by buildings (both the house and all accessory buildings combined). In most residential zones, the maximum lot coverage is **35% to 45%** of the total lot area. On a typical Moncton residential lot of 5,000 to 7,000 square feet, with a house footprint already consuming 1,000 to 1,500 square feet, you may have limited room for a large garage before exceeding the coverage limit. A standard two-car garage (24x24 = 576 square feet) is usually feasible, but an oversized three-car garage on a smaller urban lot may push you over the limit.

Maximum height restrictions for accessory buildings in Moncton are typically **15 to 20 feet** depending on the zone, which is adequate for a standard single-storey garage but may constrain designs with a bonus room, loft, or steeper roof pitch. If you are planning a two-storey garage or a garage with living space above, you may need to meet the same setback and height requirements as the principal dwelling, which are more restrictive.

There are several situations where the standard setbacks may not apply or where additional restrictions exist. **Easements** — utility easements, drainage easements, or right-of-ways — may cross your property and further restrict where you can build, even within the permitted setback area. A garage built on an easement can be ordered removed. **Heritage conservation areas** in Moncton may have additional design and placement requirements. Properties near **watercourses or wetlands** are subject to setbacks under provincial environmental regulations in addition to municipal zoning setbacks.

Before investing in garage design or construction quotes, take these steps: **obtain a copy of your property survey** (or commission one if you do not have a current one — \$1,500 to \$3,000 in the Moncton area), **contact the City of Moncton's Planning and Development department** to confirm the zoning designation for your property and the specific setback requirements that apply, and **ask about any easements or restrictions** registered against your title. This \$200-\$300 investment in research prevents the catastrophic cost of building a garage that does not comply with zoning — which can result in fines, forced relocation, or demolition.

An experienced local garage contractor will be familiar with Moncton's zoning requirements and can help navigate the planning process. Find garage contractors in the Greater Moncton area through the New Brunswick Construction Network directory at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

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- Thirty Four Renovations
- Gionetterenovations

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Does the New Brunswick Building Code require a garage to have a firewall if attached to a house?

Yes, the New Brunswick Building Code absolutely requires fire separation between an attached garage and the living space of a house. This is a life-safety requirement, not an optional upgrade, and it applies to every attached garage in the province regardless of size, age, or whether the garage is heated or unheated. The purpose is to prevent a fire that starts in the garage — from a vehicle, stored flammables, or electrical fault — from rapidly spreading into the home where occupants may be sleeping.

The NB Building Code, which adopts and references the **National Building Code of Canada**, requires a minimum **45-minute fire-resistance rating** on the wall and ceiling assemblies that separate the garage from the dwelling. In practical construction terms, this means the garage side of every shared wall and every shared ceiling must be covered with **5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall**. This is not the same as standard 1/2-inch drywall — Type X drywall contains glass fibres that hold the gypsum core together longer under fire exposure, providing the required resistance time. All joints must be **taped and finished** (mud and tape at minimum — full Level 4 or 5 finishing is not required for fire performance, but the joints must be sealed). Some wall and ceiling assemblies may require **two layers of drywall** to achieve the 45-minute rating, depending on the framing spacing and insulation type — consult your building inspector or a qualified designer to confirm the specific assembly required for your project.

The **door between the garage and the house** is a critical component of the fire separation. The NB Building Code requires this door to be either a **solid-core wood door at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) thick** or a **20-minute fire-rated door**. Steel insulated exterior doors also meet this requirement. The door must be equipped with a **self-closing device** — a spring hinge or hydraulic closer that ensures the door returns to the closed position automatically. This is non-negotiable because an open door between the garage and the house completely defeats the fire separation. The door threshold and weatherstripping should also provide a seal against garage fumes, including carbon monoxide.

No direct openings are permitted between the garage and sleeping areas (bedrooms) unless the opening is protected by the required fire-rated assembly. In practice, this means the door from the garage typically enters a hallway, mudroom, or kitchen — never directly into a bedroom. Any **windows in the common wall** between the garage and house must also be fire-rated.

Every penetration through the fire separation must be properly **fire-stopped**. This includes electrical wires, plumbing pipes, HVAC ducts, gas lines, dryer vents, and any other service that passes through the shared wall or ceiling. Approved fire-stop sealants (typically red silicone caulk rated for fire-stopping) or mechanical fire-stop devices must be used at every penetration point. A single unsealed penetration — even a small hole for an

electrical cable — compromises the entire fire separation and will fail inspection.

HVAC systems require special attention in attached garages. The garage must not share return air with the house — garage air containing carbon monoxide, gasoline vapours, and other contaminants must never be drawn into the home's heating system. If HVAC ducts pass through the garage, they must be sealed and fire-stopped where they penetrate the fire separation. A separate heating system for the garage (such as a unit heater) is the safest approach.

This is not an area for shortcuts or DIY interpretation. The fire separation between your attached garage and your home protects your family's lives while they sleep. **Hire a professional contractor** who understands NB Building Code fire separation requirements, and ensure your building inspector signs off on the assembly before it is covered by finishing materials. If you are adding an attached garage to your existing home or converting a breezeway into a garage connection, the fire separation requirements apply in full.

Need help finding a contractor experienced with attached garage construction in New Brunswick? New Brunswick Garages can match you with qualified builders through the New Brunswick Construction Network for free.

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Q8

What is the maximum garage height allowed in residential zones in Saint John NB?

The maximum height for a detached accessory building such as a garage in residential zones in Saint John is typically limited to 5 metres (approximately 16 feet) at the peak, though this can vary depending on the specific zoning designation of your property. Saint John's municipal zoning by-law sets height limits for accessory structures that are generally lower than the height permitted for the principal dwelling, and your garage must comply with the limit that applies to your particular zone.

Saint John divides its residential areas into several zoning classifications — from low-density single-family zones to higher-density residential zones — and each classification has its own set of rules for accessory buildings. In most standard single-family residential zones, a detached garage is limited to one storey and must not exceed the height cap set out in the by-law. If you are planning a garage with a bonus room, loft, or second-storey storage area above, you need to pay close attention to the height measurement method. Saint John typically measures building height from the **average finished grade at the building perimeter to the highest point of the roof**. A steeper roof pitch will push you closer to the limit, while a lower-slope roof gives you more usable wall height before you hit the cap.

For attached garages, the height restriction is generally governed by the rules for the principal dwelling rather than the accessory building rules, since the garage becomes part of the main structure. This means an attached garage can often be taller than a detached one, especially if the roofline integrates with the house. However, the attached garage must still comply with all setback, lot coverage, and fire separation requirements.

NB Building Code and Municipal Zoning Interaction

It is important to understand that **zoning by-laws and the NB Building Code work together but address different things**. The zoning by-law controls where you can build, how tall the structure can be, how far it must sit from property lines, and how much of your lot it can cover. The NB Building Code controls how the structure must be built — foundation depth, structural capacity, fire separation, electrical, and so on. Your garage must satisfy both sets of requirements. In Saint John, you apply for a building permit through the city's Building Inspection division, and they review your plans against both the zoning by-law and the building code.

If your planned garage exceeds the permitted height for your zone, you have the option of applying for a **variance** through Saint John's Committee of Adjustment. A variance is a formal request to deviate from a specific zoning requirement, and it requires demonstrating that strict compliance would cause undue hardship and that the proposed deviation will not negatively impact neighbouring properties. Variance applications involve a public notification process and a hearing, and approval is not guaranteed.

Before you finalize your garage design, take these practical steps. First, confirm your property's zoning designation by contacting Saint John's planning department or checking the city's online zoning map. Second, request a copy of the specific height and setback rules for accessory buildings in your zone. Third, have your contractor or designer prepare drawings that clearly show the height measurement from finished grade to peak. Finally, submit your building permit application early in the planning process — the permit review will catch any height or setback issues before construction begins, which is far less expensive than discovering a problem after the foundation is poured.

Garage height restrictions exist for good reasons — they protect neighbours' sight lines, sunlight access, and property values. If you need a taller garage for a vehicle lift, RV storage, or a loft workspace, a professional garage contractor familiar with Saint John's zoning can help you design a structure that maximizes interior height while staying within the permitted envelope. Need help finding a professional garage builder in Saint John? New Brunswick Garages can match you with local contractors for free through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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Q9

Do I need a permit for a garage under 108 square feet in Dieppe New Brunswick?

You should plan on needing a building permit even for a small garage under 108 square feet (10 square metres) in Dieppe, because the municipality enforces its own zoning and building permit requirements that may not include a blanket exemption at that size. While some smaller rural municipalities in New Brunswick exempt accessory structures under 10 square metres from building permits, Dieppe is a growing urban municipality within Greater Moncton with its own by-laws and building inspection department, and you should confirm directly with them before assuming any exemption applies.

Even if the building permit itself is not required for a structure below a certain size threshold, there are several other regulatory requirements that almost certainly still apply. **Zoning compliance is required regardless of whether a building permit is needed.** Your small garage must still meet the setback requirements for accessory buildings in your zone — typically 3 to 5 feet from side and rear property lines in Dieppe's residential zones. It must not exceed the maximum lot coverage percentage when combined with your house and any other structures on the property. And it must not encroach on any easements, drainage corridors, or right-of-ways.

Electrical work always requires a separate electrical permit in New Brunswick, regardless of the size of the building. If your small garage will have any wiring at all — even a single light fixture and outlet — you need an electrical permit and the work must be performed by a licensed electrician and inspected before it is energized. This

is a provincial requirement administered through your local building inspection office, and there is no size exemption for electrical permits.

A garage under 108 square feet is quite small — roughly 10 feet by 10 feet — which is adequate for a single small car, a motorcycle, lawn equipment storage, or a small workshop, but it will not accommodate a standard-size pickup truck or SUV. Before committing to this size, measure your vehicle including the length with the doors open and ensure you have adequate clearance. A structure this small also raises practical questions about foundation requirements. Even at this size, **the foundation must extend below the frost line in NB — a minimum of 4 feet (1.2 metres)** — unless you use an approved floating slab or pier system. A shallow foundation on a small garage will heave just as readily as on a large one, and a heaving garage with a jammed door or cracked slab is not worth the savings from skipping proper frost protection.

Here is what you should do before building. Contact Dieppe's building inspection department directly and describe your planned structure — size, location on the lot, intended use, whether it will have electrical, and your proposed foundation type. They will tell you definitively whether a building permit is required and what zoning rules apply. Bring a copy of your property survey or a site plan showing where you intend to place the garage relative to your property lines and existing structures. This conversation costs nothing and can save you from building a structure that violates setbacks, exceeds lot coverage, or creates problems when you eventually sell your home.

Skipping the permit process to save a few hundred dollars is a false economy. **Unpermitted structures can void your homeowner's insurance coverage**, create complications during a property sale when the buyer's lender or inspector identifies the structure, and may need to be removed or brought into compliance at your expense. For a small garage project in Dieppe, the permit process is straightforward and relatively quick. If you need help finding a contractor to build even a small garage properly in the Greater Moncton area, New Brunswick Garages can match you with local professionals for free.

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What are the New Brunswick fire code requirements for an attached garage?

An attached garage in New Brunswick must have a minimum 45-minute fire-resistance-rated separation between the garage and the living space, including all common walls and any ceiling shared with rooms above. This fire separation is a life-safety requirement under the NB Building Code, and it is one of the most important — and most frequently botched — elements of attached garage construction.

The purpose of the fire separation is to give occupants time to escape the house if a fire starts in the garage. Garages contain vehicles with fuel, stored gasoline for lawn equipment, paints, solvents, propane tanks, and other flammable materials that make garage fires burn fast and hot. The 45-minute rating means the assembly must contain the fire and prevent flame and hot gas passage for at least 45 minutes under standard fire test conditions, giving the family time to wake up, evacuate, and call for help.

What the Fire Separation Assembly Requires

The most common way to achieve the required fire-resistance rating is to install **5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall** on the garage side of every wall and ceiling that separates the garage from the house. Type X drywall contains glass fibres that hold it together longer under fire exposure than standard drywall. All joints must be taped and finished — leaving gaps, unsealed joints, or unfinished seams defeats the purpose of the assembly. In some configurations, particularly where the garage ceiling is directly below a bedroom, **two layers of 5/8-inch Type X drywall** may be required to achieve the necessary rating.

The door between the garage and the house is a critical component of the fire separation. The NB Building Code requires this door to be either a solid-core wood door at least 1-3/4 inches (44 mm) thick, or a door with a 20-minute fire-protection rating. The door must be equipped with a **self-closing device** — a spring hinge or hydraulic closer that pulls the door shut automatically. This ensures the door is not accidentally left open, which would completely bypass the fire separation. The door must also have proper weatherstripping to prevent smoke and gas migration. Importantly, **the door between the garage and living space must never open directly into a bedroom** — it must open into a hallway, kitchen, laundry room, or other non-sleeping area.

Every penetration through the fire-rated assembly must be properly **fire-stopped**. This includes electrical boxes, wiring, plumbing pipes, HVAC ducts, and any other service that passes through the common wall or ceiling. Approved fire-stop sealants, putty pads behind electrical boxes, and fire dampers in ducts are required to maintain the integrity of the assembly. A single unsealed penetration — even something as small as a cable TV wire — creates a pathway for flame and toxic gas to enter the living space.

Additional fire code considerations for attached garages in NB include these requirements. No heating equipment that uses an open flame or glowing element should be installed in the garage unless it is specifically designed and approved for garage use and is mounted at least 18 inches above the floor (to avoid ignition of heavier-than-air gasoline vapours). The garage floor should be sloped toward the overhead door or a floor drain to prevent fuel spills from pooling against the common wall. If the garage has a gas-fired heater or other fuel-burning appliance, a **carbon monoxide detector** is required in the adjacent living space, and one is strongly recommended inside the garage itself.

Insulation in the common wall between the garage and living space serves double duty — it contributes to both the fire-resistance rating and the thermal performance of the home's building envelope. Many builders in NB install **R-20 batt insulation** in the 2x6 common wall along with the Type X drywall, which satisfies both fire and energy code requirements simultaneously.

If you are adding an attached garage to an existing home, or if you suspect your current attached garage does not meet fire separation requirements, have a professional inspect the assembly. Common deficiencies in older NB homes include regular 1/2-inch drywall instead of 5/8-inch Type X, hollow-core doors without self-closers, unsealed electrical and plumbing penetrations, and missing drywall on the garage ceiling below second-storey rooms. These are not cosmetic issues — they are life-safety deficiencies that should be corrected. A qualified contractor familiar with NB Building Code fire separation requirements can assess your garage and recommend the necessary upgrades. Find garage contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com.

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Q11

How long does it take to get a garage building permit approved in Miramichi NB?

A straightforward garage building permit in Miramichi typically takes 1 to 3 weeks to process from the date you submit a complete application, though the timeline can be shorter during quieter months or longer if your application requires revisions, additional documentation, or a zoning variance. The key factor in how quickly your permit is approved is the completeness and quality of your application — incomplete submissions are the number one cause of delays in every municipality.

Miramichi's building inspection department reviews your application against both the municipal zoning by-law and the NB Building Code. For a standard detached garage that complies with all setback, height, and lot coverage requirements for your zone, the review is relatively straightforward. The inspector checks your site plan to confirm the garage location meets setbacks and does not encroach on easements, reviews your foundation plan to ensure it extends below the **4 to 5 foot frost depth** required in the Miramichi area, verifies that your structural plan is adequate for the **local snow loads** (which can be significant in the Miramichi River valley), and confirms that your electrical plan meets code requirements.

To get the fastest possible approval, submit a complete application package that includes all of the following. A completed building permit application form with your name, property address, legal description, and project value. A site plan or survey showing the proposed garage location with dimensions to all property lines, existing structures, and any easements or right-of-ways. Detailed construction drawings showing the foundation plan with frost wall depth, floor plan with dimensions, wall framing details including header sizes over door openings, roof truss or rafter details with snow load specifications, and exterior finishing details. An electrical plan showing the proposed panel, circuits, outlets, and lighting layout — or a note indicating that a separate electrical permit will be submitted by your electrician. If the garage is attached to your home, the plans must show the fire separation assembly details.

Applications that are missing the site plan, lack foundation depth details, or have incomplete drawings get sent back for revisions, which adds another 1 to 2 weeks each time. **Having your contractor prepare professional drawings rather than rough sketches significantly speeds up the review process.** Many experienced NB garage contractors include permit-ready drawings as part of their quote, and this service alone is worth paying for even if you handle the permit application yourself.

The permit fee in most NB municipalities is calculated based on the estimated construction value of the project — typically \$5 to \$15 per \$1,000 of construction value, with a minimum fee. For a typical two-car detached garage valued at \$50,000 to \$70,000, expect a building permit fee in the range of \$250 to \$700. The electrical permit is separate and has its own fee schedule. These fees are payable when you submit the application.

If your proposed garage does not comply with the zoning by-law — for example, it is too close to a property line, exceeds the height limit, or pushes the lot coverage over the maximum — you will need to apply for a **variance** through the Committee of Adjustment or planning advisory committee. This process adds significant time, typically

4 to 8 weeks or more, because it requires public notification, a waiting period for objections, and a hearing. Variances are not guaranteed to be approved, so it is always better to design your garage to comply with the zoning rules if possible.

Plan your permit application timing around your construction schedule. If you want to start building in May to take advantage of NB's optimal construction season (April through November), submit your permit application by early April at the latest. Spring is the busiest time for building departments across NB, and processing times may stretch during the rush. Submitting in late winter when volumes are lower often results in faster turnaround. Your contractor can help you prepare and submit the application, and many Miramichi-area builders handle the entire permit process on your behalf. Need help finding a garage contractor in the Miramichi area? New Brunswick Garages can match you with local professionals for free.

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Q12

What inspections are required during garage construction in New Brunswick?

Garage construction in New Brunswick typically requires three to five inspections at key stages of the build, with the exact number depending on the complexity of the project, whether the garage is attached or detached, and your municipality's inspection schedule. These inspections are not optional extras — they are conditions of your building permit, and proceeding to the next phase of construction before the current inspection is completed and approved can result in being ordered to open up or undo completed work.

The first and arguably most critical inspection is the **footing and foundation inspection**. This happens after the footings are excavated and formed but before concrete is poured. The inspector verifies that the excavation reaches below the frost line — a minimum of **4 feet (1.2 metres) in southern NB and up to 5 feet (1.5 metres) in northern communities** like Bathurst, Edmundston, and Campbellton. They check that the footing dimensions meet code (typically 16 inches wide and 8 inches thick minimum for residential garage loads), that reinforcing steel is in

place if required, and that the soil bearing capacity is adequate. If you are building on a slab-on-grade with thickened edges, the inspector checks the edge thickness, reinforcement, vapour barrier placement, and any sub-slab insulation. **Never pour concrete before this inspection is completed** — a foundation that does not meet code must be removed and rebuilt, and that is a catastrophically expensive mistake.

The second inspection is the **framing inspection**, which occurs after the walls, roof structure, and sheathing are complete but before insulation and interior finishing begin. The inspector checks stud spacing, header sizes over garage door openings, roof truss or rafter installation and bracing, wall sheathing and fastening, hurricane straps and hold-downs, and the overall structural adequacy of the frame for NB's **snow loads (2.4 to 4.8 kPa depending on location)** and wind loads. For attached garages, this inspection also covers the structural connection between the new garage and the existing house, including any modifications to the house wall or roof.

For attached garages, a fire separation inspection is typically required either as part of the framing inspection or as a separate inspection. The inspector verifies that the common wall and ceiling between the garage and living space have the required **5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall**, that all joints are taped and finished, that penetrations are fire-stopped, and that the door between the garage and house is the correct type (solid-core, minimum 1-3/4 inches thick, with self-closing hardware).

The **electrical inspection** is conducted by the electrical inspector (often a different person from the building inspector) after all wiring, boxes, panels, and devices are installed but before walls are closed up with insulation and drywall. The inspector checks that the sub-panel or circuit connections are properly sized, that all garage receptacles have **GFCI protection**, that wiring is properly supported and protected, that dedicated circuits are provided where required (garage door opener, EV charger, heater, workshop tools), and that the overall installation meets the Canadian Electrical Code. This inspection requires a separate electrical permit, and the work must be done by a licensed electrician.

The **final inspection** occurs when construction is complete — all finishing, doors, hardware, and exterior grading are done. The inspector does a comprehensive check of the completed garage, including proper operation of the overhead door and opener, safety sensor function, exterior grading and drainage away from the foundation, completion of all fire separation components (attached garages), and confirmation that the garage matches the approved plans. Once the final inspection is passed, the inspector signs off on the permit and you receive your occupancy approval.

Practical tips for smooth inspections. Give your building inspection office at least 48 hours' notice before you need an inspection — some busy municipalities require more lead time. Be present or have your contractor present during the inspection to answer questions. Keep your approved plans on site so the inspector can reference them. If an inspection identifies deficiencies, correct them promptly and schedule a re-inspection. Do not cover up or proceed past any stage without the required inspection approval. Your contractor should be managing the

inspection schedule as part of the project — if they seem unfamiliar with the process, that is a red flag worth paying attention to. Browse garage builders in your area through the New Brunswick Construction Network directory at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com.

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Are there lot coverage limits that affect garage size in Quispamsis New Brunswick?

Yes, Quispamsis has lot coverage limits in its zoning by-law that directly affect how large a garage you can build on your property. Lot coverage is expressed as a percentage of your total lot area, and it includes the footprint of your house, any existing accessory buildings (sheds, workshops), decks, and your proposed garage. If adding a garage would push the total coverage beyond the permitted maximum for your zone, you will either need to reduce the garage size or apply for a variance.

In most residential zones in Quispamsis, the **maximum lot coverage for all structures combined typically ranges from 35% to 45%** of the total lot area, depending on the specific zoning designation. Some zones also set a separate maximum size for accessory buildings such as detached garages — for example, limiting accessory structures to a maximum footprint of 80 to 120 square metres (roughly 860 to 1,290 square feet). This means that even on a very large lot where overall coverage is not a concern, your detached garage may still be capped at a specific maximum size by the accessory building rules.

To calculate your available lot coverage for a garage, you need three numbers: your total lot area (from your property survey or assessment), the footprint of your existing house and any other structures already on the lot, and the maximum coverage percentage for your zone. For example, if your lot is 800 square metres and your zone allows 40% coverage, the maximum total building footprint is 320 square metres. If your house footprint is 140 square metres and you have a 20-square-metre shed, you have already used 160 square metres, leaving 160 square metres for a garage. That is ample room for even a large three-car garage. But on a smaller lot — say 500 square metres with a 150-square-metre house footprint — the math gets tighter, and you may be limited to a single-car or modest two-car garage.

Quispamsis is part of the Kennebecasis Valley and has experienced significant residential growth, which means the municipality pays close attention to zoning compliance. **Before designing your garage, contact the Quispamsis planning and development department** to confirm your lot's zoning designation, the applicable coverage percentage, any separate accessory building size limits, and the required setbacks from property lines. Bring your property survey or tax assessment to the conversation — the staff can quickly tell you exactly how much room you have to work with.

If lot coverage limits prevent you from building the garage size you want, you have a few options. First, consider whether any existing accessory structures (old sheds, small outbuildings) can be removed to free up coverage room. Second, explore whether a **two-storey garage with a smaller footprint** might meet your needs — a 24x24 garage with a loft provides the same vehicle storage as a single-storey structure while using less lot coverage,

though it must still meet the height limit for your zone. Third, you can apply for a **minor variance** through the Committee of Adjustment if the overage is small and you can demonstrate that the larger garage will not negatively impact neighbouring properties. Variance applications typically cost \$200 to \$500 in application fees and take 4 to 8 weeks to process.

Keep in mind that lot coverage is just one of several constraints on garage size in Quispamsis. Your garage must also meet the minimum setback requirements from all property lines — typically 3 to 5 feet from side and rear lines for a detached garage — and the maximum height limit for accessory buildings. On narrower lots, setback requirements often end up being the limiting factor rather than lot coverage. A professional garage contractor experienced in building in the Quispamsis and Kennebecasis Valley area will be familiar with these local zoning requirements and can help you design the largest garage that fits within your lot's constraints. Need help finding a local garage builder? New Brunswick Garages can match you with contractors in the Quispamsis area for free.

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Q14

What is the minimum distance a detached garage must be from the property line in Riverview NB?

In Riverview, a detached garage (classified as an accessory building) must typically be set back a minimum of 3 to 5 feet (approximately 1 to 1.5 metres) from both the side and rear property lines, though the exact requirement depends on your property's specific zoning designation. Riverview's zoning by-law establishes different setback requirements for different residential zones, and some zones may require greater distances, particularly on corner lots or lots adjacent to commercial zones.

Setback requirements for **detached garages differ from the setbacks required for your main dwelling.** Your house must meet more restrictive front, side, and rear setbacks — typically 20 to 25 feet from the front property line and 5 to 10 feet from side lines. A detached garage, as an accessory building, generally cannot be located in the

front yard at all (it must be behind the front wall of the house) and must maintain the minimum side and rear setbacks established for accessory structures in your zone. The garage also cannot be placed over any utility easements, drainage easements, or municipal right-of-ways that cross your property, even if the accessory building setback would otherwise allow it.

Corner lots in Riverview have additional setback requirements on the flanking street side. The side of your lot that faces the secondary street is typically treated more like a front yard, meaning the setback on that side will be larger — often 10 to 15 feet rather than the 3 to 5 feet required on an interior side yard. This catches many homeowners off guard and can significantly reduce the buildable area on a corner lot. If your property is a corner lot, verify the flanking street setback before designing your garage.

Riverview is part of the Greater Moncton area and has a well-established planning and building inspection department. **Before you finalize your garage plans, take these steps to confirm your exact setback requirements.** First, obtain or locate your property survey — this is the legal document that shows your exact property boundaries, lot dimensions, and any easements. Without a survey, you are guessing where your property lines are, and guessing can lead to building a garage that encroaches on your neighbour's property or on a municipal easement. If you do not have a recent survey, a New Brunswick land surveyor can prepare one for approximately \$1,500 to \$3,000 depending on lot complexity. Second, contact Riverview's planning department and provide your civic address and property identifier (PID) number. They can tell you your zoning designation and the specific setback requirements that apply. Third, have your garage contractor or designer prepare a site plan showing the proposed garage location with measured distances to all property lines.

Building a garage too close to the property line creates serious problems. If the encroachment is discovered during construction, the building inspector will issue a stop-work order and you may be required to move the foundation — which effectively means starting over. If the encroachment is discovered after construction, you may face legal action from your neighbour, be required to obtain a retroactive variance (which may or may not be granted), or in worst cases, be ordered to demolish the structure. Your homeowner's insurance may also exclude claims related to an improperly sited structure.

If your lot is small or unusually shaped and the standard setbacks prevent you from building the garage you need, you can apply to Riverview's Committee of Adjustment for a **minor variance** to reduce the setback. You will need to demonstrate that strict compliance would create genuine hardship and that the reduced setback will not adversely affect neighbouring properties. Having the support (or at least the non-objection) of the affected neighbour strengthens your application considerably. Get matched with a garage contractor for a free estimate on your Riverview project through New Brunswick Garages.

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Q15

Does New Brunswick require a separate electrical permit for wiring a garage?

Yes, New Brunswick requires a separate electrical permit for any electrical work in a garage, and this is completely independent of the building permit you obtain for the garage structure itself. The electrical permit is a provincial requirement, and there is no exemption based on the size of the garage or the amount of wiring involved. Even a single light fixture and outlet in a detached garage requires an electrical permit and inspection.

The electrical permit ensures that all wiring, panels, circuits, devices, and connections are installed according to the **Canadian Electrical Code (CEC)** as adopted in New Brunswick, and that the installation is inspected by a qualified electrical inspector before the system is energized. This is fundamentally a safety requirement — faulty electrical work in garages is a leading cause of residential fires, and the risk is heightened in garages where flammable materials such as gasoline, solvents, and propane are stored.

All electrical work in NB garages must be performed by a licensed electrician. New Brunswick does not permit homeowners to do their own electrical wiring, even in an accessory building like a detached garage. The licensed electrician pulls the electrical permit, performs the installation, and coordinates the inspection. The permit fee is typically modest — ranging from \$50 to \$200 depending on the scope of work and the municipality. Your electrician includes this cost in their quote.

The **electrical inspection** takes place after all wiring is installed but before the walls are closed up with insulation and drywall. The inspector checks the wire gauge, circuit breaker sizing, number and placement of outlets, GFCI protection, grounding, panel connections, and overall code compliance. For a standard two-car garage, the inspection typically takes 30 to 60 minutes. If deficiencies are found, they must be corrected and re-inspected before the installation can be approved and energized.

Here is what a typical NB garage electrical installation includes. At minimum, your garage needs at least one **15-amp or 20-amp general circuit** for lighting and outlets, with **GFCI protection on all receptacles** (a code

requirement for garage locations). You need exterior lighting at the service door and adequate interior lighting — most two-car garages benefit from four to six LED fixtures providing even illumination across the work area. A **dedicated circuit for the garage door opener** is standard. Beyond the basics, your electrical needs depend on how you plan to use the garage. A workshop with power tools typically requires two to three dedicated **20-amp circuits**. An **EV Level 2 charger** requires a dedicated **40-amp, 240-volt circuit** — this is increasingly common in NB as electric vehicle adoption grows. A **garage heater** (electric unit heater or radiant heater) requires its own dedicated 240-volt circuit sized to the heater's amperage draw. If you are planning any of these additions, include them in the original electrical installation — adding circuits later, after the garage is insulated and drywalled, costs three to five times more in labour because the electrician must open up finished walls to run new wiring.

The total cost for garage electrical work in NB ranges from **\$1,500 to \$4,000** depending on scope. A basic installation with lighting, a few outlets, and a garage door opener circuit runs \$1,500 to \$2,000. A full workshop or heated garage installation with sub-panel, multiple dedicated circuits, EV charger circuit, and 240-volt heater circuit runs \$3,000 to \$4,000 or more. These costs include the permit, materials, labour, and inspection.

Plan your electrical needs before the garage is built, not after. Discuss your current and future electrical requirements with your electrician during the design phase so that adequate service capacity, wire runs, and outlet locations can be planned into the structure from the start. Find contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com.

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What are the NB Building Code requirements for garage floor drains in Bathurst?

The NB Building Code does not require floor drains in residential garages, and in fact many municipalities in New Brunswick — including Bathurst — discourage or restrict garage floor drains because of concerns about contaminated water (oil, gasoline, road salt, antifreeze) entering the municipal sewer system or the environment. If you want a floor drain in your Bathurst garage, you need to check with the city's building and plumbing inspection departments to determine whether it is permitted and what conditions apply.

The standard approach for residential garage drainage in NB is to **slope the garage floor toward the overhead door** rather than toward an interior drain. A slope of approximately 1/8 inch per foot (about 1%) toward the door opening is sufficient to direct snowmelt, rainwater tracked in by vehicles, and wash water toward the driveway and away from the garage interior. This eliminates the need for a floor drain entirely and avoids the plumbing and regulatory complications that come with one.

If you do want a floor drain in your Bathurst garage, there are several requirements and considerations. First, any plumbing work — including floor drain installation — requires a **separate plumbing permit** in NB, independent of the building permit and electrical permit. The drain must be installed by a licensed plumber. Second, the drain must include a **P-trap** to prevent sewer gas from entering the garage. In NB's cold climate, P-traps in unheated or intermittently heated garages can freeze and crack during winter — this is a real concern in Bathurst, which experiences some of the coldest temperatures in southern NB and the full force of northern Maritime winters. A frozen P-trap also loses its water seal, allowing sewer gas to enter the garage. If your garage will not be consistently heated, a floor drain with a P-trap may not be practical.

Third, **where the drain connects matters enormously**. A garage floor drain cannot simply discharge onto the ground surface or into a ditch — this would release oil, antifreeze, and road salt directly into the environment, violating New Brunswick's environmental regulations. If your property is connected to a **municipal sanitary sewer**, the drain may be permitted to connect to it, but many municipalities require an **oil-water separator (also called an oil interceptor)** between the garage drain and the sewer connection. An oil-water separator traps petroleum products and prevents them from entering the sewer system. These devices cost **\$500 to \$2,000** for a residential unit and require periodic maintenance (cleaning out accumulated oil and sediment). If your property uses a **private septic system**, connecting a garage floor drain to it is generally prohibited because petroleum products and road chemicals will damage the septic field and contaminate groundwater.

Fourth, consider whether you actually need a floor drain or whether there is a simpler solution to the problem you are trying to solve. If your concern is snowmelt and water from vehicles in winter, the **sloped floor toward the**

overhead door handles this effectively. If your concern is washing the garage floor, a squeegee and the sloped floor direct wash water out the door. If you want to wash vehicles inside the garage, that is where a floor drain becomes genuinely useful — but in Bathurst's climate, most vehicle washing happens at commercial car washes during winter months anyway.

For a heated garage or workshop in Bathurst where a floor drain is practical, here is the typical installation. The drain is set into the concrete slab during the pour — it cannot easily be added after the slab is cured. The slab is sloped from all directions toward the drain location at approximately 1/8 to 1/4 inch per foot. The drain connects through a P-trap (installed below the slab, within or below the frost wall) to either the sanitary sewer with an oil-water separator, or to a dedicated holding tank. The total cost for a floor drain installation including the plumbing, slab modification, and any required separator typically adds **\$1,500 to \$4,000** to the garage construction cost.

Before making a decision, discuss your drainage needs with your garage contractor and with Bathurst's building inspection department. They can advise you on what is permitted in your specific situation and whether a floor drain is worth the added cost and complexity. Browse garage builders in your area through the New Brunswick Construction Network directory at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com.

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Q17

Do I need a variance to build an oversized garage in a Fredericton residential neighbourhood?

You may need a variance if your planned garage exceeds the maximum size, height, or lot coverage limits established by Fredericton's zoning by-law for accessory buildings in your residential zone — but whether you actually need one depends entirely on the specific numbers for your property and your zone's rules.

The first step is to determine what your zone allows and then compare that to what you want to build.

Fredericton's zoning by-law sets several limits that can trigger the need for a variance on a larger garage.

Maximum accessory building footprint is often capped at a specific size — commonly in the range of 80 to 110 square metres (860 to 1,184 square feet) depending on the zone, though larger lots in some zones may permit larger accessory structures. **Maximum height** for detached accessory buildings is typically limited to one storey or a specific height measurement (commonly around 5 metres or 16 feet at the peak). **Maximum lot coverage** — the total percentage of your lot covered by all buildings combined — typically ranges from 35% to 45% in Fredericton's residential zones. And **setback requirements** from property lines must be maintained, which can effectively limit the size of a garage on smaller or irregularly shaped lots even when the coverage percentage would allow a larger footprint.

An "oversized" garage means different things depending on your zone. On a large suburban lot in the newer developments on Fredericton's north side or in the Hanwell Road area, a 24x30 two-car garage (720 square feet) may fit well within all zoning limits. On a smaller lot in an older neighbourhood like Skyline Acres, Devon, or the South Side, the same 24x30 garage might exceed lot coverage or accessory building size limits. The math is straightforward: measure your lot, add up the footprints of all existing structures, check your zone's coverage percentage, and determine the maximum remaining footprint available for a garage.

If your planned garage exceeds one or more zoning limits, you need to apply for a variance through Fredericton's Development Officer or Committee of Adjustment, depending on the type and magnitude of the deviation. A **minor variance** — typically defined as a deviation of 10% or less from a specific requirement — may be approved by the Development Officer without a full hearing. A **major variance** requires a hearing before the Committee of Adjustment, which involves submitting an application, public notification to neighbouring property owners, a waiting period for objections, and a hearing where you present your case.

The Variance Application Process in Fredericton

To apply for a variance, you submit a formal application to Fredericton's planning department along with a site plan showing the proposed garage, its dimensions, and its distances from all property lines and existing structures. You must explain why you need the larger garage and why strict compliance with the zoning limit would cause you hardship. The application fee typically ranges from **\$200 to \$500**. The committee considers whether the variance is consistent with the intent of the zoning by-law, whether it will adversely affect neighbouring properties (blocking views, creating drainage issues, reducing property values), and whether there are reasonable alternatives that comply with the by-law.

Practical tips for getting a variance approved. Talk to your neighbours before you apply — if adjacent property owners support your request (or at least do not object), your chances improve significantly. A letter of non-objection from the most affected neighbour carries real weight with the committee. Prepare a clear, professional site plan that shows the garage in context with surrounding properties. Explain the legitimate need for the larger size — vehicle

collection, home-based trade requiring equipment storage, accessibility needs, or accommodating modern full-size trucks that simply do not fit in a standard single-car garage. Demonstrate that you have minimized the encroachment as much as possible — asking for 15% over the limit is more likely to be approved than asking for 50% over.

Before committing to the variance process, explore alternatives. Could a taller garage with a smaller footprint (using a loft for storage) achieve your goals within the by-law limits? Could removing an existing shed or outbuilding free up enough coverage room? An experienced Fredericton garage contractor can help you design a structure that maximizes usable space while staying within — or as close as possible to — your zoning limits. Need help finding a professional garage builder in Fredericton? New Brunswick Garages can match you with local contractors for free through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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Q18

What NB code requirements apply to a garage with a living space above it in Oromocto?

A garage with living space above it in Oromocto must meet the full requirements of the NB Building Code for both a garage structure and a habitable dwelling space, including fire separation, structural engineering for floor loads, insulation to current energy code standards, and separate egress from the upper level. This is one of the more complex residential garage projects you can undertake, and it triggers requirements that a standard garage alone would not.

The most critical requirement is **fire separation between the garage below and the living space above**. The NB Building Code requires a minimum **45-minute fire-resistance rating** on the ceiling assembly separating the garage from the living area. In practice, this means at least one layer of **5/8-inch Type X fire-rated drywall** on the garage ceiling, with all joints properly taped and finished. Some assemblies require two layers depending on the joist

spacing and construction method. Every penetration through this assembly — electrical boxes, plumbing pipes, HVAC ducts, lighting fixtures — must be properly fire-stopped with approved sealants or intumescent devices. The stairway connecting the garage to the upper floor must also be enclosed with fire-rated assemblies, and the door at the garage level must be a **solid-core or 20-minute fire-rated door with a self-closing mechanism**.

Structurally, the floor system supporting the living space must be engineered for **residential live loads (1.9 kPa or 40 pounds per square foot minimum)** rather than the lighter attic storage loads that a simple bonus room might carry. In Oromocto, you will almost certainly need engineered trusses or an engineered floor system — standard 2x8 or 2x10 joists may not span the full width of a two-car garage without intermediate support. A structural engineer should design the floor system, and the municipality will require stamped drawings as part of the building permit application. The **roof trusses** above the living space must also be engineered for NB snow loads, which range from **2.4 to 4.8 kPa** depending on your specific location within the Oromocto area.

Insulation requirements for the living space are governed by the NB energy code. The upper-level walls must meet a minimum of **R-20 effective** insulation, and the roof or ceiling assembly must achieve **R-40 to R-60** depending on the assembly type. The garage ceiling below the living space also needs insulation — typically **R-28 to R-32** — both for energy efficiency and to prevent the cold garage from chilling the floor above. A continuous vapour barrier on the warm side of the insulation is required throughout. Proper ventilation of the roof cavity above the living space is essential to prevent ice dams and moisture accumulation, especially given NB's heavy snow loads and cold winters.

Oromocto, being a military community adjacent to CFB Gagetown, follows standard NB Building Code requirements administered through the town's building inspection department. You will need a **building permit** that covers the entire structure — garage and living space — along with **separate electrical and plumbing permits**. The living space must have **proper egress** (a window or door large enough to escape through in an emergency from every bedroom), **smoke and carbon monoxide detectors**, adequate heating, and ventilation. If the living space includes a kitchen or bathroom, plumbing rough-in and fixtures must comply with the NB Plumbing Code.

The foundation for a garage with living space above must be more robust than a standard garage foundation. The additional dead load and live load of the second storey means wider footings — typically **20 to 24 inches wide** rather than the standard 16 inches — and the frost walls must still extend below the **4-foot frost line** in the Oromocto area. Total project cost for a two-car garage with a finished living space above typically runs **\$75,000 to \$120,000** in the NB market, depending on the level of finishing and whether plumbing is included.

This is not a DIY project. The intersection of structural engineering, fire safety, energy code, and multiple trade coordination means you need an experienced general contractor who has built bonus-room garages in New Brunswick. Get matched with a garage contractor for a free estimate through New Brunswick Garages, part of the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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Are there Heritage District restrictions on garage design in downtown Saint John NB?

Yes, if your property falls within one of Saint John's designated Heritage Conservation Areas, your garage design will be subject to additional restrictions beyond the standard NB Building Code requirements, including guidelines on materials, colours, proportions, roof style, and placement that are intended to preserve the historic character of the neighbourhood. These restrictions are administered through the City of Saint John's Heritage Development Board and planning department.

Saint John has several **Heritage Conservation Areas** established under the province's Heritage Conservation Act and the city's municipal plan, most notably in the **Trinity Royal** and **uptown core** areas. Properties within these districts require approval from the Heritage Development Board before any exterior construction or alteration, including building a new garage. The board reviews proposed designs for compatibility with the surrounding historic architecture, and they have the authority to require changes to your plans before issuing approval. This review is in addition to the standard building permit process — you need heritage approval first, then your building permit.

The types of restrictions you may encounter in a Saint John Heritage Conservation Area include requirements for specific exterior cladding materials (wood clapboard or shingles rather than vinyl siding, for example), restrictions on garage door styles (carriage house style doors may be required rather than modern flush panel), limitations on building height and massing to ensure the garage does not visually dominate the streetscape, and colour palette guidelines that require exterior colours to be compatible with the historic period of the surrounding buildings. Roof pitch and style may also be prescribed — a flat-roofed modern garage would likely not receive approval in a neighbourhood of Victorian-era homes with steep gable roofs.

Placement and setbacks in Heritage Districts can be more restrictive than standard zoning. In many historic Saint John neighbourhoods, garages were traditionally placed at the rear of narrow urban lots, accessed by rear lanes or alleys. The Heritage Development Board may require your garage to follow this traditional pattern rather than allowing a front-facing attached garage that would alter the streetscape. Given that many downtown Saint John lots are narrow and deep — a legacy of the city's 19th-century layout — fitting a garage onto the property while meeting both heritage guidelines and standard setback requirements can be challenging.

The practical impact on your budget is worth understanding upfront. Heritage-compliant materials and design details typically add **15 to 30 percent** to the cost of a garage compared to a standard build. Wood clapboard siding costs more than vinyl and requires ongoing maintenance. Carriage house style garage doors run **\$3,000 to \$4,500 per door** compared to \$800 to \$1,500 for a standard steel door. Custom trim details, period-appropriate lighting fixtures, and specific colour schemes all add cost. However, these investments do contribute to property value in a

Heritage District, and many homeowners find that a well-designed heritage-compatible garage enhances rather than detracts from their property's appeal.

Before investing in architectural drawings, contact the City of Saint John's planning and heritage department to confirm whether your property is within a Heritage Conservation Area and to obtain the specific design guidelines that apply. Ask for examples of recently approved garage projects in your area — this gives you a realistic sense of what the board expects and helps your designer create plans that will pass review without multiple revisions. Your architect or designer should have experience working within Saint John's heritage guidelines, as the review process can add several weeks to your project timeline if revisions are required.

The foundation, structural, and electrical requirements for a heritage-district garage are the same as any NB garage — frost walls to **4 to 5 feet below grade**, snow-load-rated trusses, and permitted electrical work by a licensed electrician. The heritage overlay adds aesthetic and placement requirements on top of the standard code. For a project this complex, working with an experienced local contractor familiar with both NB Building Code requirements and Saint John's heritage review process is essential. Browse garage and general contractors in the New Brunswick Construction Network directory at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com to find professionals with heritage project experience.

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Q20

What are the New Brunswick Building Code requirements for garage ventilation?

The NB Building Code requires ventilation in garages primarily to address two concerns: carbon monoxide and combustion gas management in attached garages, and moisture and air quality control in all enclosed garages, whether attached or detached. The specific requirements depend on whether the garage is attached to a dwelling, whether it is heated or insulated, and whether it contains fuel-burning appliances.

For **attached garages**, the most important ventilation-related code requirement is actually about **air sealing** — preventing garage air from migrating into the living space. The NB Building Code requires the common wall and ceiling between the garage and the dwelling to be air-sealed, and any ductwork for the home's HVAC system must not draw air from the garage space. This means no HVAC supply or return registers in the garage connected to the home's system. If you want to heat an attached garage, it needs its own independent heating system — a unit heater, infrared heater, or separate mini-split — that does not share air with the house. A **carbon monoxide detector** is required in the dwelling near the door to the attached garage.

Heated and insulated garages in NB have the greatest need for ventilation, and this is where many homeowners make costly mistakes. When a vehicle covered in snow and road salt enters a warm garage, the temperature differential causes rapid melting and evaporation, releasing significant moisture into the enclosed space. Without ventilation, this moisture condenses on walls, tools, ceiling surfaces, and stored items, promoting rust, mould, and deterioration. The NB Building Code and good building practice recommend either **passive ventilation** (vents in the gable ends or soffit-to-ridge airflow) or **mechanical ventilation** (an exhaust fan rated for the garage volume). A practical rule of thumb is to provide ventilation capacity that can exchange the garage air volume at least **once per hour** — for a standard 24x24 garage with 9-foot ceilings, that is roughly 5,200 cubic feet, requiring a fan rated at approximately 100 CFM.

Roof ventilation is required by the NB Building Code for any garage with an insulated ceiling or an attic space. The standard requirement is a **1:300 ratio** of net free ventilation area to insulated ceiling area when both intake (soffit) and exhaust (ridge or gable) vents are provided, or **1:150** if only one type of vent is used. For a 24x24 garage (576 square feet of ceiling), this means roughly 2 square feet of net free ventilation split between soffit and ridge. This ventilation prevents moisture buildup in the attic space, reduces ice dam formation on the garage roof — a real concern given NB's heavy snow loads of **2.4 to 4.8 kPa** — and extends the life of the roofing materials.

For **detached unheated garages**, the NB Building Code has minimal ventilation requirements. These structures are essentially outdoor-temperature spaces, and natural air exchange through gaps, the overhead door seals, and normal building envelope leakage provides adequate ventilation. However, if you store gasoline, solvents, paints, or other volatile materials, good practice dictates installing at least a passive vent near the ceiling to allow heavier-than-air fumes to dissipate and lighter fumes to exhaust naturally.

Garages with fuel-burning appliances — natural gas or propane unit heaters, wood stoves, or any combustion equipment — have specific combustion air requirements under the NB Building Code. The appliance needs a supply of fresh air for combustion, typically provided through a direct vent to the outdoors or through a combustion air intake duct. The sizing of this intake depends on the BTU rating of the appliance and is specified in the installation manual and the code. A licensed HVAC technician should design and install any combustion heating in a garage to ensure code compliance and safety.

From a practical standpoint, if you are building or insulating a garage in NB, plan for ventilation from the start. Adding a **through-wall exhaust fan** costs \$200 to \$500 during construction but can cost \$800 to \$1,500 to retrofit after the walls are insulated and finished. A timer switch or humidistat-controlled fan is ideal — it runs automatically when moisture levels rise and shuts off when the air is dry, saving energy without requiring you to remember to turn it on. Need help planning your garage ventilation system? Get matched with a local garage contractor through New Brunswick Garages for a free estimate.

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Q21

Can I build my own garage in New Brunswick without a licensed contractor?

Yes, New Brunswick homeowners are generally permitted to build a garage on their own property without hiring a licensed general contractor, but there are important legal and practical limitations you need to understand before picking up a hammer. NB does not require a general contractor licence for residential construction in the same way that some other provinces do, but specific trades — most importantly electrical and plumbing — must be performed by licensed professionals regardless of who builds the structure.

All electrical work in your garage must be done by a licensed electrician and requires a separate electrical permit and inspection. This is not optional and it is not something you can legally do yourself in New Brunswick, even on your own property. Wiring outlets, lighting, a sub-panel, a garage door opener circuit, or an EV charger hookup all require a licensed electrician who will pull the permit and arrange the inspection. Similarly, if your garage includes plumbing — a sink, floor drain connected to the sewer, or water supply — that work must be done by a licensed plumber with the appropriate permits.

For the **building permit itself**, most NB municipalities allow a homeowner to be the applicant and the builder of record on their own property. You will need to submit plans that show the proposed garage meets the NB Building

Code requirements, including proper foundation depth below the **4-to-5-foot frost line**, adequate structural framing for NB's snow loads of **2.4 to 4.8 kPa**, correct roof design, and fire separation details if the garage is attached to your home. Some municipalities require that plans for structures over a certain size be prepared or reviewed by a professional engineer or architect — check with your local building inspection department before investing time in drawing your own plans.

The practical reality of owner-built garages in NB is worth considering honestly. A garage foundation is the single most critical element of the project, and it is the most unforgiving of mistakes. The footings must be below the frost line, the concrete must be properly mixed, placed, and cured, the slab must have a **6-mil vapour barrier underneath**, and the drainage must direct water away from the foundation on all sides. A foundation mistake in NB's freeze-thaw climate shows up within the first winter as heaving, cracking, and misalignment — and the only fix is demolition and rebuilding. Most experienced builders strongly advise against DIY foundation work in NB for this reason.

Framing a simple single-car detached garage is within the capability of a skilled DIYer with construction experience, good tools, and a helper. A **12x20 or 14x24 single-car garage** with a straightforward gable roof is a manageable project if you have framed walls before and understand how to read plans, layout plates, plumb walls, and set trusses safely. A two-car or larger garage with engineered trusses, large header spans over 16-foot door openings, and multiple bearing points is significantly more complex and carries greater structural risk if done incorrectly.

Roof truss installation is one of the most dangerous phases of any garage build. Trusses for a 24-foot-wide garage weigh 100 to 200 pounds each and must be lifted, positioned, and braced at height. Falls from height are the leading cause of construction injuries and fatalities in Canada. If you choose to set trusses yourself, you need a proper plan for temporary bracing, adequate help (minimum 3-4 people for a two-car garage), and fall protection equipment.

Insurance and liability are important considerations for owner-built garages. Your homeowner's insurance may not cover injuries to helpers or damage caused during construction. Some insurers will not cover an owner-built garage or will require a professional inspection before adding it to your policy. Discuss your plans with your insurance provider before starting.

The cost savings from owner-building can be significant — **labour typically accounts for 40 to 50 percent** of a garage construction budget, so a \$50,000 two-car garage might be built for \$25,000 to \$30,000 in materials and subtrade costs if you do the general labour, framing, siding, and finishing yourself. However, this assumes you have the time, tools, skills, and physical ability to do the work correctly and safely. A garage that takes a professional crew two to three weeks to build may take an owner-builder two to three months of weekends.

If you decide the project is beyond your comfort level, New Brunswick Garages can match you with local garage construction professionals through the New Brunswick Construction Network — the matching service is free, and getting multiple quotes helps ensure you get fair pricing for your project.

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