

NEW BRUNSWICK PAINTING

Permits, Safety & Lead Paint

Lead paint regulations, VOC safety, WorkSafeNB requirements, heritage building rules, and health considerations

20 Expert Answers from Paint IQ

newbrunswickpainting.com/construction-brain

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Does asbestos in textured ceiling coatings in pre-1990 homes in Saint John require abatement before repainting or is encapsulation acceptable?

Asbestos-containing textured ceiling coatings (stipple/popcorn ceilings) in pre-1990 Saint John homes can often be safely encapsulated with paint rather than removed, but this requires professional assessment and specific safety protocols.

Textured ceiling coatings applied before 1990 in New Brunswick commonly contain asbestos, particularly in homes built between 1950-1985. The good news is that **encapsulation through painting is often the safer and more cost-effective approach** compared to removal. Asbestos becomes dangerous when disturbed and becomes airborne — intact textured ceilings that are firmly adhered pose minimal risk when properly encapsulated.

Health Canada and WorkSafeNB guidelines allow encapsulation of asbestos-containing materials when they are in good condition (not cracking, peeling, or damaged). However, you must **never sand, scrape, or disturb** the existing texture before painting. Any loose or damaged areas require professional abatement before encapsulation can proceed safely.

Professional assessment is essential before proceeding. A qualified asbestos inspector should test samples of your textured ceiling to confirm asbestos content and evaluate the condition. In Saint John's older housing stock, this testing typically costs \$300-600 and provides definitive answers about both asbestos presence and the ceiling's structural integrity.

If encapsulation is appropriate, the process involves applying a high-quality primer designed for asbestos encapsulation (such as Fiberlock ABC or similar products available through professional suppliers in Saint John), followed by ceiling paint. The encapsulant creates a protective barrier that prevents asbestos fibers from becoming airborne. This work should be done by professionals with proper respiratory protection and containment procedures, even though full abatement isn't required.

When removal becomes necessary: If the textured coating is peeling, water-damaged, or structurally compromised, encapsulation won't work and professional asbestos abatement is required. This involves complete containment, specialized removal techniques, and disposal at approved facilities. Removal costs in the Saint John area typically range from \$15-25 per square foot.

Never attempt DIY work on suspected asbestos ceilings. Even "wet scraping" or light sanding can release dangerous fibers. Always hire certified asbestos professionals who follow WorkSafeNB protocols and carry proper insurance for hazardous material work.

For asbestos assessment and abatement professionals in the Saint John area, contact the New Brunswick Construction Network for qualified contractors who specialize in hazardous material handling.

Q2

Which NB municipality requires a heritage review permit before changing exterior paint colour on a designated heritage property in Fredericton's downtown district?

Fredericton requires heritage review through the Heritage Preservation Review Board before changing exterior paint colours on designated heritage properties in the downtown heritage conservation area.

The City of Fredericton has established heritage conservation areas, particularly in the downtown core, where designated heritage properties must receive approval from the Heritage Preservation Review Board before making exterior colour changes. This includes the historic downtown district along Queen Street, King Street, and surrounding blocks where many of Fredericton's oldest commercial and residential buildings are located.

The heritage review process typically requires submitting a heritage alteration permit application that includes colour samples, photographs of the existing building, and details about the proposed colour scheme. The Heritage Preservation Review Board meets monthly to review applications and ensure that proposed changes are compatible with the historic character of the area and neighbouring heritage buildings. The review focuses on maintaining the visual harmony of the heritage district while allowing property owners reasonable flexibility in colour choices.

Properties subject to heritage review include buildings listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places, municipally designated heritage properties, and buildings within defined heritage conservation areas. Even if your building isn't individually designated, if it's located within a heritage conservation area boundary, exterior colour changes may still require approval. The heritage designation should be noted on your property deed or tax assessment, but you can also check with Fredericton's Planning and Development Services department to confirm your property's status.

Approved colour palettes for heritage properties in Fredericton often emphasize historically appropriate colours that were available and commonly used during the building's original construction period. The Heritage Preservation Review Board maintains guidelines for appropriate colour schemes, typically favouring more muted, traditional colours over bright contemporary shades. However, they do consider the building's architectural style, age, and surrounding context when making decisions.

Timeline and costs for heritage review applications in Fredericton typically range from 4-8 weeks for processing, with application fees around \$100-200 depending on the scope of work. It's wise to submit your application well before you plan to start painting, especially if you're hoping to complete exterior work within New Brunswick's May-October painting season.

If you're unsure whether your Fredericton property requires heritage review, contact the City of Fredericton's Planning and Development Services department before purchasing paint or hiring contractors. Getting approval after the fact is more complicated and expensive than applying beforehand.

Need help finding a painting professional familiar with heritage property requirements? New Brunswick Painting can match you with contractors experienced in heritage district work through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

Q3

How does the Technical Safety Authority of New Brunswick regulate spray painting equipment used in commercial painting operations?

The Technical Safety Authority of New Brunswick (TSANB) does not directly regulate spray painting equipment used in commercial painting operations. TSANB's mandate focuses on pressure vessels, elevating devices, electrical installations, and gas systems — not painting equipment specifically.

Commercial spray painting equipment regulation in New Brunswick falls under different authorities.

WorkSafeNB (the provincial workplace safety regulator) sets safety standards for spray painting operations, particularly around ventilation, fire prevention, respiratory protection, and proper handling of flammable coatings. Their regulations cover booth ventilation requirements, explosion-proof electrical equipment in spray areas, and mandatory respiratory protection when using solvent-based coatings.

Fire safety regulations are handled by the New Brunswick Fire Marshal's Office and local fire departments. Commercial spray operations must comply with National Fire Code requirements for flammable liquid storage, spray booth fire suppression systems, and proper disposal of paint-soaked rags and filters. Many municipalities require permits for commercial spray booths and regular inspections of fire suppression systems.

For residential painting projects, these commercial regulations typically don't apply. However, professional painters using airless sprayers, HVLP systems, or compressed air equipment should still follow manufacturer safety guidelines and WorkSafeNB recommendations for respiratory protection, especially when spraying solvent-based primers or specialty coatings in enclosed spaces.

If you're planning a commercial painting project in New Brunswick, your painting contractor should be familiar with WorkSafeNB requirements and local fire safety regulations. They should carry proper liability insurance and WorkSafeNB coverage, and ensure their spray equipment and ventilation systems meet current safety standards.

For other construction equipment and safety questions beyond painting, you can find qualified contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network who understand the various regulatory requirements for commercial projects across the province.

Are painting contractors in New Brunswick required to carry WSIB-equivalent WorkSafeNB coverage for subcontractors they bring onto a job site?

Yes, painting contractors in New Brunswick are required to carry WorkSafeNB coverage for their employees, but the rules around subcontractors are more complex and depend on the specific working relationship.

Primary Contractor Requirements

Painting contractors with employees must carry WorkSafeNB coverage — this is mandatory under the Workers' Compensation Act. Any painting business that hires employees (even part-time or seasonal workers) must register with WorkSafeNB and maintain coverage. This includes apprentice painters, helpers, and crew members working under the contractor's direction.

For subcontractors, the requirements depend on their classification. If a painting contractor hires another painter as a true independent subcontractor (with their own business registration, tools, and operating independently), that subcontractor is responsible for their own WorkSafeNB coverage. However, if the relationship looks more like an employment arrangement — where the "subcontractor" works exclusively for one contractor, uses the contractor's tools, follows detailed direction, and doesn't operate as an independent business — WorkSafeNB may classify them as an employee requiring coverage under the primary contractor's account.

Homeowner Protection

As a homeowner hiring a painting contractor, you should verify that they carry both WorkSafeNB coverage and general liability insurance. While WorkSafeNB coverage protects workers injured on your property, liability insurance protects you from property damage claims. A legitimate painting contractor should readily provide proof of both coverages.

For residential projects, some sole proprietor painters operate without employees and may not be required to carry WorkSafeNB coverage for themselves — but they should still carry liability insurance. However, the moment they bring anyone else onto your job site (helper, apprentice, subcontractor), the WorkSafeNB requirements become more complex.

Practical Advice

Before hiring any painting contractor in New Brunswick, ask for:

- Proof of current WorkSafeNB coverage (if they have employees)

- General liability insurance certificate
- Clear explanation of who will be working on your project and their coverage status

Red flags include contractors who are vague about coverage, claim they don't need it, or ask you to pay cash to avoid "paperwork." Legitimate contractors understand these requirements and maintain proper coverage to protect both their workers and their clients.

For exterior painting projects involving ladders, scaffolding, or multi-storey work, proper coverage becomes even more critical due to the increased risk of workplace injuries. Never compromise on insurance verification for elevated work.

If you're unsure about a contractor's coverage status or have questions about WorkSafeNB requirements, contact WorkSafeNB directly at 1-800-222-9775. They can verify a contractor's coverage status and explain the requirements for your specific project.

Need help finding properly insured painting contractors? New Brunswick Painting can match you with local professionals who understand and maintain the required coverage for residential projects.

Q5

What WHMIS labelling requirements apply to paint products used by professional painters on job sites in New Brunswick?

Professional painters in New Brunswick must follow federal WHMIS 2015 requirements for all paint products on job sites, including proper labelling, safety data sheets, and worker training.

Under the Hazardous Products Act and WHMIS 2015 regulations, paint products used by professional painting contractors in NB are classified as workplace hazardous materials and must comply with specific labelling and handling requirements. This applies to all commercial painting operations, whether residential or commercial projects.

WHMIS Labelling Requirements for Paint Products

All paint containers on professional job sites must display supplier labels with standardized pictograms, signal words, hazard statements, and precautionary statements. Common paint-related WHMIS classifications include flammable liquids (solvent-based paints and thinners), skin and eye irritants (most paints and primers), and respiratory sensitizers (isocyanate-containing products). Oil-based paints, lacquers, and specialty coatings typically carry flame pictograms and health hazard symbols, while latex paints may have exclamation mark pictograms for mild irritation.

When paint is transferred to secondary containers (spray guns, buckets, rollers trays), workplace labels must be applied showing the product identifier, safe handling precautions, and reference to the safety data sheet. This is particularly important for painting crews who decant paint from original containers into sprayers or smaller working containers throughout the day.

Safety Data Sheets and Worker Training

Painting contractors must maintain current safety data sheets (SDS) for every paint product on site and ensure workers can access them immediately. The SDS provides detailed information about chemical composition, health hazards, first aid measures, and proper disposal procedures. Workers must receive WHMIS training before handling any paint products, covering hazard recognition, proper use of personal protective equipment, and emergency procedures.

New Brunswick Specific Considerations

WorkSafeNB enforces WHMIS compliance on painting job sites and can issue stop-work orders for violations. Professional painters working on exterior projects in NB's humid Maritime climate must pay special attention to solvent vapour accumulation and ensure adequate ventilation even during outdoor work. Interior painting in older NB homes often involves lead paint removal, which requires additional WHMIS considerations for lead-containing dust and specialized disposal procedures.

Practical Compliance for Painting Contractors

Professional painting contractors should maintain a WHMIS binder on every job site with safety data sheets for all products in use, ensure all workers have current WHMIS training certificates, and conduct regular toolbox talks about chemical hazards specific to the day's work. Paint suppliers in NB (Benjamin Moore dealers, Sherwin-Williams stores, hardware stores) provide WHMIS-compliant labelling, but contractors are responsible for workplace labelling when transferring products.

When Professional Help is Essential

Any painting project involving lead paint removal, commercial spray applications, or specialty coatings with isocyanates requires contractors with proper WHMIS training and WorkSafeNB coverage. Homeowners hiring painting contractors should verify that the company maintains current WHMIS compliance and worker training records.

Find WHMIS-compliant professional painting contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network directory at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=painting.

Are NB painting contractors required to hold a specific trade certification or license to operate legally in New Brunswick?

No, New Brunswick does not require painting contractors to hold a specific trade certification or license to operate legally as residential painters. Painting is considered an unregulated trade in NB, meaning anyone can legally start a painting business without formal certification.

However, this doesn't mean all painters are equal in terms of qualifications, insurance, or business practices. Here's what you need to know about the regulatory landscape for painting contractors in New Brunswick:

What's NOT Required

No mandatory trade certification — Unlike electricians or plumbers, painters don't need to complete an apprenticeship program or pass a licensing exam to work in NB. There's no provincial painter's license or certification requirement for residential work.

No business license for most residential work — Small painting contractors typically don't need municipal business licenses for residential projects, though some municipalities may require registration for commercial work or if operating from a commercial location.

What IS Required or Strongly Recommended

WorkSafeNB coverage is mandatory for any painting contractor with employees. Even sole proprietors are strongly encouraged to carry WorkSafeNB coverage, especially for exterior work involving ladders and scaffolding. This protects both the contractor and the homeowner in case of workplace injuries.

Liability insurance isn't legally required but is essential business protection. A legitimate painting contractor should carry at least \$1-2 million in general liability insurance to protect against property damage or injury claims.

Business registration may be required depending on the business structure. Incorporated painting companies must register with Service New Brunswick, and some contractors may need HST registration if annual revenue exceeds \$30,000.

What This Means for Homeowners

Since painting isn't regulated, **the responsibility falls on you to verify a contractor's qualifications and legitimacy.** When hiring a painter in NB, always check:

- **WorkSafeNB coverage** — Ask for their account number and verify coverage directly with WorkSafeNB

- **Liability insurance** — Request a certificate of insurance from their provider
- **References** — Contact previous customers to verify quality of work and professionalism
- **Written estimates** — Get detailed quotes that specify materials, labour, timeline, and warranty
- **Local reputation** — Check online reviews and ask for local references

Commercial vs. Residential Work

For large commercial projects, additional requirements may apply including WorkSafeNB compliance for fall protection, scaffolding safety certifications, and specific insurance minimums. Some commercial clients or government contracts may require contractors to meet additional qualification standards.

The lack of mandatory certification means you'll find a wide range of experience levels among NB painting contractors — from highly skilled professionals with decades of experience to newcomers just starting out.

Always do your due diligence when selecting a painter, regardless of their years in business.

Need help finding a qualified painting professional? New Brunswick Painting can match you with local contractors who carry proper insurance and have established reputations in their communities.

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

- Expressions Painting
- Thirty Four Renovations
- Gionetterenovations
- moose luxury painting
- M And M Painting

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What are the lead paint regulations for older homes built before 1978 in New Brunswick?

Lead paint is a serious health hazard found in a large proportion of New Brunswick homes built before 1978, and while NB does not have a province-specific lead abatement licensing regime, federal Health Canada guidelines and WorkSafeNB regulations establish clear requirements for safe handling — requirements that every homeowner should understand before starting any painting project on an older NB home.

The background: lead was commonly added to interior and exterior paints as a pigment, drying agent, and durability enhancer until the late 1970s. The federal government restricted its use significantly in 1976, but older stock was still sold through the late 1970s. This means homes in Fredericton's north side, Saint John's older neighbourhoods, the Heritage Conservation District in uptown Saint John, and older residential areas throughout Moncton, Bathurst, and Miramichi have a high likelihood of containing lead paint — particularly on exterior surfaces, window frames, doors, trim, and any originally oil-based painted surfaces.

Federal regulation: Health Canada's Lead and Your Health guidelines establish that blood lead levels above 5 micrograms per decilitre are a health concern, with children under 6 and pregnant women most vulnerable. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act restricts lead content in new paints to 90 parts per million (ppm), effectively banning lead in modern paint. However, the regulations governing the removal of existing lead paint from homes are less prescriptive: there is no federal or NB provincial law requiring homeowners to hire a certified lead abatement contractor for residential renovation work. The obligation falls instead on the homeowner to follow Health Canada's safe work practices guidance and on contractors to follow WorkSafeNB regulations.

WorkSafeNB requirements apply to painting contractors and renovation workers as employers. WorkSafeNB requires employers to assess the workplace for hazardous materials, including lead, before beginning work that disturbs painted surfaces in pre-1978 buildings. Contractors must follow the hierarchy of controls — containment, wet methods to suppress dust, HEPA vacuuming, proper PPE (P100 or N100 respirator, disposable coveralls, gloves) — and must properly dispose of lead-contaminated debris as regulated waste through an approved NB facility. Personal air monitoring may be required for workers with ongoing lead paint exposure.

For homeowners doing DIY work: You are not subject to WorkSafeNB regulations (which govern employment relationships), but you are still creating a health hazard for yourself, your family, and especially any children in the home if you disturb lead paint without proper precautions. Health Canada's guidance is clear: if you suspect lead paint, test before disturbing, and if confirmed, follow lead-safe work practices or hire a professional. Never dry sand or dry scrape surfaces with suspected lead paint. Never use a heat gun on suspected lead paint — this creates

lead vapour, which is far more dangerous than lead dust. Use wet methods, contain the work area with plastic sheeting, wear appropriate respiratory protection, and bag and dispose of waste properly.

Heritage areas: In Saint John's heritage conservation areas and Fredericton's designated heritage districts, you may face additional constraints around exterior surface treatments, but these heritage bylaws address appearance rather than lead paint specifically. The lead paint obligations are the same regardless of heritage status.

The practical bottom line for NB homeowners: if your home was built before 1978 and you are planning any work that will disturb painted surfaces — sanding, scraping, stripping trim, removing window frames — testing for lead paint is the responsible first step. Test kits are inexpensive and widely available. If lead is confirmed, strongly consider hiring a professional painter experienced with lead-safe work practices, especially if children live in or visit the home.

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Q8

How do I test for lead paint in my older Fredericton home before starting a painting project?

Testing for lead paint before disturbing any surfaces in an older Fredericton home is one of the most important steps you can take to protect your family's health — and fortunately, initial testing is both inexpensive and straightforward. The two main options are DIY chemical test kits (available locally) and professional laboratory testing, which gives more definitive results.

Fredericton's older neighbourhoods — the north side, downtown residential streets, and the older south side — have a high proportion of pre-1960 housing stock where lead paint is extremely common. The same applies to older

homes throughout NB: Moncton's West End, Saint John's north and south ends, Bathurst, and Miramichi all have significant pre-1978 housing. Lead paint is most likely to be found on trim, doors, window frames, exterior siding, and any surface originally painted with oil-based paint — the sheen, hardness, and slightly yellowish tinge of old oil-based alkyd paint can be a visual indicator, though it is not a reliable test on its own.

DIY chemical test kits are available at Home Depot and most hardware stores in Fredericton and Moncton, priced at roughly 0-25 per kit. The most common type uses a sodium rhodizonate chemical that turns pink or red in the presence of lead. The test is simple: scrape a small area of painted surface down to the bare substrate, apply the chemical swab, and observe the colour change. These kits will tell you whether lead is present, but they do not tell you the concentration level. They also can give false negatives if the lead paint is buried under multiple later coats of non-lead paint — the chemical needs to contact the lead-containing layer. For surfaces with many paint layers, you need to expose and test multiple layers, not just the surface.

Professional laboratory testing is the gold standard. A professional collects paint chip samples from each surface you are concerned about, labels them clearly, and sends them to an accredited environmental testing laboratory. In NB, samples can be sent to labs in Moncton or Fredericton, or to accredited labs in Halifax and beyond. Results typically take 5-7 business days and give you an exact lead concentration in milligrams per square centimetre (mg/cm²) or ppm. Health Canada's guideline for concern is above 1.0 mg/cm². Lab testing typically costs 0-80 per sample, and a thorough assessment of a 1,500-square-foot older Fredericton home might involve 10-15 samples from different surfaces, putting total lab costs at 00-800 — a worthwhile investment before starting a major renovation.

Professional environmental inspection is the most comprehensive option. An environmental consultant or industrial hygienist with lead assessment training will inspect your home systematically, use an X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyser (a handheld device that reads lead content through multiple paint layers non-destructively), and provide a full report with results and recommendations. XRF analysis is faster than lab sampling and can test many surfaces in a single visit without damaging any surfaces. The cost is typically 00-600 for a residential assessment. This is the approach most recommended before major renovations involving significant paint disturbance on pre-1960 Fredericton homes.

What to do with the results: If lead paint is found at concerning levels (above 1.0 mg/cm² or in a deteriorated, peeling condition), the safest options are encapsulation (painting over it with a thick, bonding encapsulant paint to seal it in place without disturbance) or lead-safe removal by an experienced professional. If lead paint is in good condition and not being disturbed, it generally poses low risk. The priority for action is always: deteriorated or peeling lead paint first, then work that will disturb intact lead paint (sanding, scraping, demo), then simply painting over intact lead paint with proper priming.

If you'd like help finding a professional painter experienced with lead-safe work practices in the Fredericton area, New Brunswick Painting can match you with local contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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

- Expressions Painting
- moose luxury painting
- FRS Flooring Solutions
- Worry No More Handyman Services
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Q9

What safety precautions should I take when removing lead paint from trim in my NB home?

If you have confirmed or suspect lead paint on trim in your New Brunswick home — which is extremely likely in any home built before 1978 — you should hire a professional with lead-safe work practices rather than doing it yourself, especially if children under six or pregnant women are present.

Lead paint was used extensively in Canadian homes until the late 1970s. In NB, the older housing stock in Saint John, Fredericton, Moncton, and countless smaller communities means hundreds of thousands of homes have lead paint on trim, doors, and window frames. Lead is only dangerous when it becomes dust or chips — intact lead paint simply painted over with a fresh topcoat poses minimal risk.

If you are proceeding with removal yourself — on a property with no children or pregnant women present — Health Canada and WorkSafeNB guidelines require:

Containment: Seal off the work area completely with 6-mil poly sheeting, covering floors, furniture, and any HVAC vents.

Respiratory protection: Use a properly fitted **P100 half-face respirator** — not an N95 surgical mask.

Wet methods: Always wet the surface before scraping or sanding. Never dry-sand lead paint. Use a **heat gun at low temperature (below 500°C)** if heat stripping is necessary — open flame or propane torches are never acceptable.

Disposal: Collect all scrapings in sealed, heavy poly bags. Contact your regional service commission for guidance on proper disposal of lead paint waste — it is classified as hazardous material in NB.

Personal decontamination: Shower and change clothes before leaving the work area. Never eat, drink, or smoke in a lead work zone.

Professional lead abatement in NB for a typical room's worth of trim typically costs **\$800-2,500** depending on scope. That cost is money well spent when the alternative is exposing your family to lead dust.

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- Loves Painting Ltd.
- FRS Flooring Solutions

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Do I need WorkSafeNB coverage to hire a painting contractor for my residential project?

You do not need to purchase WorkSafeNB coverage yourself to hire a painting contractor for a residential project in New Brunswick — but you should always verify that your painter carries their own coverage or understand your potential liability.

WorkSafeNB is a no-fault insurance system that covers workers injured on the job. The obligation to carry coverage falls on the **employer**, not the homeowner. If a painting contractor operates as an incorporated company or has employees, they are generally required to register with WorkSafeNB.

Where this becomes a liability issue for you is if you hire an unregistered self-employed painter who is injured on your property — WorkSafeNB may determine that you are considered the "employer" for the purposes of the claim, and you could be assessed for premiums retroactively.

The practical protection steps for NB homeowners:

First, ask any painter for their **WorkSafeNB account number** and verify their good standing by calling 1-800-222-9775 or checking at worksafenb.ca.

Second, verify **general liability insurance** — ask for a certificate showing at minimum \$1-2 million in general liability coverage. Any professional painter pricing jobs in the **\$2,000-15,000** range should carry this as standard.

Third, review your own **home insurance policy**. Some NB homeowners' policies include coverage for contractor injuries — others explicitly exclude it for unlicensed or uninsured contractors.

For small interior jobs (**\$300-800 for a single room**), many NB homeowners hire local independent painters without verified WorkSafeNB registration. For larger exterior projects involving ladders and scaffolding with real fall risk, the coverage question matters significantly more.

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Q11

What are the VOC limits for interior paint sold in New Brunswick and why do they matter?

Interior paints sold in New Brunswick must comply with Environment and Climate Change Canada's national VOC limits — and in practical terms, every can of paint on the shelf at hardware and paint stores across Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John already meets these limits.

VOCs are the carbon-based chemicals in paint that evaporate as the paint dries. Health effects from VOC exposure range from mild (headaches, eye irritation) to more serious with prolonged exposure (respiratory irritation, central nervous system effects). Children, elderly individuals, and people with asthma are most vulnerable.

The federal limits set maximums by product category. For flat interior wall paint, the limit is **50 grams of VOC per litre**. For non-flat interior wall paint (eggshell, satin, semi-gloss), the limit is **150 g/L**. For context, a **low-VOC interior latex** typically contains **10-50 g/L**, and a **zero-VOC** formulation is generally under **5 g/L**. Older oil-based alkyd paints could contain **300-500+ g/L**.

Why this matters for your NB home: New Brunswick homes are tightly sealed from November through April — windows stay closed and the house runs on recirculated forced-air heat. Choosing a **zero-VOC or low-VOC interior paint** for bedrooms, nurseries, and living rooms is a straightforward health decision. Premium low-VOC options like Benjamin Moore Aura (\$75-90/gallon), Sherwin-Williams Emerald (\$80-95/gallon), or Dulux Lifemaster (\$55-70/gallon) perform as well or better than conventional formulations.

Note that **tinting** a zero-VOC base can add VOCs back if the colourant used is not zero-VOC itself. Ask your paint store to confirm they use zero-VOC tinting systems if you need a deep colour.

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Q12

Are there heritage building painting restrictions in Saint John or Fredericton heritage districts?

Yes — if your home is in a designated heritage conservation area in Saint John or Fredericton, changing the exterior colour may require approval from the municipal heritage board before you pick up a brush. This is one of the few painting-related situations in New Brunswick where you genuinely need to check with local authorities before proceeding.

Saint John has a well-established heritage preservation program covering parts of the South End, the Uptown core, and several residential neighbourhoods with significant 19th-century housing stock. The city's Heritage Conservation Areas Bylaw gives the Heritage Development Board authority to review proposed exterior changes, including paint colours, on designated properties. Fredericton has similar provisions through its Heritage Preservation By-law, particularly around the downtown core and residential streets with concentrations of Victorian-era homes. The review process is typically not onerous — many homeowners are surprised to find it's just a matter of submitting a colour proposal and receiving written approval — but skipping it can result in orders to repaint at your own expense.

It's important to understand the distinction between a property being in a heritage area and being an individually designated heritage property. A home on a heritage street may not itself be individually listed, in which case fewer restrictions apply. The most restrictive requirements generally apply to individually designated or registered heritage properties. To know exactly where your home stands, contact the Planning and Development office at the City of Saint John or the City of Fredericton — both municipalities have heritage planners on staff who can answer your questions quickly. This call costs you nothing and takes ten minutes.

What to do before repainting a heritage-area home: Start by contacting your municipal planning office to confirm whether your specific property is subject to heritage review. If it is, ask what the submission process involves — typically you'll need to provide the paint manufacturer, colour name, and colour chip for the proposed colours. Heritage boards generally favour historically appropriate palettes: muted earth tones, deep greens, warm ochres, and classic whites that would have been available in the Victorian or Edwardian period. Bright or bold contemporary colours are more likely to face pushback on truly historic structures.

For the painting work itself, even when no heritage approval is required, older NB homes in Saint John and Fredericton deserve particular attention to prep and product selection. Many of these homes have original wood clapboard or shingle siding with dozens of layers of paint over a century or more of ownership. Before any heritage home repaint, a careful assessment of existing paint condition — including lead paint testing if any sanding or scraping is involved — is strongly recommended. A painter experienced with heritage properties understands both the regulatory landscape and the specific techniques these old buildings require.

Need help finding a professional painter familiar with NB heritage districts? New Brunswick Painting can match you with local painters through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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What safety equipment do I need for exterior painting on ladders and scaffolding in NB?

For ladder work, the minimum safety equipment is non-slip footwear, a tool belt or bucket hook to keep both hands free, and a spotter on the ground — for scaffolding or any work above 3 metres (10 feet), a fall arrest harness is strongly recommended and may be required under WorkSafeNB regulations for commercial projects. Exterior painting injuries from falls are among the most common causes of serious injury in residential construction, and New Brunswick's uneven ground, wind off the Bay of Fundy, and slippery morning dew all add to the risk.

For homeowners tackling exterior painting on a single-storey home, a good-quality fibreglass ladder rated for your weight plus tools (add at least 30 kg / 65 lbs for paint, tools, and yourself) is the starting point. Aluminum ladders conduct electricity — stay well away from power lines. Set the ladder at the correct 4:1 angle (one foot out for every four feet of height), and always secure the top against the building. Never lean to the side or reach further than arm's length — descend and reposition the ladder. This sounds obvious but ladder falls happen because people don't want to climb down and move. On NB soil, ladder feet sink into soft ground after rain, so use leg levellers or a plywood base on soft or uneven surfaces.

For two-storey exteriors, scaffolding is safer and more productive than ladders for anything beyond small repairs. Pump jack scaffolding, which is the most common setup for residential exterior painting in NB, requires proper base plates and guardrails on open sides and ends. Under WorkSafeNB regulations, any scaffolding above 3 metres used in a commercial or professional context must have guardrails and toe boards. As a homeowner doing your own work, you are not subject to the same mandatory compliance, but the physics of a fall from 6 metres are the same regardless.

Essential safety equipment checklist for exterior painting:

Eye and face protection matters more than most people realize — paint mist from sprayers, debris from scraping, and dried paint chips all create eye hazard. Safety glasses or goggles should be worn whenever you are scraping, sanding, or spraying. For lead paint work on pre-1978 NB homes, add a P100 half-mask respirator — this is non-negotiable.

Gloves protect against skin sensitization from extended paint contact, especially with oil-based products and stain-blocking primers that contain harsh solvents.

Sun protection is often overlooked but NB summer sun combined with physical outdoor labour means SPF 30+ sunscreen and a hat are practical safety equipment for long painting days.

For any exterior painting project involving ladders on a two-storey or higher NB home, strongly consider hiring a professional. The painting might be straightforward — the fall risk is not. Professional exterior painters carry WorkSafeNB coverage and liability insurance precisely because height work carries real risk. Browse local painting contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=painting.

Q14

Can I paint over lead paint safely or does it need to be removed first in my NB home?

In most cases, encapsulation — painting over intact lead paint with a fresh coat — is actually the recommended approach, and is safer than removal. But if the lead paint is peeling, flaking, or on a surface subject to friction (doors, windows, trim), removal or professional encapsulation is necessary, and that work should always be done by a professional with lead-safe practices. This distinction matters enormously for the safety of you and your family.

New Brunswick has a large stock of pre-1978 housing, particularly in the older neighbourhoods of Saint John, Moncton, and Fredericton. Lead was a common additive in residential paint until Canada phased it out in the late 1970s. If your home was built before 1978, assume there is lead paint somewhere — most commonly on window frames, door frames, trim, baseboards, exterior siding, and older kitchen and bathroom surfaces. Health Canada estimates that the older the home, the higher the lead concentration in early paint layers.

The key principle is this: lead paint that is in good condition, firmly adhered, and not subject to friction or abrasion poses minimal immediate risk as long as it stays intact. Painting over it with a fresh coat of paint — what professionals call encapsulation — seals the lead beneath a new barrier and is Health Canada's preferred approach for stable lead paint. The danger comes when lead paint is disturbed: sanding, scraping, heat-gun stripping, or cutting through it generates lead dust and paint chips, which are the actual hazard, particularly for children under 6 and pregnant women.

Before you do anything with suspected lead paint in your NB home, do a lead test. Lead test swabs (available at hardware stores across NB for about 0-15 each) give a result in minutes. A lab-based dust wipe test is more accurate for confirming whether a room has been contaminated. If the test is positive and the paint is intact, you can safely paint over it with proper precautions: wipe the surface with a damp cloth to remove dust, apply a bonding primer, then your finish coat. Do not sand or dry-scrape the surface.

If the lead paint is peeling, chipping, or on a friction surface (window sashes, door edges), removal is necessary — and this is unequivocally a job for a professional with lead-safe work practices. The work area must be sealed with plastic sheeting, occupants (especially children and pregnant women) must vacate the home during and after work until cleanup is confirmed complete, workers must wear full-face respirators with P100 cartridges and disposable coveralls, and lead-contaminated debris must be disposed of as hazardous waste. This is not a DIY project. Not because of bureaucratic rules, but because lead dust at this level is genuinely dangerous to your family's health.

If you're unsure about the lead paint condition in your home, reach out to New Brunswick Painting to be connected with a professional painter experienced in lead-safe work practices.

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

- Expressions Painting
- FRS Flooring Solutions
- M And M Painting
- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations

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Q15

What insurance should a painting contractor carry when working on my home in New Brunswick?

At minimum, any painting contractor you hire in New Brunswick should carry commercial general liability (CGL) insurance — ideally million in coverage — and should be able to show you a current certificate of insurance before starting work. For exterior work involving ladders and scaffolding, WorkSafeNB coverage is also strongly recommended, and for larger projects, verify both.

Commercial general liability insurance protects you, the homeowner, if the painter accidentally damages your property or a third party is injured during the work. Think about what can go wrong: a drop cloth slips and a paint spill damages your hardwood floors, a ladder falls and breaks a window, or a contractor trips over equipment and

injures themselves on your property. Without liability insurance, the cost of those incidents lands on you. A million CGL policy is the standard in the Canadian residential painting trade — some contractors carry million, which may be acceptable for smaller interior projects, but million is the more prudent standard for exterior work or larger whole-home projects.

WorkSafeNB coverage is the New Brunswick equivalent of workers' compensation. If a painter is injured on your property and does not carry WorkSafeNB coverage, you as the homeowner could potentially be held liable for their medical costs and lost wages under provincial workplace health and safety law. This is especially relevant for exterior painting involving ladders and scaffolding, where fall injuries are a real risk. Ask your painter directly: "Do you carry WorkSafeNB coverage for your crew?" A reputable contractor will have no hesitation answering yes and showing their clearance letter.

What to actually ask and verify:

Request a certificate of insurance directly from the contractor's insurance broker — not just a verbal assurance. The certificate should show the policy is current (check the expiry date), the coverage amount, and list your project address. For WorkSafeNB, you can verify coverage online through the WorkSafeNB website by requesting a clearance letter in the contractor's name.

Also consider whether the contractor is a sole proprietor working alone versus a company with employees. A solo painter who is the sole worker on your project has slightly different insurance considerations than a crew of three or four. Either way, liability insurance is non-negotiable.

New Brunswick Painting is a free matching service — we recommend homeowners verify insurance and WorkSafeNB coverage independently for every contractor they hire. For any painting project, get at least three quotes and ask each contractor for their proof of insurance as part of the quoting process. Any reputable painter will provide this without hesitation. Browse verified painting contractors through the New Brunswick Construction Network at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=painting.

How do I dispose of leftover paint and paint cans properly in New Brunswick?

In New Brunswick, leftover paint and empty paint cans should be brought to a **PaintCare** or **municipal household hazardous waste (HHW) depot** — **pouring paint down the drain, into the ground, or putting liquid paint in the garbage is illegal and environmentally harmful**. The good news is that paint recycling is free and genuinely convenient across most of NB.

Canada's PaintCare program operates drop-off locations at hardware and paint stores across New Brunswick, including locations in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, Bathurst, Miramichi, and smaller communities. Most Benjamin Moore dealers, Sherwin-Williams stores, Dulux retailers, and many Home Hardware locations participate. You can drop off both interior and exterior latex and oil-based paints, stains, varnishes, and primers. The program is funded by a small environmental handling fee built into every gallon of paint sold in Canada, so the drop-off is free for residents. Check the PaintCare website (paintcare.ca) for the nearest drop-off location.

Many NB municipalities also run seasonal or permanent household hazardous waste collection events where paint is accepted. The City of Moncton, the City of Fredericton, and the City of Saint John each have HHW programs — check your municipal website for current collection dates and locations. These events also accept other painting-related hazardous materials like paint thinners, solvents, mineral spirits, and old oil-based caulking.

Latex paint handling tips before disposal:

If you have a small amount of leftover latex (water-based) paint — say, less than a quarter of a can — you can dry it out and put it in your regular garbage in most NB municipalities once it is completely solid. Stir in cat litter, sawdust, or commercial paint hardener to speed up the process. Liquid latex paint cannot go in the regular garbage. Dried paint in a can with the lid off is generally accepted in municipal solid waste once solid. Check your municipality's specific rules, as policies vary.

Oil-based paint, stains, and solvents must always go through an HHW drop-off or PaintCare, regardless of quantity or state. These products contain VOCs and flammable compounds that make them hazardous — never put them in the garbage or pour them on the ground.

Keeping leftover paint for touch-ups is genuinely useful — pour it into a smaller container to minimize air exposure, label it clearly with the room name and paint colour, and store it in a climate-controlled space (a cold garage in NB winter will ruin latex paint). A properly sealed container in a basement or interior closet can keep touch-up paint usable for 2-5 years.

For larger project cleanups, professional painters should be handling their own waste disposal as part of the service — if you are hiring someone, it is reasonable to ask how they dispose of leftover materials.

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- moose luxury painting
- FRS Flooring Solutions
- Thirty Four Renovations
- Loves Painting Ltd.

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Q17

What are the health risks of painting indoors without proper ventilation in a NB home?

Painting indoors without adequate ventilation exposes you to volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea, and respiratory irritation in the short term, and — with prolonged or repeated high-level exposure — more serious neurological and respiratory effects. Modern low-VOC latex paints are significantly safer than older oil-based products, but all paints release some compounds into the air during application and drying, and ventilation is not optional.

VOCs are chemicals that evaporate at room temperature and become airborne. Even water-based latex paints contain some VOCs during the wet and drying phases. Oil-based paints, alkyd enamels, solvent-based primers, shellac-based stain blockers (like Zinsser BIN), and paint thinners have substantially higher VOC concentrations. In a poorly ventilated room, VOC levels can quickly reach concentrations that cause symptoms — particularly in smaller spaces like bathrooms, closets, and bedrooms.

In NB homes, the ventilation challenge cuts both ways depending on the season. In summer, windows can be opened freely, but the high Maritime humidity means you want airflow without drawing in too much humid outside air. In winter — which is actually the ideal season for interior painting in NB because forced-air heating keeps homes dry — opening windows even slightly in -20°C weather creates a balance between ventilation need and heat loss. The practical approach in winter is cross-ventilation: open one window a few inches on one side of the room while a bathroom exhaust fan or box fan in another window draws air out. Thirty minutes of ventilation during application and a few hours afterward makes a significant difference.

Groups with higher vulnerability deserve particular mention. Children, particularly infants and toddlers, are more susceptible to VOC exposure than adults — developing nervous systems are more sensitive to chemical exposure. Pregnant women, the elderly, and anyone with asthma or chronic respiratory conditions should avoid freshly painted spaces until odour has fully cleared, which with low-VOC latex typically means 24-48 hours with good ventilation. With oil-based products, that clearing time can be several days.

The practical solutions are straightforward. **Choose low-VOC or zero-VOC latex paint** for all interior projects — the major brands all offer these now, and they perform as well as conventional formulations. Benjamin Moore Natura, Sherwin-Williams Harmony, and Dulux EasyCare are popular low-VOC options available across NB. These typically have VOC levels below 50 grams per litre, and zero-VOC versions below 5 g/L. The performance difference from conventional paint is minimal; the health difference is meaningful.

Practical ventilation steps: Open windows on opposite sides of the room to create cross-ventilation. Use a box fan to exhaust air to the outside. Take regular breaks in fresh air. Don't sleep in a freshly painted room until the odour has fully cleared. For solvent-based primers and stain blockers in enclosed spaces, a half-face respirator with organic vapour cartridges provides meaningful protection.

If anyone in your household has known respiratory sensitivities or you are painting in a very small or enclosed space, low-VOC products and a respirator are the right approach — not optional extras.

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- M And M Painting
- Worry No More Handyman Services
- Loves Painting Ltd.

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Q18

Do I need a permit to change the exterior colour of my home in a Moncton neighbourhood?

For most homes in Moncton, no permit is required to change your exterior paint colour — painting is a maintenance activity, not a structural change, and the City of Moncton does not generally require building permits for exterior repaints. However, there are two situations where restrictions can apply: homes within designated heritage areas, and properties governed by condo bylaws or homeowner associations.

Moncton's heritage preservation focus is less extensive than Saint John's or Fredericton's, but the city does have heritage-listed properties and areas where exterior changes may need consultation. The Mountain Road corridor and parts of the Westmount and older residential neighbourhoods have heritage-designated properties. If your home is on the Heritage Register or within a heritage conservation area, it's worth a quick call to the City of Moncton's Planning and Development office to confirm whether a proposed colour change requires approval. This is a 10-minute call that can save you a costly order to repaint.

For the vast majority of Moncton homes — including most of the suburban developments in Riverview, Dieppe, the North End, and newer neighbourhoods — no permit or approval is required to repaint your exterior in any colour you choose. You can go from beige to dark charcoal, from white to deep navy, without anyone's permission. Paint colour is considered a personal choice and maintenance activity under NB building code.

Condo and strata rules are the more common restriction in Moncton. If you own a condo unit, townhouse in a managed complex, or live in a neighbourhood with an active homeowner association (HOA), your governing documents (condo declaration, bylaws, or HOA rules) may specify approved exterior colour palettes or require board approval for any exterior colour changes. This is particularly common in newer Moncton-area developments. Check your condo documents or contact your condo corporation or property manager before committing to a colour — it's much easier to choose a compliant colour upfront than to repaint again after receiving an objection.

A practical note on Moncton's building stock: A significant number of Moncton homes were built between the 1950s and 1990s and have been painted many times over. If your exterior hasn't been repainted in 15-20 years, the bigger question isn't the permit — it's the condition of the existing paint and whether the surface needs proper preparation before any new colour goes on. Power washing, scraping loose areas, caulking gaps around trim, and priming bare spots are what determine whether your new exterior colour looks great in year one and year seven, or peels by year three.

For help finding a professional painter for your Moncton exterior repaint, New Brunswick Painting can match you with local contractors at no charge.

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- moose luxury painting
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What respiratory protection do I need when sanding and painting in an enclosed space in NB?

For sanding in an enclosed space, you need at minimum an **N95 disposable respirator** to protect against fine dust particles — for sanding in a home with **suspected lead paint (any NB home built before 1978)**, you need a **P100 half-mask respirator, full stop**. For painting with oil-based products or solvent-based primers in enclosed spaces, add an organic vapour cartridge to a half-face respirator. This is one area where the difference between the right protection and the wrong protection is genuinely serious.

Let's break it down by task. **Sanding with latex paint (post-1978 home)**: A high-quality disposable N95 respirator (like the 3M 8210 or equivalent) provides adequate protection against the fine particulate dust generated by sanding dried latex. A basic paper dust mask does not — it filters large particles but lets fine PM2.5 dust through. N95 respirators are available at hardware stores across NB for a few dollars each. For light sanding in a room with open windows, some ventilation, and brief exposure, an N95 is appropriate.

Sanding, scraping, or disturbing paint in a pre-1978 NB home is a fundamentally different situation. As discussed, homes of this vintage commonly contain lead paint, especially on trim, doors, and exterior surfaces. Lead dust is a neurotoxin with no safe exposure level for children. For any sanding or scraping of potentially lead-containing paint, the required protection is a **P100 half-face respirator** (the kind with replaceable cartridges, not a disposable mask). P100 cartridges filter at 99.97% efficiency, including the ultra-fine particles generated by sanding lead paint. Couple the respirator with goggles, disposable coveralls, and wet-sanding technique (which keeps dust particles wet and heavy rather than airborne). Better still, get a lead test done before sanding anything in an older NB home.

For painting with oil-based products, alkyd primers, shellac-based stain blockers, or solvent-containing products in a small or poorly ventilated space, the relevant hazard shifts from particles to chemical vapours (VOCs). Particulate respirators (N95 or P100) do not filter vapours. You need a **half-face respirator with organic vapour (OV) cartridges** — or combination OV/P100 cartridges if you are doing both sanding and solvent-based painting. 3M, MSA, and Honeywell all make comfortable half-face units with interchangeable cartridge systems available at industrial supply stores and larger hardware retailers in Moncton and Fredericton.

For low-VOC or zero-VOC latex paint in a room with open windows, a respirator is not strictly necessary for most people, though anyone with asthma, chemical sensitivities, or working in a very tight space (like a bathroom or closet) will benefit from one.

Practical summary for NB homeowners: Know how old your home is. If it's pre-1978 and you plan to sand anything, get a lead test kit first (0-15 at any hardware store). If lead is present, stop and contact a professional —

this is genuinely one situation where the risk of DIY is not worth it. For everything else, match your respirator to your task: N95 for dust, OV cartridge for vapours, P100 for lead.

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Q20

Are there any NB regulations about painting near schools or childcare centres due to VOC concerns?

There are no New Brunswick-specific regulations that uniquely govern paint VOC emissions near schools or childcare centres beyond general WorkSafeNB occupational health requirements for commercial painting contractors. However, practical guidelines, Health Canada recommendations, and institutional procurement policies create strong expectations around low-VOC products and appropriate scheduling for any painting work in or near facilities serving children.

The regulatory landscape in NB for this specific scenario falls under several overlapping authorities rather than a single clear rule. WorkSafeNB sets occupational exposure limits (OELs) for chemical compounds in the workplace, which apply to commercial painters working in occupied or semi-occupied buildings. Environment and Climate Change Canada sets national VOC limits for architectural coatings, which all paints sold in Canada must meet — this means paints used in schools must comply with these limits by default. Individual school districts and licensed childcare operators in NB typically have their own facility maintenance policies that may require low-VOC or zero-VOC products, off-hours scheduling, and mandatory airing-out periods before reoccupancy.

In practice, this means that painting contractors working in NB schools, daycare centres, or other childcare facilities will generally be required by the contracting institution to use low-VOC products (typically defined as less than 50

g/L for latex paints) and to schedule work during non-operating hours — evenings, weekends, or school breaks. Adequate ventilation between painting completion and reoccupancy is standard — typically 24-48 hours for low-VOC latex, longer for any oil-based products. Many school districts specify zero-VOC paints as a project requirement.

For homeowners, the school and childcare context is less about regulatory compliance and more about good practice. If you are painting a nursery, children's bedroom, or any space where children spend significant time, choosing zero-VOC latex paint is straightforward common sense. Products like Benjamin Moore Natura (zero-VOC), Sherwin-Williams Harmony (near-zero VOC), and Dulux EasyCare Zero meet the highest standard and are widely available in NB. The cost difference over conventional paint is minimal, and the peace of mind is worth it.

Timing matters too. Even zero-VOC paints release some compounds during the wet phase. Painting a nursery a week before a baby arrives, then leaving windows cracked for a few days, is the right approach. Painting the room and putting a newborn in it the same day is not ideal regardless of paint type.

If you are overseeing painting work at a licensed NB childcare facility or school and need guidance on contractor qualifications and product specifications, WorkSafeNB's occupational hygiene resources are a good starting point. For finding painting contractors experienced with institutional and childcare facility projects, browse the New Brunswick Construction Network at newbrunswickconstructionnetwork.com/directory?trade=painting.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by New Brunswick Painting. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any painting project. Information is current as of May 3, 2026 and may change. Visit newbrunswickpainting.com for the latest answers.