

NEW BRUNSWICK FLOORING

Refinishing & Restoration

Hardwood floor sanding, staining, polyurethane application, scratch repair, and floor restoration in NB homes

17 Expert Answers from Floor IQ

newbrunswickflooring.com/construction-brain

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What does a professional concrete floor polishing job cost for a Moncton garage or workshop space?

Professional concrete floor polishing in Moncton typically costs \$4-\$8 per square foot for a basic polish, or \$6-\$12 per square foot for decorative polishing with staining or aggregate exposure. For a standard two-car garage (400-500 sq ft), expect to pay \$1,600-\$4,000 depending on the concrete condition and desired finish level.

Basic Polishing Services include grinding to remove surface imperfections, progressive diamond polishing to achieve the desired sheen level, and densifier application to harden the surface. This creates a smooth, dust-free floor that's easy to clean and maintains well in workshop environments. Most Moncton contractors offer three sheen levels: matte (400-grit equivalent), satin (800-grit), and high-gloss (3000-grit). Higher gloss levels cost more due to additional polishing steps.

Decorative Options add significant cost but create stunning results. Acid staining (\$2-\$4/sq ft additional) produces rich, variegated colours that penetrate the concrete permanently. Dye staining (\$1-\$3/sq ft additional) offers more colour options with consistent coverage. Aggregate exposure polishing (\$3-\$6/sq ft additional) grinds deeper to reveal decorative stone within the concrete mix, creating a terrazzo-like appearance.

New Brunswick's freeze-thaw cycles make proper concrete assessment critical before polishing. Garages and workshops built before 1990 often have concrete that's suffered frost damage, creating spalling, cracking, or delamination that must be repaired before polishing can begin. Surface repairs add \$2-\$5 per square foot to the project cost. Additionally, Maritime humidity means your concrete slab may have higher moisture content than inland provinces — excessive moisture can interfere with densifier penetration and polishing compound adhesion.

Preparation work significantly affects total cost. Oil stains from vehicles require degreasing treatment (\$1-\$2/sq ft). Existing coatings or sealers must be completely removed through grinding, adding \$2-\$4/sq ft. Uneven concrete requires more aggressive initial grinding to achieve a flat surface suitable for polishing. Joint filling and crack repair are typically quoted separately at \$3-\$8 per linear foot.

Timing matters for Moncton garage projects. Schedule polishing during late summer through fall when concrete moisture content is lowest and workshop ventilation is easier. Spring polishing can be problematic due to elevated moisture from snowmelt raising the water table beneath your slab.

Professional polishing requires specialized equipment — planetary grinders, diamond tooling systems, dust collection, and densifier application equipment that cost \$50,000-\$100,000. This isn't a DIY project. However, the results last 15-20 years with minimal maintenance beyond occasional resealing every 3-5 years (\$1-\$2/sq ft).

Get quotes from contractors experienced with Maritime concrete conditions — coastal moisture and freeze-thaw cycles create challenges that inland contractors may not understand. Verify that your contractor carries WorkSafeNB coverage and general liability insurance, especially important given the dust and chemical exposure involved in concrete polishing.

Need help finding a concrete polishing professional in the Moncton area? The New Brunswick Construction Network can connect you with experienced contractors who understand Maritime concrete conditions and can provide accurate quotes for your specific garage or workshop space.

Q2

What is the best season to schedule hardwood floor refinishing in New Brunswick for fastest curing and lowest humidity?

Late August through October is the optimal window for hardwood floor refinishing in New Brunswick, when humidity levels stabilize between 40-50% and temperatures remain consistently warm enough for proper polyurethane curing without the extreme dryness of winter heating season.

Why Fall is Perfect for NB Refinishing

New Brunswick's Maritime climate creates a narrow sweet spot for hardwood refinishing success. During late summer and early fall, indoor humidity levels naturally settle into the ideal 40-55% range without aggressive heating or cooling. This stability is crucial because polyurethane finishes cure through chemical reaction with moisture in the air — too little humidity (winter's 20-30%) slows curing and can cause finish defects, while too much humidity (summer's 60%+) extends drying times and risks contamination from airborne particles sticking to tacky surfaces.

September and early October offer the most predictable conditions across all NB regions. Coastal areas like Saint John and Shediac still benefit from moderating ocean temperatures without summer's oppressive humidity, while inland communities like Fredericton and Edmundston enjoy stable conditions before heating systems kick in. The consistent 18-22°C temperatures during this period allow each polyurethane coat to cure within the manufacturer's specified 4-6 hour recoat window.

Seasonal Timing to Avoid

Winter refinishing (November-March) presents serious challenges in NB homes. Forced-air heating drops indoor humidity below 30%, which slows polyurethane curing and can cause the finish to develop a cloudy appearance or poor adhesion between coats. Even with humidifiers running, maintaining consistent conditions is difficult when outdoor temperatures swing from -20°C to +5°C throughout the heating season.

Late spring refinishing (April-June) coincides with NB's snowmelt season, when basement humidity spikes and ground moisture affects even upper-level floors in older homes. The unpredictable weather patterns — warm days followed by cool, damp nights — make it impossible to maintain the consistent environment that quality refinishing requires.

Summer refinishing (July-August) faces the opposite problem: excessive humidity that extends drying times and increases the risk of dust, insects, and debris contaminating the wet finish. Maritime humidity often pushes indoor levels above 65% even with air conditioning, and the frequent afternoon thunderstorms create pressure changes that can cause finish defects.

Practical Refinishing Timeline

Plan your refinishing project for a 7-10 day period in late August through early October when weather forecasts show stable conditions. The process requires 2-3 days for sanding and staining, followed by 3-4 days for applying and curing multiple polyurethane coats. Each coat needs 4-6 hours to dry before recoating, and the final coat requires 24-48 hours before light foot traffic and 7 days before moving furniture back.

Monitor indoor humidity with a digital hygrometer throughout the project — if levels drop below 35% or rise above 60%, delay the next coat until conditions stabilize. Professional refinishers in NB often use temporary humidifiers or dehumidifiers to maintain the 40-50% sweet spot, especially in older homes with poor moisture control.

When to Hire a Professional

Hardwood refinishing requires drum sanders, edgers, and buffer equipment that can cause irreversible damage in inexperienced hands. Professional refinishers understand how NB's climate affects each step of the process and carry the specialized tools needed to achieve showroom results. The investment in professional refinishing (\$3-\$6 per square foot) protects the much larger investment in your hardwood floors and ensures the finish will last 8-12 years in NB's challenging humidity cycles.

Need help finding a professional flooring refinisher? New Brunswick Flooring can match you with experienced local contractors who understand Maritime climate challenges.

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

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- First united design & construction inc.
- RenoMe

- Forever Epoxy Inc
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Q3

Can I refinish old fir or spruce softwood floors in a pre-1940 NB heritage home without sanding through the wood?

Yes, you can refinish old softwood floors in your heritage NB home, but it requires extreme care and likely professional expertise. Pre-1940 fir and spruce floors were often installed as structural subflooring that doubled as finish flooring, making them thinner than modern hardwood and much easier to sand through.

Understanding Your Heritage Floors

Most pre-1940 NB homes used local Eastern White Pine, Douglas Fir, or Red Spruce as structural floor boards, typically 1-inch thick (actual 3/4") and 3-6 inches wide. These softwood floors have likely been refinished 1-3 times over 80+ years, reducing their thickness to perhaps 5/8" or less in high-traffic areas. Unlike modern 3/4" oak flooring that can handle 3-5 refinishing cycles, your heritage softwoods may only tolerate one more careful refinishing before you sand into the tongue-and-groove joints or hit nail heads.

The biggest challenge is that softwood shows every imperfection. Drum sander gouges, cross-grain scratches, and uneven pressure marks that might be barely visible on oak will be glaringly obvious on soft fir or spruce. Maritime humidity cycles in NB have also likely caused some cupping, crowning, or splitting in these old floors over the decades.

Professional Assessment First

Before any refinishing work, have an experienced floor refinisher assess the remaining wood thickness using a small test area in a closet or under furniture. They'll check for previous refinishing layers, measure remaining thickness above the tongue, and identify any boards that are too thin or damaged to survive another sanding. Many heritage NB homes have floors that look terrible but clean up beautifully with careful work, while others that appear decent are actually too thin to refinish safely.

Screen and Recoat vs Full Refinishing

If your floors have a relatively intact finish with minor scratches and wear, consider **screen and recoat** instead of full refinishing. This process uses a buffer with 120-150 grit screen to lightly abrade the existing polyurethane, then

applies a fresh topcoat. Screen and recoat removes almost no wood (less than 1/64") while refreshing the appearance and protection. This gentler approach is often perfect for heritage softwoods that can't handle aggressive sanding.

For floors needing full refinishing, the process must start with very fine grits (100-120) instead of the coarse grits (36-60) used on hardwood. Multiple light passes with progressively finer grits minimize the risk of gouging while achieving smooth results.

When to Hire a Professional

Heritage softwood refinishing demands professional expertise. The margin for error is essentially zero - one aggressive pass with a drum sander can ruin 80+ year old floors permanently. Experienced refinishers understand how to work with thin, soft wood and have the specialized equipment (orbital sanders, edge sanders with variable speed) needed for delicate work. They'll also know whether your floors need wood filler for gaps, how to address cupped or crowned boards, and which finish products work best on softwood in NB's humidity cycles.

The investment in professional refinishing (\$4-\$7 per square foot) is worthwhile to preserve irreplaceable heritage character that adds significant value to your pre-1940 NB home.

Need help finding an experienced floor refinishing professional who understands heritage homes? New Brunswick Flooring can match you with contractors familiar with pre-1940 softwood floors through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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How much does it cost to refinish 1000 square feet of hardwood in New Brunswick?

Refinishing 1,000 square feet of hardwood flooring in New Brunswick typically costs \$3,000-\$6,000, with most NB homeowners paying in the \$3,500-\$5,000 range for a standard sand-and-refinish job with three coats of polyurethane. NB labour rates for hardwood refinishing run approximately 10-15% below the national Canadian average, which helps keep costs manageable for this transformative project.

The total cost breaks down into several components. **Sanding and preparation** — the most labour-intensive phase — accounts for the bulk of the cost. The crew will sand the entire floor in three progressively finer passes (coarse, medium, fine grit) to remove the old finish and create a smooth, level surface. **Stain application** is optional but adds \$0.50-\$1.50/sq ft if you want to change or deepen the floor's colour. **Finish coats** — typically three coats of polyurethane with light sanding between coats — complete the job.

Several factors push the price toward the higher end of the range. **Floor condition** matters significantly — floors with deep scratches, pet stains, water damage, or previous poor-quality refinishing jobs require more aggressive sanding and potentially board replacement, adding \$500-\$1,500 to a 1,000 sq ft job. **Staircase treads** add complexity and cost — expect \$20-\$40 per tread for sanding and finishing, as stairs require hand sanding and detailed work. **Furniture moving** adds \$50-\$200 per room if the crew handles it, though you'll save by moving furniture yourself before they arrive. **Old finish removal** can add cost if the existing finish is heavily built up or if the floor has been painted or coated with incompatible products.

The type of finish you choose affects both cost and performance. **Oil-based polyurethane** is the traditional choice — slightly less expensive, with a warm amber tone that deepens over time. **Water-based polyurethane** costs \$0.50-\$1.00/sq ft more but dries faster (reducing project timeline from 5-7 days to 3-4 days), has lower odour and VOC levels, and maintains the wood's natural colour without yellowing. Both options perform well in NB conditions when maintained properly.

NB climate considerations for refinishing timing are important. The best time to refinish hardwood in New Brunswick is late spring through early fall (May through September) when you can open windows for ventilation during the curing process. Humidity should ideally be between 35-55% during finishing — NB's summer humidity can push higher, so running a dehumidifier during the curing period helps ensure a smooth, even finish. Avoid refinishing during winter when opening windows isn't practical and the forced-air heating creates very dry conditions that can affect how the finish cures.

The project timeline for 1,000 sq ft is typically 3-5 days of active work plus 2-3 additional days of curing time before you can move furniture back and resume normal traffic. You'll need to vacate the area completely during

sanding and finishing — the dust and fumes make the space uninhabitable.

This is firmly a hire-a-professional project. Drum sanders are powerful and unforgiving — a moment's hesitation creates visible gouges and swirl marks that cannot be corrected without re-sanding. Professional refinishers in NB have the equipment, experience, and technique to deliver smooth, even results. Renting a sander and attempting 1,000 sq ft of DIY refinishing almost always leads to a result that looks obviously amateur. Get three quotes from local flooring professionals to compare pricing — NB refinishing costs vary 25-40% between contractors.

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- Arctic Fox Construction Inc.
- 3Tone Construction Ltd
- M&L Commercial and residential services
- Gionetterenovations

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Q5

How do I know if my NB hardwood floors can be refinished or need replacement?

Your NB hardwood floors can likely be refinished if the wood is still structurally sound and has enough thickness remaining above the tongue-and-groove joint to survive another sanding pass. Most solid hardwood floors can be refinished 3-5 times over their lifetime, and many older NB homes have original hardwood that's been refinished only once or twice — meaning there's plenty of life left.

The most reliable way to check is the **thickness test**. Solid hardwood flooring is typically 3/4 inch thick, with the wear surface above the tongue measuring roughly 1/4 inch (about 6mm). Each refinishing pass removes approximately 1-2mm of wood. If your floor has been refinished multiple times and the wood above the tongue is getting thin — less than 2mm — another sanding risks exposing the tongue or creating weak spots. You can check by removing a floor register or transition strip and examining the plank edge from the side. If you can see the tongue is close to the surface, replacement is the safer option.

Engineered hardwood has more limited refinishing potential. The veneer wear layer on engineered products ranges from 1mm (cannot be refinished) to 4-6mm (can be refinished 1-2 times). Check your product specifications if you have them. If you don't know the veneer thickness, a professional can assess it.

Signs your floor can be refinished include surface scratches and wear patterns that don't penetrate deeply into the wood, dulled or worn finish that makes the floor look tired but the wood beneath is solid, minor water stains that are in the finish rather than deep in the wood grain, and small gaps between planks from seasonal movement. All of these are cosmetic issues that sanding and refinishing will address beautifully. Refinishing 1,000 sq ft of hardwood in NB costs \$3,000-\$6,000 — significantly less than replacement.

Signs your floor needs partial or full replacement are more serious. **Structural damage** — boards that are soft, spongy, or crumbling when pressed — indicates rot, typically from prolonged moisture exposure. This is common in older NB homes near exterior walls where ice damming, plumbing leaks, or foundation moisture has reached the subfloor. **Severe cupping or crowning** that persists year-round (not just seasonal movement) indicates ongoing moisture problems that refinishing won't solve — you need to fix the moisture source first, then replace affected boards. **Deep pet stains** that have penetrated through the wood and into the subfloor leave dark, permanent discolouration that sanding cannot remove. **Widespread board damage** where more than 30-40% of the floor needs individual board replacement makes full replacement more cost-effective than patching.

NB-specific factors that affect this assessment include the age and condition of your home's subfloor. Many NB homes built before the 1970s have original board subfloors that may have their own moisture and structural issues. If your hardwood is being removed for any reason, it's the perfect opportunity to assess and upgrade the subfloor — adding a plywood overlay (\$1.50-\$3.00/sq ft) over old board subfloors creates a flat, stable base for new flooring.

Also consider NB's humidity cycles. If your hardwood has survived decades of Maritime humidity swings and is still structurally sound, it's proven wood — refinishing it preserves a floor that has already demonstrated its ability to perform in NB conditions. New hardwood still needs to prove itself through those same cycles.

Have a professional flooring contractor assess your floors before deciding. They can measure remaining wood thickness, identify structural concerns, and give you an honest recommendation on refinishing versus replacement. Most NB flooring professionals will provide this assessment as part of a free estimate.

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Q6

What is dustless hardwood floor sanding and is it available in NB?

Dustless hardwood floor sanding uses specialized sanding equipment connected to powerful vacuum and filtration systems that capture 95-99% of the wood dust at the point of contact, keeping your NB home dramatically cleaner during the refinishing process. Yes, dustless sanding is available in New Brunswick — several professional flooring refinishers across the province have invested in this equipment, particularly in the Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton markets.

Traditional hardwood sanding generates enormous amounts of fine wood dust that travels through your entire home, settles on every surface, infiltrates ductwork, and takes weeks to fully clean out of fabrics, electronics, and hidden crevices. Dustless systems — the most well-known brand is Bona DCS (Dust Containment System) — attach industrial HEPA-filtered vacuums directly to the drum sander, edger, and buffer. The dust is sucked into sealed containment bags as it's created, rather than billowing into the room. The result isn't truly 100% dust-free, but it reduces airborne dust by roughly 95% compared to conventional sanding.

The benefits are substantial for NB homeowners. You can typically remain in your home during the sanding phase, which isn't practical with conventional sanding. Cleanup time is dramatically reduced — hours instead of days. Your HVAC system doesn't get clogged with fine wood particles, which is particularly important for NB homeowners with forced-air heating systems that would otherwise circulate dust throughout the house for weeks. For families with asthma, allergies, or respiratory sensitivities, dustless sanding makes hardwood refinishing far more practical.

The cost premium for dustless sanding in NB is typically \$0.50-\$1.50/sq ft more than conventional sanding, depending on the contractor and equipment used. For a 1,000 sq ft refinishing job that might cost \$3,000-\$6,000 total, the dustless upgrade adds roughly \$500-\$1,500 to the project. Most homeowners who've experienced both methods consider the premium well worth the reduced mess and disruption.

What dustless sanding doesn't change: The refinishing process itself is identical — coarse, medium, and fine sanding passes followed by stain (optional) and polyurethane coats. The quality of the final result depends entirely

on the operator's skill, not the dust collection system. A skilled refinisher using conventional equipment will produce a better floor than an inexperienced operator with dustless technology. The drying and curing times for stain and polyurethane are also unchanged — you still need 3-5 days of active work plus 2-3 days of curing before moving furniture back.

NB-specific timing still matters for dustless projects. Even though dust is controlled, the finishing phase (stain and polyurethane application) still requires good ventilation and controlled humidity. Schedule refinishing for late spring through early fall when you can open windows during the curing process, and maintain indoor humidity between 35-55% for optimal finish performance. NB's summer humidity may require running a dehumidifier during the curing period.

When requesting quotes from NB flooring refinishers, ask specifically about dustless capability. Not every refinishing crew has invested in the equipment, and the quality of dust containment varies between systems. Ask what equipment they use, what percentage of dust containment they achieve, and whether the premium is per square foot or a flat upcharge. Getting 3 quotes lets you compare both pricing and equipment quality. Browse flooring contractors in the New Brunswick Construction Network directory to find refinishing professionals in your area.

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Should I choose oil-based or water-based polyurethane for my NB hardwood floors?

Both oil-based and water-based polyurethane perform well on NB hardwood floors, but they differ in appearance, durability, drying time, odour, and cost — and NB's Maritime climate adds some specific considerations that affect this choice. For most NB homeowners, water-based polyurethane has become the preferred option in recent years, though oil-based still has loyal advocates for good reasons.

Oil-based polyurethane has been the traditional choice for decades and remains popular in NB. It adds a warm amber tone to the wood that deepens to a rich golden hue over time — this is the classic hardwood floor look that many homeowners love, especially on red oak and maple species common in NB homes. Oil-based poly is slightly more abrasion-resistant than water-based products, making it a strong choice for high-traffic areas. It costs less per coat — approximately \$30-\$50 per gallon compared to \$40-\$70 for quality water-based products. The downsides are significant: oil-based poly has strong fumes that require ventilation and make the home uninhabitable during application and curing, it takes 8-12 hours between coats (versus 2-3 hours for water-based), and the full project takes 5-7 days versus 3-4 days for water-based. The amber yellowing, while attractive on warm-toned wood, can look undesirable on white-stained, grey-stained, or naturally pale floors.

Water-based polyurethane dries crystal clear and maintains the wood's natural colour without adding amber warmth. This makes it the correct choice if you want a natural, unaltered wood appearance or if you've applied a grey, white, or cool-toned stain that would be ruined by yellowing. Modern water-based formulas (look for products using aluminum oxide or ceramic micro-particle technology) have closed the durability gap with oil-based products significantly — top brands like Bona Traffic HD and StreetShoe NXT rival or exceed oil-based durability. Water-based poly has low odour and lower VOC levels, dries in 2-3 hours between coats, and allows you to return to the space much sooner. The faster dry time means your refinishing crew can apply all three coats in a shorter timeframe, reducing total project disruption.

NB climate considerations play into this decision. The biggest factor is humidity during application and curing. Oil-based polyurethane is more forgiving of higher humidity during application — it cures through oxidation rather than evaporation, so NB's summer humidity is less likely to cause problems. Water-based polyurethane cures through evaporation and is more sensitive to humidity levels above 65%. During NB's humid summer months (June-August), running a dehumidifier to keep indoor humidity between 35-55% during water-based application and curing is essential for a smooth, even finish.

Winter application presents the opposite challenge — NB's forced-air heating drops indoor humidity to 20-30%, which can cause water-based poly to dry too quickly and leave visible brush or roller marks. A humidifier helps

maintain optimal conditions during winter application.

The best time to apply either finish in NB is late spring or early fall when temperatures are moderate, humidity is in the middle range, and you can open windows for ventilation without introducing extreme humidity or cold.

Cost comparison for a typical NB refinishing project: Oil-based polyurethane saves approximately \$0.50-\$1.00/sq ft on materials but adds 1-2 extra days to the project timeline. If you're paying a professional crew (and you should — refinishing is firmly a pro job), the longer timeline may offset the material savings. For 1,000 sq ft, expect to pay \$3,000-\$5,000 with oil-based or \$3,500-\$6,000 with water-based polyurethane, depending on the specific products and crew.

The bottom line for NB homeowners: Choose water-based if you want a natural clear finish, faster project timeline, lower odour, and you're willing to control humidity during application. Choose oil-based if you love the warm amber glow on traditional wood species and want maximum abrasion resistance at a slightly lower cost.

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Q8

Can I change the colour of my existing hardwood floors through refinishing in NB?

Yes, refinishing is one of the most effective ways to completely change the colour of your existing hardwood floors, and it is one of the most popular renovation projects in New Brunswick homes. Whether you want to go from honey oak to a rich dark walnut, lighten up a dated reddish stain, or embrace the natural-look trend with a clear matte finish, sanding down to bare wood gives you a blank canvas to work with.

The process involves sanding off the existing finish and stain down to raw wood, then applying your chosen stain colour followed by protective topcoats. Most domestic hardwood species common in NB homes — red oak, white oak, maple, and birch — accept stain well, though each species has its own character. **Red oak** has a pronounced grain pattern that becomes dramatic with dark stains, while **maple and birch** have subtler, tighter grain that produces a more uniform appearance. White oak takes grey and cool-toned stains particularly well, which is why it has become the go-to species for the modern light-floor look.

One important consideration for NB homeowners is that **going dramatically darker will show dust, pet hair, and scratches more readily** — something worth thinking about in a province where winter boots, road salt, and sand get tracked across floors for six months of the year. Conversely, very light or natural finishes hide everyday wear better but may show water spots more easily in high-humidity months.

New Brunswick's Maritime humidity cycles directly affect the staining process. The ideal time to refinish and change colour is during the fall shoulder season — September through early November — when indoor humidity is moderate and stable, windows can be opened for ventilation, and the finish cures evenly. Refinishing during NB's humid summer months (June through August) can cause stain to dry unevenly or take longer to cure, while winter refinishing in dry heated air can cause the stain to set too quickly, producing blotchy results on species like maple and birch. If you must refinish in winter, maintain indoor humidity at 35-45% with a humidifier for consistent stain absorption.

For the best results when changing colour, keep these tips in mind. **Always sand a test area first** and apply your chosen stain to see how it looks on your specific wood — samples on display boards never match exactly. If you are going from dark to light, expect the sanding process to take longer, as old stain can penetrate deeply into the wood grain. **Water-based stains** dry faster and have lower odour, making them practical for occupied NB homes, while **oil-based stains** penetrate deeper and produce richer colour but require longer dry times and better ventilation. Budget approximately **\$3-\$6 per square foot** for professional refinishing with a colour change in New Brunswick, with a typical 800 square foot main floor running \$2,400-\$4,800.

Changing hardwood colour through refinishing is a job best left to professionals. Drum sanding is unforgiving — a moment's hesitation leaves visible gouges, and uneven sanding produces blotchy stain absorption that cannot be corrected without re-sanding. A professional crew will also manage dust containment, which is critical in an occupied NB home. If you are considering a colour change, get matched with a local refinishing professional through New Brunswick Flooring for free estimates and colour consultations.

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Q9

How long does hardwood floor refinishing take in a New Brunswick home?

A typical hardwood floor refinishing project in a New Brunswick home takes 3-5 days from start to finish, though the total timeline depends on the size of the area, the number of finish coats, whether you are changing the stain colour, and the specific conditions inside your home during the project.

Here is a realistic breakdown of how the days typically unfold. **Day one** involves furniture removal, floor preparation, and the initial rough sanding with a drum sander to strip off the old finish and stain. **Day two** covers the finer sanding passes (medium and fine grit) to smooth the wood surface, followed by edging and detail sanding along walls, corners, and around door frames. If you are applying a stain colour, it goes down on **day two or three** after all sanding dust has been vacuumed and tack-clothed. Each coat of polyurethane finish requires its own day — application in the morning, drying through the afternoon and overnight, then a light screen sanding before the next coat. **Most professionals apply 2-3 coats of polyurethane**, so the finish phase alone takes 2-3 days.

For a straightforward 800-1,000 square foot refinish with a natural clear coat (no stain colour change), expect **3 days of active work**. Adding a stain colour change adds roughly half a day to a full day. Larger homes with 1,500+ square feet of hardwood, or homes with complex layouts involving hallways, closets, and stairs, can stretch to **5-7 days**.

New Brunswick's climate has a direct impact on drying and curing times, which is why timing matters. Oil-based polyurethane needs 8-12 hours between coats under ideal conditions (65-75 degrees Fahrenheit, 40-50% relative humidity), but NB's humid summer months can push that to 16-24 hours per coat. In winter, forced-air heating drops indoor humidity to 20-30%, which can cause the finish to dry too quickly and produce bubbles or brush marks. **The ideal refinishing window in NB is September through November or April through May** — moderate temperatures, manageable humidity, and you can crack windows for ventilation without freezing the house.

Water-based polyurethane finishes dry significantly faster — typically 2-4 hours between coats — which can compress the entire project into **2-3 days**. They also produce far less odour, making them practical for NB homeowners who need to remain in the home during refinishing. The trade-off is that water-based finishes generally require one additional coat compared to oil-based for equivalent protection.

Plan to stay off the floors for 24 hours after the final coat, and avoid placing rugs or heavy furniture for a full week while the finish cures to full hardness. During this curing period, maintain your indoor humidity between 35-55% — running a humidifier in winter or a dehumidifier in summer helps the finish cure properly and protects your newly refinished floors from the start.

Professional refinishing in NB typically costs **\$3-\$6 per square foot**, and most crews can schedule within 2-4 weeks during the shoulder seasons. Get matched with a local flooring professional through New Brunswick Flooring to get accurate timelines and quotes for your specific project.

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Can I refinish my hardwood floors myself or should I hire a professional in NB?

Hardwood floor refinishing is one of the most commonly attempted DIY projects that homeowners end up regretting, and in New Brunswick's challenging humidity environment, the stakes are even higher. While it is technically possible to rent a drum sander and refinish your own floors, the skill gap between a passable result and a professional-quality finish is enormous — and mistakes are expensive to correct.

The core challenge is the **drum sander**. This is a powerful, heavy machine that removes wood aggressively. A moment's hesitation while the drum is spinning creates a visible gouge. Tilting the machine slightly at the start or end of a pass leaves dig marks. Moving too slowly burns through the wood unevenly, and moving too fast leaves old finish behind. Even experienced DIYers with strong tool skills find drum sanding intimidating, because the consequences of a mistake — visible swirl marks, uneven sanding depth, gouges in the wood — cannot be fixed without re-sanding the entire floor down further, removing precious wood thickness from boards that may have already been refinished once or twice in an older NB home.

Edge sanding is equally demanding. The rotating disc edger used along walls and in corners requires constant, steady pressure and movement. If you stop moving for even a second, you get a circular swirl mark that shows through every coat of stain and finish. In older NB homes with irregular walls, built-in cabinetry, and tight hallways, edge sanding accounts for a significant portion of the work and the difficulty.

Beyond the sanding, **NB's Maritime humidity makes the finishing process tricky for DIYers**. Stain absorption and finish drying times vary dramatically with indoor humidity levels. Applying polyurethane when humidity is too high (common in NB summers) can cause the finish to remain tacky, develop a milky haze, or take days to dry. Applying it when humidity is too low (NB winters with forced-air heating) can cause the finish to dry too fast, trapping bubbles and producing an orange-peel texture. Professionals know how to read conditions and adjust their technique and products accordingly.

The cost argument for DIY is less compelling than it appears. Renting a drum sander, edger, and buffer in NB runs approximately \$150-\$250 per day, and you will likely need the equipment for 2-3 days. Add sandpaper (\$50-\$100 in various grits), stain (\$40-\$80), polyurethane (\$100-\$200 for multiple coats), applicators, tack cloths, and other supplies, and a DIY refinish of an 800 square foot floor costs \$500-\$800 in materials and rentals alone. Professional refinishing for the same area runs **\$2,400-\$4,800** in NB (\$3-\$6 per square foot), so the savings are real — but if you make a mistake that requires a professional to come in and fix, the repair often costs more than having it done professionally from the start.

There are a few refinishing tasks that are reasonable for DIY. Applying a maintenance coat of finish to floors that are dull but not damaged (a screen-and-recoat) is far more forgiving than a full sand-and-refinish. Touching up

small scratches with colour-matched wood filler and polyurethane is straightforward. And cleaning and buffing floors with a rented buffer is low-risk.

For a full sand, stain, and refinish, **hire a professional**. The quality difference is visible for the 10-15 years that finish lasts, and in NB's demanding humidity environment, proper technique during application makes the difference between a finish that performs beautifully and one that peels, bubbles, or hazes within the first year.

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Q11

What stain colours are most popular for hardwood floors in NB homes in 2026?

The biggest trend in NB hardwood floors in 2026 is a move toward lighter, more natural tones — a significant shift from the dark espresso and ebony stains that dominated the 2010s. Homeowners across Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John are choosing finishes that let the wood's natural grain and character show through, creating brighter, more open-feeling rooms that complement both modern and traditional Maritime home styles.

Natural and clear finishes are the top choice for 2026, especially on white oak. A matte or satin clear coat with no stain lets the wood speak for itself — warm honey tones on red oak, pale golden hues on white oak, and creamy light tones on maple. This look pairs beautifully with the white trim and neutral wall colours popular in NB homes and makes rooms feel larger and more airy, which is particularly appealing during the province's long, dark winters.

Cool grey and greige tones remain strong, especially in newer construction and condo projects. These are typically achieved with a grey-tinted stain or a reactive finish on white oak. The cool palette works well in coastal NB communities like Saint John and Shediac, where it complements the grey Maritime light that comes through

windows much of the year. Grey-toned floors also have the practical advantage of hiding dust and minor scratches better than very dark or very light finishes.

Warm mid-tones — think classic golden oak, provincial, and special walnut — are making a comeback after years of being considered dated. NB homeowners who refinished their floors dark in the 2010s are now sanding them back and going with warmer, medium-toned stains that feel both classic and current. These mid-range colours are also the most forgiving for NB's active households, hiding everyday wear without showing every speck of dust the way dark floors do.

Weathered and whitewashed looks have a niche following, particularly in cottage country and waterfront NB properties. These finishes use a diluted white or grey wash over the wood grain to create a sun-bleached, coastal appearance. They suit casual living spaces but require more maintenance and recoating over time.

A few practical considerations for NB homeowners choosing stain colours. **Dark stains show every scratch, dent, dust bunny, and pet hair**, which is a real challenge in a province where road salt and sand get tracked in for six months. **Very light or natural finishes** are more forgiving day-to-day but can show water spots and spills more readily — worth considering given NB's spring mud season and snowy boot traffic. **Test your stain on your actual floor** before committing — a small test patch in a closet or under furniture shows you exactly how the colour will look on your specific wood species, age, and grain pattern. Display samples in a showroom never match precisely.

For the finish itself, **matte and satin sheens dominate in 2026** — the high-gloss look has fallen out of favour across the province. Matte finishes hide imperfections better and give floors a more natural, organic appearance that suits NB's relaxed coastal aesthetic.

Professional refinishing with a colour change runs **\$3-\$6 per square foot** in New Brunswick. A flooring professional can bring stain samples to your home and apply test patches so you can see exactly how each colour looks in your lighting before committing to the full project.

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How long do I need to stay off hardwood floors after refinishing in NB?

You should stay off your hardwood floors in socks for at least 24 hours after the final coat of polyurethane, and avoid normal foot traffic for 48-72 hours. Full curing — when the finish reaches maximum hardness and durability — takes significantly longer, and New Brunswick's humidity conditions play a direct role in how quickly that happens.

The critical distinction is between **dry time** and **cure time**. Dry time is when the surface is no longer tacky to the touch — typically 4-8 hours for oil-based polyurethane and 2-4 hours for water-based polyurethane under ideal conditions. But the finish is still soft and vulnerable at this stage. **Cure time** is when the finish has chemically hardened to its full strength, and this takes much longer: **7-10 days for water-based polyurethane and 14-30 days for oil-based polyurethane**. During this curing window, your floors need special care.

Here is a practical timeline for NB homeowners. **24 hours after the final coat:** you can walk on the floors in clean socks only — no shoes, no bare feet (skin oils can mark uncured finish), and no pets. **48-72 hours:** light foot traffic in socks or soft-soled indoor shoes is fine. **5-7 days:** you can move lightweight furniture back, but place felt pads on all legs first. **14 days (water-based) or 30 days (oil-based):** you can place area rugs back down — putting rugs on uncured finish traps solvents and can leave permanent marks or discolouration. Heavy furniture and appliances should wait the full cure period.

New Brunswick's Maritime climate directly affects these timelines. During the humid summer months (June through August), when indoor humidity can climb above 60% without air conditioning, both oil-based and water-based finishes cure more slowly. Your 24-hour dry time might stretch to 36-48 hours, and full cure time extends proportionally. Running a dehumidifier or air conditioner to keep indoor humidity between 40-50% speeds the process significantly. Conversely, during NB's dry winter heating season when indoor humidity drops to 20-30%, finishes can dry too quickly on the surface while remaining soft underneath — a condition called **surface skinning** that leads to wrinkling and peeling. Maintaining 35-45% humidity with a humidifier during winter refinishing helps the finish cure properly from bottom to top.

Temperature also matters. Polyurethane needs a minimum room temperature of 10-15 degrees Celsius to cure properly, and ideal conditions are 18-25 degrees Celsius. In NB homes where heat is turned down in unused rooms or where refinishing happens in shoulder-season conditions, keeping the space consistently warm speeds curing and produces a harder final finish.

During the curing period, **do not wash the floors with water or cleaning products** — dry dust mopping only for the first two weeks. Avoid dragging anything across the surface, and keep pet nails trimmed. Place walk-off mats at exterior doors once the finish is dry to the touch, because NB's grit, sand, and salt will scratch uncured finish far

more easily than a fully hardened surface.

Planning around these timelines is important — if you have a household with kids and pets, discuss the schedule with your refinishing professional so you can arrange to stay out of the space during the critical first 48-72 hours.

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Can engineered hardwood floors be sanded and refinished in NB?

Most engineered hardwood floors can be sanded and refinished, but the number of times depends entirely on the thickness of the top veneer layer — and this is a critical detail that NB homeowners need to verify before committing to a refinish. Unlike solid hardwood, which is the same species of wood all the way through and can typically be sanded 4-6 times over its lifetime, engineered hardwood has a thin layer of real wood on top of a plywood or HDF core, and that top layer determines everything.

Engineered hardwood with a veneer layer of 3mm or thicker can generally be sanded and refinished once or twice. Each full sand-and-refinish removes approximately 1-1.5mm of wood, so a 4mm veneer gives you room for 1-2 refinishes with a comfortable margin. Many mid-range to premium engineered products sold in NB — from brands like Lauzon, Mercier, and Mirage, all of which are Canadian-made — have veneer layers in the 3-4mm range and are designed to be refinished. **Budget engineered hardwood with a veneer layer under 2mm cannot be safely sanded** — there is simply not enough wood to remove without cutting through to the plywood core, which ruins the floor.

To determine your veneer thickness, check the product specifications from the manufacturer, look at the product label if you saved it, or carefully examine a floor register opening or transition edge where you can see the cross-section of the plank. If you cannot determine the veneer thickness, a professional flooring refinisher can assess it before committing to the project.

The refinishing process for engineered hardwood in NB requires a lighter touch than solid hardwood.

Instead of an aggressive drum sander, professionals use a **buffer with a sanding screen** or a lighter orbital sander that removes less material per pass. This screen-and-recoat approach removes the existing finish without cutting deeply into the veneer. For engineered floors that need a full sand-down to bare wood for a colour change, the process is more delicate and should only be attempted by a professional experienced with engineered products.

New Brunswick's humidity cycles are actually one of the reasons **engineered hardwood is so popular in the province** — its layered construction resists the expansion and contraction that plagues solid hardwood during NB's 30-50% annual humidity swings. When it comes time to refinish, that same dimensional stability works in your favour: engineered floors are less likely to have developed the seasonal gapping and movement issues that complicate solid hardwood refinishing in Maritime homes.

A few important tips for NB homeowners considering engineered hardwood refinishing. **Never use a drum sander on engineered hardwood** — its aggressive cutting action can chew through a thin veneer in seconds. A **screen-and-recoat** (also called a buff-and-coat) is a lighter, less expensive alternative that removes surface scratches and applies a fresh topcoat without sanding down to bare wood — this runs **\$2-\$3 per square foot** in NB and is ideal

for floors that are worn but not deeply damaged. A full sand-and-refinish on engineered hardwood with adequate veneer thickness runs the same **\$3-\$6 per square foot** as solid hardwood.

This is strictly a professional job. The margin for error on engineered hardwood is razor-thin — literally. Sanding through the veneer in even one spot means that plank must be replaced, and matching replacement planks for discontinued products can be difficult and expensive. Hire a refinishing professional who has specific experience with engineered hardwood.

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Q14

What is the best finish for high-traffic hardwood floors in a busy NB home?

For high-traffic hardwood floors in a busy New Brunswick home, oil-modified polyurethane in a satin sheen is the most durable and proven choice, offering the best combination of scratch resistance, moisture protection, and repairability for the demanding conditions of a Maritime household. That said, water-based polyurethane finishes have improved dramatically and now offer a compelling alternative with faster dry times and lower odour.

Oil-modified polyurethane has been the standard for high-traffic hardwood floors in NB for decades, and for good reason. It builds a thick, amber-toned protective film that resists scratches, scuffs, and moisture penetration better than most alternatives. It is particularly well-suited to NB homes because its flexibility allows it to move with the wood as it expands and contracts through the province's dramatic seasonal humidity swings. The trade-offs are longer dry times (8-12 hours between coats, with full cure taking 14-30 days), strong fumes during application requiring good ventilation, and a warm amber tone that deepens over time — which enhances the look of red oak and traditional wood tones but can yellow lighter species like maple.

Water-based polyurethane is the fastest-growing choice in NB, especially among homeowners who want a clear, non-yellowing finish that preserves the natural colour of their wood. Modern water-based finishes like **Bona Traffic HD** and **StreetShoe NXT** are commercial-grade products that rival oil-based durability for residential use. They dry in 2-4 hours between coats (allowing a full refinish in 2-3 days versus 4-5 for oil-based), produce minimal odour, and maintain the wood's natural colour without ambering. For busy NB households that cannot vacate the home for days during refinishing, water-based finishes are often the practical choice. They also cure faster, reaching functional hardness in 7-10 days versus 14-30 for oil-based.

Hardwax oil finishes (Rubio Monocoat, Osmo) have gained popularity in NB for their natural matte appearance and spot-repairability. Unlike polyurethane, which forms a film on top of the wood, hardwax oils penetrate into the wood fibres and can be spot-repaired without refinishing the entire floor — you simply clean the damaged area, lightly sand, and reapply oil. This is a significant advantage for high-traffic NB homes where winter boots, road salt, and sand take a toll on specific areas like entryways and hallways. The trade-off is that hardwax oil finishes require more frequent maintenance (reapplication every 1-3 years in high-traffic zones) and do not provide the same level of moisture barrier as polyurethane — an important consideration in NB's humid Maritime climate.

For sheen level, satin (40-50% gloss) is the practical choice for busy NB homes. High-gloss finishes show every scratch, scuff, and dust particle — impractical in a province where grit and sand get tracked in for half the year. Matte finishes hide wear beautifully but can show water marks and spills more readily. Satin strikes the ideal balance, providing enough sheen to look polished while concealing everyday wear.

Regardless of finish type, **applying 3 coats rather than the minimum 2 adds significant longevity** in high-traffic NB homes — the additional coat costs relatively little but adds years of protection. Budget approximately **\$3-\$6 per square foot** for professional refinishing in New Brunswick, with premium commercial-grade finishes at the higher end of that range.

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How do I fix water-damaged hardwood floors in my New Brunswick home?

The approach to fixing water-damaged hardwood floors depends entirely on the severity and duration of the water exposure — and in New Brunswick, where spring snowmelt flooding, burst pipes during winter freezes, and chronic Maritime humidity are all common causes, you need to assess the damage carefully before deciding between repair, refinishing, or replacement.

Assessing the Damage

Minor water damage — a spill that sat for a few hours, condensation staining, or a small appliance leak — typically causes surface discolouration (white or dark marks in the finish) without affecting the structural integrity of the wood. **Moderate damage** — water that sat for 24-72 hours from a slow leak, a backed-up drain, or minor flooding — often causes cupping (board edges higher than centres), localised swelling, and finish failure. **Severe damage** — prolonged flooding, burst pipes during NB winter freezes that went undiscovered, or chronic moisture from basement seepage — can cause warping, buckling, black mould staining deep in the wood, and structural degradation of both the hardwood and the subfloor beneath it.

For **surface-level water marks** (white rings or haze in the finish), the fix is often straightforward. White marks indicate moisture trapped in the finish layer, not the wood itself. Gently rubbing the area with fine steel wool (0000 grade) and a small amount of mineral spirits often removes white marks. If the marks are in the finish only, a screen-and-recoat of the affected area (or the full room for a uniform appearance) at **\$2-\$3 per square foot** resolves the issue.

Dark stains — grey or black discolouration — indicate water has penetrated through the finish into the wood fibres. These require sanding down past the stain depth. If the staining is localised to a few boards, a professional can sand and refinish the affected area, though achieving an exact colour and finish match with the surrounding floor is challenging. For widespread dark staining, a full sand-and-refinish of the room at **\$3-\$6 per square foot** is typically necessary.

Cupped boards from moderate water exposure may recover on their own once the moisture source is eliminated and the wood dries back to equilibrium — but this process takes weeks to months in NB's humid climate and requires patience. **Do not sand cupped floors flat until they have fully dried and stabilized**, which can take 2-3 months depending on the season. Sanding cupped floors prematurely creates a condition called **crowning** when the boards eventually dry and the centres rise above the now-sanded edges, requiring yet another refinish.

For **severe water damage** — buckled boards, mould growth, or boards that feel soft and spongy — the affected boards and potentially the subfloor underneath must be replaced. This is common after NB spring flooding events

or winter pipe bursts. Replacement involves removing the damaged boards, inspecting and repairing the subfloor, allowing everything to dry completely (using fans, dehumidifiers, and moisture metres to verify), then weaving in new boards that match the species, width, and thickness of the existing floor. The entire floor is then sanded and refinished for a uniform appearance. For a typical affected area of 100-200 square feet, expect **\$1,500-\$4,000** including board replacement and refinishing in NB.

The most important step with any water damage is eliminating the moisture source immediately and beginning the drying process. Run fans, dehumidifiers, and — if the damage is significant — call a water damage restoration company before addressing the flooring. In NB's humid Maritime environment, wood dries more slowly than in drier provinces, making prompt action even more critical to prevent mould growth.

Water damage repair beyond minor surface marks should be handled by a professional. Board replacement, subfloor assessment, and refinishing require experience to execute properly, and improper drying can lead to mould issues hidden beneath the floor.

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Is it better to refinish or replace old hardwood floors in a heritage NB home?

In almost every case, refinishing is the better choice for heritage hardwood floors in New Brunswick — both for preserving the character and value of an older home and for getting the most out of wood that is often higher quality than anything available new today. Many heritage NB homes built between 1850 and 1950 have old-growth hardwood floors with tight grain, exceptional hardness, and a patina that simply cannot be replicated with modern lumber.

New Brunswick has a rich stock of heritage homes — Victorian-era residences in Fredericton's downtown, Georgian and Loyalist homes in Saint John, and farmsteads throughout the river valleys and rural communities that have original hardwood floors over a century old. These floors were typically milled from old-growth Maritime timber — primarily **birch, maple, and occasionally fir or spruce for softwood floors** — with grain density and structural integrity that modern plantation-grown lumber does not match. Refinishing preserves this irreplaceable material and maintains the historical authenticity that adds value to heritage properties.

Refinishing makes financial sense in most scenarios. A full sand-and-refinish in NB runs **\$3-\$6 per square foot**, while replacing hardwood floors costs **\$8-\$14 per square foot** fully installed — and the replacement product will almost certainly be inferior in wood quality to what you are removing. For a typical 1,000 square foot heritage home main floor, refinishing saves \$5,000-\$10,000 compared to replacement while producing a floor that looks brand new.

There are situations where **replacement of specific boards** becomes necessary alongside refinishing. Heritage NB floors commonly have damage from decades of Maritime humidity cycles, old radiator leaks, plumbing failures, and in some cases structural settling. **Isolated damaged boards** — warped, split, rotted, or termite-damaged sections — can be carefully removed and replaced with species-matched reclaimed or new wood, then the entire floor is sanded and refinished together. A skilled refinishing professional can weave replacement boards into an existing heritage floor so seamlessly that the repairs are invisible.

Full replacement is warranted only when the floor has been sanded too many times and the boards are now too thin to sand again (under 5/16 inch remaining thickness), when structural damage to the subfloor has caused widespread movement and instability in the hardwood above, when the floor has been so severely water-damaged that mould has penetrated through the boards, or when a previous renovation covered the original floor with layers of adhesive, vinyl, or carpet padding that damaged the wood beyond practical restoration.

Heritage homes in NB present some specific refinishing considerations. **Wide plank floors** (common in pre-1900 homes) will show more prominent seasonal gapping than narrow-plank floors because wider boards move more during NB's humidity swings — this is normal and historically authentic, not a defect. **Square-cut nails** visible in the

floor surface are part of the home's character and should be set (tapped below the surface) before sanding rather than pulled. **Softwood floors** (fir, spruce, pine) found in some heritage NB homes dent and wear more easily than hardwood but can still be beautifully refinished — they just need a more durable finish and more frequent recoating.

Before refinishing a heritage NB floor, check whether any existing floor finishes or adhesives predate 1986 — old varnishes may contain lead, and old vinyl adhesives may contain asbestos. **Testing costs \$25-\$50 per sample** and is essential for safe refinishing in older homes.

Hire a refinishing professional experienced with heritage floors. Older wood responds differently to sanding and finishing than modern products, and an experienced professional knows how to handle the irregularities, nail patterns, and wood characteristics specific to heritage Maritime homes.

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Q17

How many coats of polyurethane should be applied to hardwood floors in NB?

Three coats of polyurethane is the standard recommendation for hardwood floors in New Brunswick, providing the best balance of protection, durability, and appearance for the province's demanding humidity conditions. While two coats is the manufacturer's minimum for most products, and some contractors offer two-coat applications to save time and cost, that third coat makes a meaningful difference in how long your finish lasts — especially in NB homes where moisture, temperature swings, road salt, and sand stress floor finishes harder than in most Canadian provinces.

Each coat of polyurethane serves a distinct purpose. The **first coat** (sometimes called the seal coat) penetrates into the wood grain and bonds to the bare wood surface, sealing the pores and providing the foundation for the

finish system. The **second coat** builds the protective film thickness and fills any micro-imperfections left by sanding. The **third coat** adds the final layer of wear resistance — and this is the coat that takes all the daily abuse from foot traffic, furniture, pets, and cleaning. In practical terms, a three-coat finish lasts **8-12 years** in high-traffic NB homes before needing a maintenance recoat, while a two-coat finish may need attention in **5-7 years**.

In certain high-wear areas of NB homes, four coats may be warranted. Entryways and mudrooms — where winter boots carry in road salt, sand, and moisture for six months — take extraordinary punishment. Kitchen floors near sinks and dishwashers face chronic moisture exposure. Hallways connecting rooms see concentrated foot traffic patterns. Adding a fourth coat in these specific zones (while applying three coats to the rest of the home) is a targeted investment that extends the life of the finish where it matters most.

The type of polyurethane affects how many coats you need. **Oil-based polyurethane** builds a thicker film per coat, so three coats of oil-based provides substantial protection. Each coat needs 8-12 hours of dry time in NB conditions, with a light screen sanding between coats for adhesion. **Water-based polyurethane** applies thinner per coat, which is why some manufacturers and professionals recommend 3-4 coats of water-based to equal the film thickness of 2-3 coats of oil-based. Water-based coats dry in 2-4 hours, so even with an extra coat, the total project timeline is shorter.

New Brunswick's Maritime humidity directly affects coating application. Between coats, the surface should be lightly screened (buffed with a fine sanding screen) to create tooth for the next coat to grip. During NB's humid summer months, polyurethane may take longer to dry between coats — rushing the next coat before the previous one has fully dried causes adhesion failure, peeling, and cloudiness. During NB's dry winter heating season, the opposite problem occurs: finish dries too quickly on the surface, potentially trapping solvents underneath. Maintaining indoor humidity between **35-50%** during the finishing process — using humidifiers in winter, dehumidifiers in summer — ensures proper drying and adhesion between coats.

Between each coat, a proper **screen sanding with a 120-150 grit screen** removes any dust nibs, bubbles, or imperfections and creates a micro-rough surface for the next coat to bond to. Skipping this step between coats is the most common cause of polyurethane peeling and delamination.

Professional refinishing in NB at **\$3-\$6 per square foot** typically includes three coats. If a contractor quotes you for only two coats, ask about the cost to add a third — it is usually a modest upcharge of **\$0.50-\$1.00 per square foot** that significantly extends the life of your finish.

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