

NEW BRUNSWICK INSULATION

Batt & Roll Insulation

Fibreglass batts, mineral wool batts, and roll insulation for walls, attics, basements, and floors

15 Expert Answers from Insulation IQ

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Does the extreme cold in northern New Brunswick around Edmundston require a higher-density batt insulation than what is used in Moncton?

No, the extreme cold in northern New Brunswick does not require higher-density batt insulation than what's used in Moncton — but it does require higher R-values, which means thicker insulation assemblies rather than denser batts.

The density of batt insulation (measured in pounds per cubic foot) is determined by the manufacturing process and material type, not the climate zone. A standard R-20 fibreglass batt has the same density whether it's installed in Edmundston or Moncton — roughly 0.5 to 1.0 pounds per cubic foot for fibreglass, or 2.5 to 4.0 pounds per cubic foot for mineral wool batts. **Higher density does not automatically mean better insulation performance** — in fact, over-compressed batts lose R-value because the air pockets that provide thermal resistance get squeezed out.

What northern NB does require is higher total R-values. Edmundston accumulates roughly 5,200+ heating degree days annually compared to Moncton's 4,800 HDD — a 10% increase that translates to meaningfully higher heating costs and more severe thermal stress on the building envelope. While both communities must meet the same NB Building Code minimums (R-50 attic, R-22+ walls, R-17+ basement), **northern NB homeowners benefit from exceeding these minimums more than their southern counterparts.**

For Edmundston and the Saint John River valley, consider **R-60 to R-70 in attics** instead of the code minimum R-50, and **effective wall R-values of R-28 to R-32** through continuous exterior insulation rather than just cavity-fill batts. The longer, colder heating season means these upgrades pay for themselves faster in northern NB — typically within 7-10 years compared to 10-15 years in milder coastal areas.

The key difference is assembly design, not batt density. Northern NB homes benefit from thicker wall assemblies (2x6 construction with continuous exterior insulation), deeper attic insulation, and more attention to thermal bridging through framing members. A 2x6 wall with R-22 batts plus R-5 continuous rigid foam outperforms a 2x4 wall with high-density R-15 batts, even though the total amount of batt insulation is similar.

Mineral wool batts (Rockwool/Roxul) are worth considering throughout NB — not because of density requirements, but because they maintain their R-value better in extreme temperature swings, provide superior fire resistance, and are hydrophobic (won't absorb moisture if the vapour barrier fails). At R-4.2 per inch compared to fibreglass at R-3.1 to R-3.8 per inch, mineral wool delivers higher R-values in the same wall thickness — valuable when trying to maximize performance in standard 2x6 framing.

For northern NB specifically, focus on comprehensive air sealing over batt density. The temperature differential between indoor and outdoor air reaches 40-50 degrees Celsius on the coldest nights, creating massive pressure differentials that drive air leakage. A home with R-30 walls and excellent air sealing (2.0 ACH50 or better) will outperform a home with R-40 walls and poor air sealing (8+ ACH50) every time.

When hiring professionals in northern NB, prioritize contractors experienced with extreme cold climate construction — proper vapour barrier installation, comprehensive air sealing, and understanding of how building assemblies perform at -30°C. The stakes are higher when design or installation errors must survive six months of sustained sub-zero temperatures.

Need help finding insulation contractors experienced with northern NB's climate challenges? Browse professionals in the New Brunswick Construction Network directory who understand the specific requirements of extreme cold climate insulation.

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Q2

What type of fibreglass batt insulation is best for New Brunswick winters? | Insulation IQ?

New Brunswick winters are unambiguous in their demands. Fredericton regularly reaches -25°C, Saint John contends with wind chill off the Bay of Fundy, and even the comparatively milder Moncton and the Acadian coast still clock weeks of sustained sub-zero temperatures each year. As a climate zone 6 province, New Brunswick sets building code insulation requirements that are among the more stringent in Atlantic Canada. Choosing the right fibreglass batt product means understanding the differences between available types and matching them to the assembly being insulated.

The two main fibreglass batt categories

Standard kraft-faced fibreglass batts are the traditional choice and are widely available at building supply stores across New Brunswick. The kraft paper facing acts as a partial vapour retarder and is installed facing the warm (interior) side of the wall or floor assembly. For above-grade exterior walls insulated with 2x6 framing — the standard in any NB home built to modern code — standard batts provide approximately **R-19 to R-22** depending on product and manufacturer. This is adequate for wall assemblies when combined with exterior continuous insulation, but falls short on its own for attic applications that require R-50 under current NB Building Code (NBC 2015 as adopted provincially).

High-density fibreglass batts (sometimes marketed as "high-performance" or "HD" batts) are compressed tighter during manufacturing, delivering more R-value per inch than standard batts. A high-density R-15 batt fits into a 2x4 cavity (3.5 inches) rather than the standard R-12, and high-density **R-22 batts** fit snugly into a 2x6 stud cavity (5.5 inches). In New Brunswick wall assemblies, the extra R-value within the same framing dimension is worthwhile, particularly given the long 6,200 to 7,000 heating degree days typical of Fredericton and the Saint John River valley.

What "best" means in the NB climate context

For exterior walls in a climate zone 6 province like New Brunswick, the most important fibreglass batt characteristic is not brand — it is **complete cavity fill without voids or compressions**. A standard R-19 batt installed without gaps, not compressed around wires, and with corners fully tucked into electrical box edges outperforms an R-22 high-density batt with a 1-inch air gap at the top. Heat loss through convective air movement within a void is dramatically faster than conduction through intact insulation.

For **above-grade walls**, the current NB Building Code requires a minimum effective thermal resistance of RSI 3.85 (approximately R-22) in the wall assembly — a value that 2x6 framing with R-22 high-density batts just achieves when accounting for thermal bridging through the studs. Adding **exterior rigid foam continuous insulation** (25 mm/1-inch XPS at R-5, or 38 mm/1.5-inch at R-7.5) to the sheathing layer breaks the thermal bridge and pushes effective wall performance well above code minimum. This combination — R-22 HD batts in a 2x6 wall plus exterior continuous insulation — is the assembly most commonly specified in new Fredericton and Moncton construction today.

For attics, fibreglass batts alone are rarely the right choice for meeting the R-50 target. The depth required (approximately 16 to 20 inches for standard batts) makes cross-layered batts at 90 degrees to each other possible in an open attic, but most contractors prefer blown-in cellulose or fibreglass for attic top-ups given the easier installation and better coverage of irregular joist bays. If batts are being used in an attic — for instance, between floor trusses in an unfinished floor system — high-density R-22 batts in 2x6 truss chords paired with a second

perpendicular layer of R-28 batts approaches the R-50 target.

Faced versus unfaced for NB conditions

In below-grade wall assemblies (basement walls) and when topping up existing insulation, **unfaced batts** are preferred. Using kraft-faced batts in mid-assembly creates a second vapour barrier, which can trap moisture between the two facing layers. For exterior above-grade walls, kraft-facing on the interior side is acceptable when the separate 6 mil polyethylene vapour barrier is omitted by design — but in most NB construction, the polyethylene sheet is installed over the batt-filled studs as the primary vapour control layer, making the kraft facing redundant.

Cost benchmarks for fibreglass batts in NB

For a typical 2,000 sq ft two-storey home in Moncton with 2x6 exterior wall framing:

- Standard R-19 batts (2x6 walls): approximately \$0.55 to \$0.75 per sq ft of wall area (materials only)
- High-density R-22 batts (2x6 walls): approximately \$0.70 to \$0.95 per sq ft of wall area (materials only)
- Labour for batt installation in new construction framing: \$0.50 to \$0.90 per sq ft

NB Power's Home Energy Savings Program and the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** support wall and attic insulation upgrades, including fibreglass batt installations, when tied to an energy assessment. Rebates are calculated on RSI improvement and can offset hundreds to over \$1,000 of project costs for a whole-house insulation upgrade.

For help selecting the right batt product and assembly design for your specific New Brunswick project, connect with a qualified insulation contractor through New Brunswick Insulation or the New Brunswick Construction Network.

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How do I properly install batt insulation in my Fredericton basement walls? | Insulation IQ?

Installing batt insulation in a Fredericton basement wall correctly requires careful attention to moisture management, air sealing, and code compliance — basement walls in New Brunswick are among the most frequently under-insulated assemblies in the province, and poor installation can lead to mould, thermal bridging, and long-term structural damage.

Before any insulation goes in, the wall assembly must be properly planned. Fredericton's climate falls firmly in **Climate Zone 6**, where the NB Building Code and the National Building Code of Canada (NBC 2020, as adopted provincially) require a minimum of **RSI 3.52 (R-20)** for basement walls in new construction. For existing homes undergoing renovation, the goal should be at least R-12 to R-20 depending on the framing depth and whether you're combining batts with rigid foam.

The most important step before installing any batt is addressing **moisture control at the foundation wall**. Poured concrete and block foundations in the Fredericton area are inherently cool and can be damp. If you frame a stud wall directly against the concrete and stuff it with fibreglass batts, you create a moisture trap where warm indoor air meets the cold foundation and condenses. The correct approach is to install a layer of **rigid foam board** — typically 1 to 2 inches of XPS or polyisocyanurate — directly against the concrete before framing the interior stud wall. This shifts the dew point outward and protects your batts.

Once the rigid layer is in place (or if you're insulating a framed wall already present), proceed with the batt installation as follows. **Cut batts to fit snugly** between studs — they should friction-fit without compression. Compression reduces the effective R-value; a compressed R-20 batt can perform closer to R-14 or R-15. Use a utility knife and straightedge to cut cleanly. For 2x4 stud walls, you'll typically use **R-12 or R-14 (RSI 2.11–2.46)** batts; for 2x6 walls, **R-20 (RSI 3.52)** batts are standard.

All **gaps and voids must be filled**. Split the batt lengthwise around wiring and plumbing rather than simply stuffing it behind. Electrical boxes, pipes, and other penetrations create air leakage paths that dramatically reduce thermal performance. Seal any gaps at the top and bottom plates with acoustical sealant or caulk before and after the batts go in.

A **vapour retarder** is required on the warm-in-winter side (interior) of the insulation in Climate Zone 6. In most residential basement wall assemblies in New Brunswick, this means a 6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier stapled to the interior face of the studs before drywall. Seams should overlap at least 150 mm (6 inches) and be sealed at all edges with acoustic sealant. If you've used high-density spray foam or closed-cell rigid foam as part of the assembly, you may meet or exceed the vapour retarder requirements without poly — consult your local Fredericton

building inspector if you're unsure.

Expect to pay roughly **\$1.50 to \$2.50 per square foot** installed for professionally installed basement batt insulation in the Fredericton area in 2025–2026, not including framing. DIY costs for materials alone are typically **\$0.40 to \$0.80 per square foot** for fibreglass batts.

Before starting, check whether your project qualifies for the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** (up to \$5,600 total for eligible upgrades including basement insulation), which requires a pre-retrofit EnerGuide home evaluation. NB Power's **Home Energy Efficiency Program** may also offer rebates for qualifying insulation upgrades — it's worth a call to NB Power before you begin to understand what documentation you'll need.

For a basement wall project of any significant size, working with a qualified insulation professional familiar with Fredericton's local code requirements will help ensure the assembly performs correctly and that you don't miss rebate opportunities. The New Brunswick Insulation directory at New Brunswick Construction Network lists vetted contractors across the province who can advise on your specific situation.

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Should I use faced or unfaced batt insulation in my New Brunswick attic? | Insulation IQ?

For the vast majority of New Brunswick attics, the correct choice is **unfaced batt insulation** — and understanding why comes down to how vapour control works in a vented attic assembly.

In a typical vented residential attic in NB, the **vapour retarder belongs at the ceiling plane**, not up in the attic floor insulation itself. The standard approach is to apply a 6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier (or use drywall taped and sealed as a vapour retarder in newer construction) at the warm-in-winter side of the assembly — the ceiling of your living space below. The insulation then sits on top of that barrier, filling the joist bays and extending well above the joists in a cross-layer arrangement to minimise thermal bridging.

Faced batts have a kraft paper or foil facing that acts as a vapour retarder. When you install faced batts in an attic floor with a polyethylene sheet already below them, you're creating a potential double vapour barrier — trapping any moisture that enters from either direction with nowhere to go. This is a recognised moisture problem in cold climates like Climate Zone 6, where New Brunswick sits, and can lead to mould, rot, and degraded insulation performance over time.

Unfaced batts allow moisture that gets into the insulation assembly to dry toward the vented attic space above, which is exactly the drying direction you want. The already-installed poly or taped drywall ceiling below handles vapour control.

There is one scenario where **faced batts make sense in an attic**: if you are insulating between rafters in a **cathedral ceiling or unvented roof assembly** and the facing is being used as the primary vapour retarder without a separate poly layer, and the product and assembly are explicitly designed for that purpose. This is a more specialised situation and should be reviewed against NBC 2020 provisions for unvented roof assemblies — if you're in doubt, consult a building science professional.

For a standard vented attic in a Moncton bungalow, a Saint John two-storey, or a Fredericton raised ranch, the correct specification is straightforward:

- **Install a continuous 6-mil poly vapour barrier** at the ceiling plane (or verify the existing one is intact and properly lapped and sealed at all seams and penetrations).
- **Lay unfaced batts** to fill the joist cavities to full depth, typically R-20 (RSI 3.52) to start.
- **Cross-layer with additional unfaced batts or blown-in insulation** perpendicular to the joists until you reach the NB Building Code minimum of **R-50 (RSI 8.8)** for attics in Climate Zone 6 (required in new construction; strongly recommended in retrofits).

- Maintain **proper ventilation channels** at the eaves — baffles (also called rafter baffles or wind baffles) keep the soffit-to-ridge airflow path open and prevent moisture-laden attic air from accumulating.

In terms of cost, unfaced fibreglass batts for an attic floor run roughly **\$0.25 to \$0.50 per square foot** for materials, depending on R-value and brand. If you're topping up an existing attic to R-50 from R-20, blown-in cellulose or fibreglass (added over existing unfaced batts or existing insulation) is often a faster and more economical option than laying additional batt layers — blown-in runs approximately **\$0.80 to \$1.50 per square foot** installed.

Before doing attic insulation work in New Brunswick, it is worth contacting **NB Power's Home Energy Efficiency Program** and checking whether your project qualifies for the **Canada Greener Homes Grant**. Both programs can offset costs significantly for attic upgrades, but the Greener Homes program requires a pre- and post-retrofit EnerGuide evaluation by a registered energy advisor, so planning ahead saves money.

If you're uncertain about the existing vapour barrier condition or want a professional assessment of your attic assembly, New Brunswick Insulation contractors listed on the New Brunswick Construction Network can provide an on-site evaluation and accurate quote.

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Q5

What R-value batt insulation do I need for 2x6 walls in NB? | Insulation IQ?

In New Brunswick, **2x6 wall framing** is the current standard for exterior walls in residential construction, and it's used specifically because it accommodates higher R-values than the older 2x4 standard. Understanding what R-value is required — and what is simply achievable — is important for both code compliance and long-term energy

performance.

New Brunswick has adopted the **National Building Code of Canada 2020 (NBC 2020)**, which places NB in **Climate Zone 6**. For above-grade opaque walls in new construction, NBC 2020 requires a minimum **effective thermal resistance of RSI 3.08 (approximately R-17.5)**. This is the *effective* R-value of the full wall assembly — accounting for thermal bridging through the studs — not just the insulation between the framing members.

A 2x6 stud cavity is **5.5 inches deep**. The most common batt insulation product for this cavity is a standard **R-20 (RSI 3.52) fibreglass or mineral wool batt**, which fills the cavity completely without compression. In practice, the **effective assembly R-value** of a 2x6 wall with R-20 batts and no exterior insulation runs closer to **R-14 to R-15** once thermal bridging through the studs is factored in — studs conduct heat at a much lower resistance than the insulation between them, and in a typical 16-inch on-centre framing layout, the framing fraction is significant enough to noticeably reduce the whole-wall performance.

To meet the effective R-17.5 requirement in a code-compliant wall assembly with 2x6 framing and R-20 batts, **continuous exterior insulation** is typically added — usually 1 to 2 inches of rigid foam or mineral wool board on the outside of the sheathing. This is increasingly the standard practice in Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John new construction. The rigid exterior layer also pushes the dew point away from the sheathing, reducing moisture risk.

If you are doing a **renovation or addition** rather than new construction, the existing wall framing may already be in place as 2x6. In that context, filling the cavity to its full depth with **R-20 unfaced batts** (or R-22 high-density batts, which can achieve slightly higher R-values in the same 2x6 cavity) is the practical goal. Higher-density R-22 batts, available from manufacturers like Owens Corning or Johns Manville, achieve approximately R-22 in the same 5.5-inch cavity by using denser glass fibre.

Mineral wool batts (such as Roxul/Rockwool Comfortbatt) are another strong option for 2x6 walls. They offer a genuine **R-23 in a 5.5-inch batt** due to their higher density, they are dimensionally stable (won't sag or settle), water-resistant, and provide better fire resistance than fibreglass. The trade-off is cost: mineral wool batts typically run **\$0.60 to \$1.00 per square foot** for materials, compared to **\$0.30 to \$0.55 per square foot** for fibreglass R-20. In a full exterior wall installation with labour, expect installed costs of **\$2.00 to \$3.50 per square foot** for 2x6 wall batt insulation in NB.

For the **vapour control layer**, Climate Zone 6 requires a vapour retarder on the warm-in-winter side of the insulation. In a standard 2x6 wood-framed wall in New Brunswick, this is typically **6-mil polyethylene** stapled to the interior face of the studs, sealed at all seams and penetrations with acoustical sealant, before the drywall goes on. If the wall assembly includes exterior rigid foam of sufficient thickness (generally 2 inches or more of XPS), the sheathing stays warm enough that a poly vapour barrier may be omitted on the interior — but this requires careful design review.

For homeowners upgrading an existing home, the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** (up to \$5,600 in eligible upgrades) and **NB Power's Home Energy Efficiency Program** both offer support for wall insulation upgrades meeting specific criteria. A registered EnerGuide energy advisor can identify what the most cost-effective combination of upgrades will be for your specific home in Moncton, Bathurst, or anywhere across New Brunswick.

If you're planning a 2x6 wall insulation project, the insulation professionals listed through New Brunswick Insulation on the New Brunswick Construction Network can help you spec the right product and ensure code compliance.

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Q6

Can I install batt insulation over existing insulation in my Moncton home? | Insulation IQ?

Yes, in most cases you can install new batt insulation over existing insulation in a Moncton home — but whether it's the right approach, and exactly how to do it correctly, depends on what's already there, where it's located, and the condition it's in.

The most common scenario is **attic top-up insulation**: an older home in Moncton or Riverview with R-12 or R-20 fibreglass batts already in the attic floor, and the goal of reaching the current NB Building Code standard of **R-50 (RSI 8.8)** for Climate Zone 6. In this case, adding insulation over the existing layer is not only acceptable — it's standard practice. The key rules are:

Use unfaced batts for any new layer. If the new batts have a kraft paper or foil vapour retarder facing, placing that facing down against the existing insulation creates a double vapour barrier — trapping moisture with nowhere to go. Unfaced batts or blown-in insulation (cellulose or fibreglass) are the correct choice for the top-up layer. The

existing vapour barrier at the ceiling plane below remains your single, properly positioned vapour control layer.

Lay the new batts perpendicular to the existing ones. If the existing batts run parallel to the joists, lay the new batts across the joists at 90 degrees. This cross-hatching pattern covers the thermal bridging at the joist tops and dramatically improves the effective R-value of the assembly. It's one of the most impactful and cost-effective upgrades a Moncton homeowner can make.

Assess the existing insulation condition first. Before adding anything on top, inspect what's there. Old fibreglass batts that have gotten wet, compressed, or settled may have significantly reduced R-values. If there is evidence of **moisture damage, mould, or pest activity**, those issues must be resolved before adding new insulation — otherwise you're sealing in a problem. Look for water stains on the existing batts or on the ceiling drywall below. In the Moncton area, ice damming was a common issue in older homes and can indicate prior moisture infiltration in the attic.

Check that air sealing is done first. Adding more insulation on top of a leaky attic floor doesn't address air leakage, which accounts for a large fraction of winter heat loss. Before laying additional batts, seal all **attic bypasses** — the gaps around pot lights, plumbing stacks, wiring penetrations, interior partition wall top plates, and the attic hatch — with fire-rated caulk or spray foam. This step is unglamorous but delivers real energy savings.

For **wall cavities**, the situation is different. You generally cannot add new batt insulation to an existing closed wall cavity without opening the wall. In a renovation where walls are being opened anyway, you can replace existing insulation or add higher-density batts if the existing insulation is incomplete or degraded. Some contractors use **dense-pack blown-in insulation** to retrofit existing wall cavities through small holes drilled in the sheathing or interior surface — but this is a specialised technique, not a batt application.

Basement walls are another area where layering is sometimes done. If there are existing batts between studs and the wall is being upgraded, adding a layer of **rigid foam board** against the concrete before reframing — or using higher-density batts in a new interior stud wall — are common strategies. As with attics, moisture condition assessment comes first.

In terms of cost, attic top-up projects in Moncton typically run **\$1.00 to \$2.00 per square foot** installed for blown-in insulation (the most common top-up material), or **\$0.80 to \$1.50 per square foot** for additional batt layers installed by a professional.

Both the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** and **NB Power's Home Energy Efficiency Program** cover attic insulation top-ups as eligible upgrades. For the Greener Homes program, a pre-retrofit EnerGuide evaluation is required before work begins — so contact a registered energy advisor in the Moncton area before starting, to ensure you can claim the rebate. NB Power's program has its own rebate structure with potentially faster turnaround.

If you'd like an expert to assess your existing insulation and recommend the most effective top-up strategy, the insulation professionals listed through New Brunswick Insulation on the New Brunswick Construction Network serve the Moncton and Greater Moncton area.

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Is mineral wool batt insulation better than fibreglass for New Brunswick homes? | Insulation IQ?

Mineral wool batt insulation — sold under brand names like Rockwool (formerly Roxul) and Thermafiber — offers several meaningful performance advantages over standard fibreglass batts, and those advantages are particularly relevant to New Brunswick's cold, damp climate. That said, fibreglass still has a strong case in the right applications. The honest answer is that neither is universally better — the right choice depends on where you're insulating and what your priorities are.

Where Mineral Wool Has a Clear Edge

Higher R-value per inch. Mineral wool batts deliver approximately **R-4.2 per inch**, compared to R-3.7 to R-3.8 per inch for standard fibreglass. In a 2x6 stud cavity (5.5 inches), a mineral wool Comfortbatt achieves a genuine **R-23**, while a standard fibreglass batt tops out at R-20 (with high-density fibreglass reaching R-21 or R-22). Over the full wall assembly, that difference in cavity insulation narrows the performance gap — but in thick assemblies and when combined with continuous exterior insulation, it adds up.

Water resistance. Mineral wool fibres are hydrophobic — they repel water rather than absorbing it. In New Brunswick's climate, where basements in Fredericton or Saint John are susceptible to seasonal moisture, this is a real advantage. Fibreglass batts that get wet lose R-value, can harbour mould on the facing or surrounding framing, and may not fully recover their performance after drying. Mineral wool will drain and dry without permanent performance loss.

Dimensional stability. Mineral wool batts are denser and stiffer than fibreglass. They hold their shape between studs without sagging and stay in place without stapling. This matters most in wall cavities where fibreglass can settle slightly over decades, leaving cold spots near the bottom of the cavity. In an attic floor, this difference is less relevant.

Fire resistance. Mineral wool is made from slag or basalt — genuinely non-combustible materials. Standard mineral wool products are rated to withstand temperatures exceeding 1,000°C without melting. Fibreglass melts at high temperatures, though it doesn't fuel flame readily. In party walls, mechanical rooms, or anywhere fire resistance is a code or insurance consideration, mineral wool has a substantial edge. For most residential exterior wall applications in Moncton or Fredericton, this is a secondary concern — but for basement mechanical rooms or attached garages, it carries more weight.

Sound attenuation. Mineral wool's density gives it significantly better **sound transmission class (STC)** performance than fibreglass at equivalent thicknesses. If you're insulating interior walls between bedrooms,

bathrooms, or a home office in a Saint John home, mineral wool batts will reduce noise transmission noticeably more than fibreglass.

Where Fibreglass Still Makes Sense

Cost is the primary argument for fibreglass. Standard R-20 fibreglass batts for 2x6 walls run approximately **\$0.30 to \$0.55 per square foot** for materials, while comparable mineral wool batts cost **\$0.60 to \$1.00 per square foot** — roughly double. In a large attic floor top-up project where moisture risk is low and the application is horizontal (reducing dimensional stability concerns), the premium for mineral wool may not be justified. Fibreglass also has a longer track record in Canadian residential construction and is more widely available at local suppliers in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John.

For attic floors in particular, many NB insulation professionals recommend **blown-in cellulose or blown-in fibreglass** over batts entirely — it fills around obstructions without gaps, requires less labour, and reaches the NB code target of **R-50 (RSI 8.8)** more easily. In that context, the mineral wool vs. fibreglass batt debate is moot.

The NB Bottom Line

For **exterior walls** in new construction or gut renovations in Climate Zone 6, mineral wool batts are a premium upgrade that pays off through slightly better whole-wall R-values, moisture resilience, and long-term stability. For **attic top-up**, blown-in products are often more practical and cost-effective. For **basement walls** near concrete with potential moisture exposure, mineral wool's hydrophobic properties make it the safer choice.

Both the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** and **NB Power's Home Energy Efficiency Program** apply to qualifying insulation upgrades regardless of whether you choose fibreglass or mineral wool — the key is meeting the performance threshold, not the product type.

For a specific recommendation on your home in Fredericton, Moncton, Bathurst, or elsewhere in New Brunswick, the insulation professionals listed through New Brunswick Insulation on the New Brunswick Construction Network can assess your assembly and recommend the best product for your budget and performance goals.

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Q8

How do I cut batt insulation to fit around electrical boxes in a Sussex home? | Insulation IQ?

Cutting batt insulation to fit neatly around electrical boxes is one of the most detail-oriented parts of insulating a wall cavity, and doing it correctly matters enormously for thermal performance. A poorly fitted batt around a box leaves air gaps that allow cold air infiltration — a real concern in Sussex and across New Brunswick, where winter temperatures can drop well below -20°C and every gap in your thermal envelope translates directly into higher heating bills.

The standard approach is called **splitting and notching**, and it produces a much tighter fit than simply cutting a rectangular hole. Start by measuring the depth and width of the electrical box and its position within the stud cavity. Rather than cutting straight through the batt, carefully split it through its thickness at the height of the box, separating it into a front layer and a back layer. Fold back the front layer, trace the outline of the box onto the back layer, and cut out that notch. Then fold the front layer back around the front face of the box. The result is insulation that wraps around the box on all sides rather than leaving a gap behind it.

For **cutting tools**, a sharp utility knife or insulation serrated knife works well for fibreglass batts. Many experienced installers in the Sussex and Moncton area use a simple bread knife or an insulation cutting tool — a long-bladed tool designed specifically to compress and cut through batts cleanly. A straightedge clamped to the batt helps produce clean, straight cuts. For **mineral wool (Roxul/Rockwool)** batts, a serrated bread knife gives cleaner cuts than a utility knife because mineral wool is denser and tends to tear rather than slice cleanly with a straight blade.

One important technique is to **compress the batt slightly** when measuring, since batts are typically sold slightly oversized to fill the cavity under compression. When you cut your notch around the box, cut the notch about 1/4 inch smaller than the actual box dimensions on all sides. This slight undersizing means the batt material will press snugly against the sides and back of the box rather than leaving a gap.

Always work from the **warm-in-winter side** (the interior face of the wall) outward. The vapour barrier — typically a 6-mil polyethylene sheet required under the NB Building Code for Climate Zone 6 — goes on the interior face of the stud cavity, over top of the installed batts. Make sure the vapour barrier is slit and sealed around the electrical box using acoustic sealant or acoustical putty pads, not just stapled over the opening. Many energy-conscious builders in Fredericton and Saint John are now using **sealed electrical boxes** or vapour barrier boxes specifically designed

to maintain the air barrier integrity around outlets.

If you are installing **R-24 batts** (the minimum required for above-grade walls under the current NB Building Code for new construction in most applications), ensure that the insulation fits snugly on all six sides of the cavity — top, bottom, both sides, and behind and in front of any wiring or boxes. Any void left behind an electrical box is an uninsulated cold spot that can also lead to condensation issues on the box face during deep winter, contributing to potential mould risk over time.

For **vapour barrier airtightness** around boxes, the preferred professional method in New Brunswick is to use pre-formed vapour barrier boxes that slip over the electrical box before the vapour poly is installed, eliminating the need to cut and seal around each box individually. This approach is common in high-performance builds and energy retrofits in Sussex, Quispamsis, and the Saint John suburbs.

Taking the time to fit batts properly around electrical boxes is one of those tasks that takes only a few extra minutes per box but has a lasting impact on the wall's thermal performance. For help selecting the right batt products and techniques for your specific wall assembly, the professionals listed on **New Brunswick Insulation** can offer guidance suited to Sussex's climate and construction practices.

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Q9

Does compressing batt insulation reduce its R-value in NB construction? | Insulation IQ?

Yes — compressing batt insulation does reduce its R-value, and this is a critically important concept for New Brunswick homeowners and builders to understand, particularly because NB's Climate Zone 6 designation

demands that walls, floors, and attics actually deliver the rated thermal resistance they're supposed to provide.

Why compression reduces R-value comes down to the physics of how batt insulation works. Fibreglass and mineral wool batts trap still air within their fibre matrix. That trapped air is the actual insulator — the fibres themselves conduct heat much more readily than still air. When you compress a batt, you force those fibres closer together, reducing the thickness of the air-trapping matrix. The result is a product that occupies less space and provides less thermal resistance per inch of thickness, even though the total amount of material hasn't changed.

The relationship isn't perfectly linear, but it is significant. A standard **R-20 fibreglass batt** designed for a 2x6 cavity (nominally about 5.5 inches thick) will only deliver approximately R-13 to R-15 if compressed into a 3.5-inch 2x4 cavity. That's a 25 to 35 percent reduction in thermal performance — a substantial penalty in New Brunswick winters, where Moncton and Fredericton regularly see weeks of temperatures between -15°C and -25°C.

This matters practically in several common construction scenarios. **Stuffing thick batts into shallow cavities** is the most obvious mistake — using R-22 or R-24 batts in a 2x4 wall rather than using the correctly sized product. The correct batt for a 2x4 wall is R-14 or R-15 (approximately 3.5 inches thick), while 2x6 walls take R-19 to R-24 batts. Always match the batt thickness to the cavity depth.

Wiring, plumbing, and blocking also cause compression. When a batt must fit around pipes or wires, the batt is often stuffed behind them rather than split around them, leaving a compressed zone against the sheathing. The correct technique is to split the batt through its thickness so that material wraps both in front of and behind any obstruction, maintaining full thickness everywhere in the cavity.

Vapour barrier installation is another common compression point. Installers who pull the 6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier too tightly across the face of batts before stapling it to studs can compress the front face of the batt, reducing its effective thickness by a quarter inch or more across the full wall. The poly should be installed with slight slack between studs, draped rather than stretched.

For NB Building Code compliance, the **minimum above-grade wall R-value** for new construction in New Brunswick is effectively R-22 effective (accounting for framing fraction), which typically means filling 2x6 stud cavities with R-24 batts. If those batts are compressed, the wall fails to meet code performance even though the correct product was specified. This is why inspection-stage verification matters, particularly in new construction in Saint John, Moncton, and Fredericton.

Mineral wool batts (Roxul/Rockwool) are slightly more resilient to light compression than fibreglass because the stone wool fibres are stiffer and spring back more effectively. However, mineral wool still suffers measurable R-value loss when significantly compressed. Neither product should be treated as forgiving on this point.

A related issue is **voids versus compression** — leaving a gap in a batt installation (a void) is actually worse than mild compression, because a void allows convective air circulation within the cavity, which can reduce effective

thermal performance even more dramatically than compression alone. The goal in any NB installation is full, snug contact with all six sides of the cavity with no compression and no gaps.

For retrofits, where existing cavities may contain old compressed batts, the best approach is to fully remove the degraded insulation and reinstall properly sized batts — or consider a blown-in alternative that fills cavities more completely. The professionals listed at **New Brunswick Insulation** can assess whether your wall cavities are delivering their rated R-value.

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What size batts do I need for standard wall studs in New Brunswick framing? | Insulation IQ?

Selecting the right batt size for your wall framing is fundamental to achieving the thermal performance required by the NB Building Code — and it's a straightforward process once you understand how batt dimensions correspond to standard framing dimensions used across New Brunswick.

Standard framing in New Brunswick follows the same nominal lumber sizing used across Canada. The two most common wall assemblies are 2x4 and 2x6 stud walls. A **2x4 stud** has an actual depth of approximately 3.5 inches, meaning the insulation cavity between the interior sheathing and exterior sheathing is also about 3.5 inches deep. A **2x6 stud** has an actual depth of approximately 5.5 inches, creating a correspondingly deeper cavity.

For a **2x4 wall**, the correct batt is an R-14 or R-15 batt, which is manufactured to be approximately 3.5 inches thick — a snug fit in the cavity with no compression. In practice, most building supply stores in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John stock **R-14 fibreglass batts** as the standard product for 2x4 walls. Some premium fibreglass and mineral wool products achieve R-15 in the same 3.5-inch thickness.

For a **2x6 wall**, the standard batt is R-19, R-20, R-21, R-22, or R-24, all manufactured in approximately 5.5-inch thicknesses. The NB Building Code for new construction in Climate Zone 6 effectively requires a minimum **R-22 effective** above-grade wall assembly, which typically means filling 2x6 cavities with **R-24 batts**. The R-24 product is slightly denser than R-19, achieving a higher R-value in the same cavity depth through denser fibre packing.

Width sizing also matters. Standard batts come in two widths: **15-inch** (for 16-inch on-centre stud spacing) and **23-inch** (for 24-inch on-centre stud spacing). In New Brunswick residential construction, 16-inch on-centre (o.c.) framing is most common, so **15-inch wide batts** are the standard product for most homes in Dieppe, Quispamsis, Rothesay, and across the province. Advanced framing techniques that use 24-inch o.c. spacing require 23-inch batts. Always measure your actual stud spacing before ordering — older homes in Sussex and Sackville may use irregular spacing from non-standard framing or past renovations.

Batts are sold slightly oversized in both width and thickness to ensure a friction fit. A 15-inch batt in a 14.5-inch clear cavity will hold itself in place without fasteners. If a batt feels loose and falls out during installation, it is likely the wrong size or the cavity spacing is non-standard.

For **floor assemblies** over unheated crawlspaces — common in rural New Brunswick homes around Sussex, Woodstock, and Edmundston — the standard is 2x10 or 2x12 joists with cavities ranging from 9.25 to 11.25 inches deep. The appropriate products are **R-28 to R-40 batts** or layered installations. Floor cavities require support — either insulation support wires (tension rods) or a mesh stapled below the joists — to prevent batts from sagging

and losing contact with the subfloor above.

For **cathedral ceilings and sloped roof assemblies**, batt selection must account for the required ventilation channel between the batt and the roof deck (typically a 1-inch minimum airspace). This means the usable insulation depth is the rafter depth minus one inch, and the batt must be sized accordingly.

For **attic floor insulation**, batts are typically laid horizontally between ceiling joists (usually 2x6 at 5.5 inches) and then cross-layered with additional unfaced batts or blown-in insulation to achieve the NB-recommended **R-50 to R-60** for attic floors. Batts alone are rarely sufficient to reach that target.

If you are unsure what framing your home uses — especially in older Moncton or Fredericton homes built before 2x6 exterior walls became standard — measure directly with a tape inserted into an electrical outlet box, which will reveal the wall cavity depth. For a full assessment and product recommendations for your specific wall assembly, consult an insulation professional through **New Brunswick Insulation**.

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Q11

How much do R-24 fibreglass batts cost at building supply stores in Saint John? | Insulation IQ?

R-24 fibreglass batts are one of the most commonly purchased insulation products at building supply stores in Saint John and across New Brunswick, since they are the standard fill product for 2x6 exterior walls in new construction and major renovations. Prices have shifted noticeably since 2021 due to supply chain changes and material costs, so current figures matter when you're budgeting a project.

As of early 2026, **R-24 fiberglass batts in the standard 15-inch wide, 47-inch length** (for 16-inch o.c. framing) typically retail in the **\$50 to \$75 per bag** range at Saint John building supply stores, with each bag generally covering between **40 and 50 square feet** of wall area. That works out to roughly **\$1.10 to \$1.75 per square foot** of wall coverage at retail pricing.

For a typical Saint John single-storey home with approximately 800 to 1,000 square feet of above-grade exterior wall area (accounting for windows and doors), you might expect to spend **\$900 to \$1,750 in material costs alone** for R-24 batts for the walls. A two-storey home with 1,400 to 1,800 square feet of exterior wall area could require **\$1,500 to \$3,000** in batt material.

Several factors affect the actual price you'll pay. **Brand** is a significant variable — Owens Corning EcoTouch, CertainTeed, and Knauf are the main fiberglass batt brands commonly stocked in Saint John at stores like Home Depot (McAllister Drive), Kent Building Supplies (Retail Drive and Westfield Road), and independent lumber yards. Store-brand or lesser-known imports sometimes undercut by 10 to 15 percent. **Faced versus unfaced** also affects price slightly — faced batts with a kraft paper or foil vapour retarder facing typically cost 5 to 10 percent more than unfaced batts, though unfaced is actually preferred in most NB wall assemblies where the vapour barrier is a separate 6-mil polyethylene sheet installed over top.

Volume pricing is available at most Saint John building centres for full-pallet orders, which is relevant if you're insulating an entire new build or a large addition. Contractors and builders typically negotiate 5 to 15 percent off retail pricing on volume orders, which is one reason why professional installation quotes can sometimes offer competitive material pricing compared to DIY retail purchases.

It's also worth noting that **R-24 versus R-22** products compete in the same cavity space. Some builders specify R-22 because it meets code on paper, but most energy-conscious builders in Saint John now default to R-24 because the incremental cost difference — typically only \$3 to \$8 per bag — is negligible over the life of the building relative to the modest thermal improvement and the NB Energy Code's direction toward higher performance envelopes.

For **NB Power rebates and the Canada Greener Homes Grant**, batt insulation costs on retrofit projects may qualify for partial reimbursement when installed as part of an eligible energy efficiency upgrade. The Canada Greener Homes Grant (subject to program availability as of early 2026) historically offered up to **\$600 for wall insulation upgrades** and up to **\$3,500 for attic insulation**, with a mandatory pre- and post-retrofit EnerGuide evaluation. NB Power's **Home Energy Efficiency Program** also offers rebates for qualifying upgrades — check NB Power's current rebate schedule, as amounts and eligibility tiers change periodically.

One practical budgeting tip: always add **10 to 15 percent** to your material estimate to account for waste, off-cuts around windows and doors, and any areas where batts need to be doubled or layered. Underestimating and making a second trip to the store adds both cost (smaller quantity, possibly higher per-unit price) and time.

For contractor-supplied-and-installed R-24 batts in Saint John, installed pricing typically runs **\$1.80 to \$3.00 per square foot** depending on wall complexity, accessibility, and whether vapour barrier is included. For accurate quotes on your specific project and help navigating available rebates, connecting with insulation professionals through **New Brunswick Insulation** is a practical starting point.

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Q12

Is Roxul mineral wool worth the extra cost over fibreglass batts in Campbellton NB? | Insulation IQ?

For homeowners in Campbellton — one of New Brunswick's colder subregions, with a climate that regularly sees heavy snowfall and extended periods well below -20°C — the question of mineral wool versus fibreglass is a genuinely important one. The short answer is that **Roxul (now marketed as Rockwool)** mineral wool batts offer a meaningful set of advantages over standard fibreglass, and for many Campbellton applications, the extra cost is justified. But it depends on where you're installing it and what you need most.

The cost premium is the starting point of the comparison. Mineral wool batts typically cost **40 to 70 percent more** than equivalent fibreglass batts at building supply stores in the Campbellton and Bathurst area. An R-24 mineral wool batt for a 2x6 wall cavity might run \$90 to \$110 per bag compared to \$55 to \$75 for a comparable fibreglass product. Over an entire house, that difference can add up to \$500 to \$2,000 or more in material costs depending on the project size.

So what do you get for that premium? **Fire resistance** is one of mineral wool's strongest advantages. Rockwool batts are non-combustible — they're made from basalt rock and steel slag, and they can withstand temperatures above 1,000°C without melting or contributing to flame spread. Fibreglass, while not highly flammable, does melt

and can soften at lower temperatures. For Campbellton homes using wood stoves or pellet stoves as supplementary heat — common in this region — or for fire-separation assemblies in garages and between units in multi-family construction, mineral wool provides genuine added safety margin.

Sound attenuation is another standout benefit. Mineral wool has a much higher **Sound Transmission Class (STC)** rating than fibreglass at equivalent thicknesses. If you're insulating interior walls between bedrooms, a home office, or a garage-to-living space wall in a Campbellton home, mineral wool batts reduce sound transmission noticeably better than fibreglass. For exterior walls, the difference in acoustic performance matters less, but in a busy household or a duplex conversion, it's a real quality-of-life improvement.

Water resistance is a meaningful difference for Campbellton's climate specifically. Mineral wool does not absorb water — it repels moisture and dries readily if it gets wet during construction or from a roof leak. Fibreglass batts, while also not fully hydrophilic, can absorb moisture into their facing and binders, losing R-value when wet and potentially supporting mould growth if they remain damp. In a climate like Campbellton's, where snow and freeze-thaw cycles are intense and construction sequencing sometimes leaves walls open to the elements, mineral wool's moisture resilience is a practical advantage.

Dimensional stability also favours mineral wool. The dense, stiff nature of Rockwool batts means they hold their shape and fit snugly in stud cavities without sagging or shifting over time. Fibreglass batts can settle slightly, particularly in sloped or irregular cavities. Mineral wool friction-fits tightly and stays put, reducing the risk of settling-related gaps developing over the decades of the building's life.

R-value per inch is approximately equivalent between the two products — both achieve roughly **R-3.7 to R-4 per inch** — so mineral wool doesn't offer a thermal density advantage in standard wall cavities. The thermal performance difference between properly installed mineral wool and properly installed fibreglass in the same 2x6 cavity is marginal.

For **Campbellton applications where mineral wool pays for itself most clearly**: exterior walls exposed to wind-driven rain (the Restigouche River area sees significant precipitation), garage walls and ceilings with fire-separation requirements, party walls in semi-detached homes, home theatre or music rooms, and any assembly where moisture risk during construction is high. For **interior partition walls with no fire or acoustic requirements** and limited budget, standard fibreglass remains serviceable.

NB Power's efficiency rebates and the Canada Greener Homes Grant do not differentiate between fibreglass and mineral wool — both qualify for the same rebate amounts on eligible retrofit projects.

For a project-specific recommendation on whether mineral wool's premium is worth it for your Campbellton home, the insulation professionals listed at **New Brunswick Insulation** can provide an honest assessment based on your wall assemblies and budget.

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Can I use batt insulation in a crawl space in New Brunswick? | Insulation IQ?

Technically, yes — batt insulation can be installed in a crawl space in New Brunswick. But whether you *should* depends heavily on the type of crawl space you have, how it is detailed, and whether you understand the serious moisture risks involved. In NB's Climate Zone 6 environment, getting crawl space insulation wrong is one of the most reliable ways to end up with a mould problem.

First, it is important to understand the two fundamentally different approaches to crawl spaces: **vented crawl spaces** and **unvented (conditioned) crawl spaces**. These require completely different insulation strategies.

In a **vented crawl space**, the intent is to allow outdoor air to flow through and carry away any moisture vapour that migrates up from the ground. In this configuration, you would install batt insulation between the floor joists above the crawl space — essentially insulating the floor of the living space, not the walls of the crawl space itself. The crawl space remains outside the thermal envelope. For this to meet the NB Building Code (which aligns with the NBC 2015 as adopted), you need at least **R-20 in the floor assembly**, though R-24 or R-28 is more appropriate for the cold winters in Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John. A **vapour barrier** is still required on the ground (6 mil polyethylene minimum) to reduce ground moisture rising into the space. Batt insulation must fit snugly between joists with no gaps or compression — any air movement through or around batts drastically reduces their thermal performance.

However, vented crawl spaces are increasingly recognised as problematic in cold climates. In New Brunswick winters, cold outdoor air entering the vents chills the crawl space floor, which can freeze pipes and cause significant heat loss through the floor above. Many older NB homes with vented crawl spaces suffer from exactly this issue.

The more energy-efficient and moisture-safe strategy today is an **unvented conditioned crawl space**, where the vents are sealed and the crawl space walls and rim joists are insulated instead. In this configuration, batt insulation between the floor joists is actually *the wrong choice* — you'd be insulating the wrong surface. The crawl space walls should be insulated with rigid foam or spray foam to bring the space inside the thermal envelope. If batts are used on the walls, they can absorb moisture and sag over time. Spray foam or a combination of rigid foam plus a vapour-control membrane is strongly preferred for conditioned crawl spaces.

There is another critical concern: **ground moisture**. New Brunswick has significant seasonal moisture fluctuations, and crawl spaces are exposed to ground vapour year-round. Any batt insulation that gets wet — even from condensation — loses R-value immediately and becomes a substrate for mould and rot. Fibreglass batts are especially susceptible to holding moisture against wood framing. Mineral wool batts are slightly more moisture-tolerant but are not immune to the problem.

For homes that do use batt insulation in a vented crawl space floor, **the vapour retarder placement matters**. The vapour retarder (typically kraft facing) must face the warm side — toward the living space above — not toward the crawl space. This slows moisture-laden interior air from entering the insulation cavity.

The NB Building Code requires crawl spaces to have a ground cover vapour barrier regardless of the insulation strategy. Under Section 9.25, the ground cover must be 0.10 mm (4 mil) polyethylene as a minimum, though 6 mil is the industry standard. Lapping seams by at least 300 mm and sealing to foundation walls significantly reduces ground moisture intrusion.

In terms of cost, installing R-20 to R-28 batts between floor joists in a crawl space typically runs \$1.50 to \$3.50 per square foot installed in New Brunswick, depending on access difficulty. Tight, cramped crawl spaces cost more due to labour. Spray foam on crawl space walls for a conditioned approach runs considerably more — \$3 to \$6 per square foot — but delivers a more durable, moisture-resilient result.

If you are unsure which approach is right for your home, a qualified insulation professional can assess your crawl space's current condition, moisture levels, and framing before recommending a solution. New Brunswick Insulation connects homeowners across the province with experienced contractors who understand the specific demands of NB's climate.

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Q14

How do I prevent gaps and voids when installing batt insulation in a Woodstock home? | Insulation IQ?

Gaps and voids in batt insulation are one of the most common — and most damaging — installation mistakes in residential construction. A single air gap as small as 1% of the insulated area can reduce the effective thermal performance of a wall assembly by 50% or more, because heat moves through air much faster than through insulation fibres. In a Woodstock home facing Climate Zone 6 winters where temperatures regularly drop below -20°C, those gaps translate directly into higher heating bills, cold walls, and potential condensation problems inside the wall cavity.

The most important principle is that **batts must completely fill the cavity they are placed in** — full width, full height, and full depth — with no compression, gaps around obstructions, or voids behind wiring and pipes.

Cutting accurately is the foundation of a good installation. Measure each cavity individually before cutting. Wall stud spacing is often inconsistent, particularly in older Woodstock homes where lumber has shifted, swelled, or been modified over time. Batts cut slightly wider than the cavity — by about 12 mm on each side — will friction-fit and hold themselves in place without needing staples, which also avoids the performance-robbing compression that happens when batts are stapled too tight. For height, cut batts 25–50 mm longer than the cavity and compress them slightly into place so the ends contact the top and bottom plates firmly with no gap.

Electrical boxes, plumbing, and wiring create the most common void locations. For electrical boxes mounted on exterior walls, the preferred approach is to cut the batt to fit behind the box, then place a second piece in front. Some installers simply push the batt around the box, which creates air pockets on both sides — this is incorrect. Cut out a box-shaped notch from the back of the batt at the right depth so it sits flush. For wiring running horizontally through the cavity, split the batt by peeling it in two layers and running the wire through the middle. Never bunch insulation to one side of a wire — it creates a void on the other side.

Rim joists and headers deserve special attention. These areas are often skipped or filled loosely with scraps. The rim joist is one of the highest heat-loss zones in a home, and in a Woodstock house with a basement or crawl space, rim joists should be tightly filled with cut-to-fit batts or ideally sealed with spray foam first and then covered with batt. Headers above windows and doors are often deep enough to accept insulation — don't leave those cavities empty.

Settling and compression reduce performance over time. Batts should not be compressed to fit a thinner space. An R-22 batt compressed to half its thickness does not perform as R-22 — it performs closer to R-10. If the cavity is shallower than the batt is designed for, use a thinner batt rated for that depth rather than forcing a thick one in.

For **irregularly shaped cavities** — the kind common around stairwells, knee walls, and angled ceilings in older homes — cut batts with a sharp utility knife and straight edge. A serrated bread knife also works well for clean cuts in fiberglass. Torn or ragged edges leave gaps at the perimeter of the cavity where the batt meets the framing, and

those perimeter gaps are where air leakage tends to concentrate.

The vapour retarder (kraft facing or poly sheet) must be continuous and free of tears. Any gaps or punctures in the vapour retarder on an exterior wall allow warm, humid interior air to reach the cold sheathing, where it condenses. In a Woodstock winter, this is how ice and mould develop inside walls. Seal tears with red vapour barrier tape.

If you are completing a larger renovation, it is worth considering a **blower door test** after insulation is in but before drywall goes up. This pressurises the building and reveals air leakage locations that can then be addressed before they are covered up permanently.

Professional installers familiar with New Brunswick homes know these details intuitively and work to avoid the gaps that DIY installs often leave behind. For help finding a qualified insulation contractor in the Woodstock area, the directory at New Brunswick Insulation and the New Brunswick Construction Network lists vetted local professionals.

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Q15

What PPE do I need when handling fibreglass batt insulation in NB? | Insulation IQ?

Handling fibreglass batt insulation without proper personal protective equipment is genuinely uncomfortable and can cause both short-term and long-term health issues. The tiny glass fibres that give fibreglass insulation its thermal properties are also exactly what make it irritating to skin, eyes, and the respiratory system. Before you unroll a single batt in your New Brunswick home, it is worth spending five minutes understanding what protection you actually need.

Respiratory protection is the most important consideration. Fibreglass insulation releases airborne fibres during cutting, handling, and installation — and those fibres are small enough to be inhaled deep into the lungs. In enclosed spaces like attics, basements, and wall cavities (common in Moncton and Fredericton renovation projects), fibre concentrations can reach levels that cause lasting respiratory irritation. At minimum, wear an **N95 respirator** — a simple dust mask is not sufficient. N95 masks filter at least 95% of airborne particles including the fine glass fibres released during installation. For extended work sessions or particularly dusty conditions (like tearing out old insulation), a half-face respirator with P100 cartridges provides a higher level of protection. The respirator must fit snugly with no gaps at the cheeks or nose bridge. Beards significantly reduce the effectiveness of any respirator seal.

Eye protection is non-negotiable. Glass fibres that become airborne during installation land on exposed surfaces — including your eyes. Even brief exposure causes irritation, redness, and a gritty sensation that is difficult to relieve. Wear **safety glasses with side shields** at a minimum. Foam-sealed goggles offer better protection against fibres floating in the air from multiple directions, which is more common in attic work. If you wear prescription glasses, safety glasses that fit over them are available at most hardware stores in Saint John, Moncton, and Fredericton.

Skin protection comes next. Direct contact with fibreglass batts causes immediate skin irritation — the fibres embed in skin pores and cause an intense itching sensation. Wear a **long-sleeved shirt** and **long pants** with no gaps at the wrists or ankles. Tucking your sleeves into gloves and your pants into boots prevents fibres from getting under clothing. Loose-weave fabrics like cotton allow fibres to pass through more easily; tighter synthetic fabrics or disposable Tyvek coveralls offer better protection. If you do get fibres on your skin, do not rub — rinse with cool water first to flush fibres from pores, then wash gently with soap. Hot water opens pores and drives fibres deeper.

Gloves protect your hands, which get the most direct contact. Nitrile or latex disposable gloves work well — they prevent fibres from embedding in the skin of your hands and fingers, which is especially relevant when cutting batts with a utility knife. Heavy work gloves work too, though they reduce dexterity.

Footwear matters in attic work specifically. Walking on attic insulation in running shoes allows fibres to infiltrate footwear and then be tracked through the living space. Wear dedicated work boots that can be left at the attic access hatch, or pull Tyvek boot covers over your footwear.

Ventilation is a critical environmental control that complements PPE. When working in enclosed spaces, use a portable fan to direct fibre-laden air away from your breathing zone and toward an open window or vent. If you are working in a basement in Woodstock or Campbellton in summer, opening windows and using cross-ventilation reduces airborne fibre concentration significantly.

Disposal and cleanup also require care. Bag used offcuts and scraps in heavy-duty plastic bags before carrying them through the house. Fibreglass waste is not hazardous waste in New Brunswick and goes in regular construction waste, but it should be bagged tightly to prevent fibres from releasing in transport. After completing work, shower and change clothes before moving through living areas — fibres on clothing will shed and settle on furniture and floors.

It is worth noting that **mineral wool (rock wool) batts** are considered by many professionals to be somewhat less irritating than fibreglass, since their fibres are thicker and less prone to becoming airborne. However, they still require the same PPE precautions.

For larger insulation projects or full-home retrofits, many New Brunswick homeowners find it worthwhile to hire a professional installer who brings their own PPE, handles disposal, and works faster than a DIYer navigating protective gear for the first time. New Brunswick Insulation can connect you with experienced local contractors throughout the province.

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