NEW BRUNSWICK INSULATION

Energy Efficiency & Audits

EnerGuide evaluations, NB Power rebates, Canada Greener Homes Grant, energy audits, and efficiency upgrade planning

17 Expert Answers from Insulation IQ

newbrunswickinsulation.com/construction-brain

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Q1

Does it make sense to schedule a home energy audit in Moncton before winter arrives so insulation upgrades can be completed before heating costs peak?

Absolutely — scheduling a home energy audit in Moncton this fall is one of the smartest moves you can make. Getting the audit done before winter allows you to identify and fix insulation problems before you're paying peak heating costs through another brutal Maritime winter.

Why Fall Timing Makes Perfect Sense

Moncton typically sees its first hard frost in early October, with sustained below-freezing temperatures starting in November. Once winter arrives, you'll be heating your home for six solid months through April, and every day of delay means money literally flowing out through your walls, attic, and basement. A poorly insulated Moncton home can easily burn through $3,000-$5,000 in heating costs over a single winter — whether you're using oil, electric baseboard, or heat pumps.

The **EnerGuide evaluation** (home energy audit) takes about 3-4 hours and costs $300-$500 in the Moncton area, but it's your roadmap to real energy savings. The auditor uses a blower door test to measure exactly how leaky your house is, thermal imaging to find hidden insulation gaps, and detailed calculations to show you which upgrades will give you the biggest bang for your buck. Most Moncton homes built before 2000 have R-12 walls and R-20-30 attics — well below today's R-22+ wall and R-50+ attic standards.

Rebate Requirements and Timing

Here's the critical part: **you must get the pre-retrofit EnerGuide evaluation BEFORE starting any insulation work** to qualify for NB Power's Total Home Energy Savings Program (up to $5,000) and the federal Greener Homes Grant (up to $5,000). These combined rebates can cover 50-80% of a typical insulation upgrade, but work done without the pre-evaluation is ineligible. Getting the audit done in September or October gives you time to get quotes, schedule the work, and potentially complete upgrades before the heating season peaks.

Realistic Project Timeline

Most insulation contractors in the Moncton area are busiest in late fall and early winter as homeowners realize their heating bills are climbing. **Booking your audit now and getting on contractors' schedules for October or November work** means you avoid the rush and potentially get better pricing. Simple projects like attic blow-in can be completed in a day, while comprehensive upgrades (walls, basement, air sealing) might take 3-5 days.

What the Audit Will Likely Find in Moncton

Given Moncton's housing stock — many 1960s-1980s bungalows and two-storey homes — the audit will probably identify several key opportunities. **Uninsulated or under-insulated basements** are epidemic in older Moncton homes and represent 20-35% of total heat loss. **Rim joist areas** where your floor framing sits on the foundation are almost always uninsulated and leaky. **Attic insulation** is often inadequate or has settled over decades, and **air sealing** around pot lights, bathroom fans, and attic hatches is typically poor or nonexistent.

When to Hire a Professional

The EnerGuide evaluation must be done by a certified energy advisor — this isn't a DIY assessment. For the insulation work itself, **hire professionals for spray foam, blown-in cellulose, dense-pack wall retrofits, and any work involving vapour barriers**. However, you might tackle simple projects like adding batts to an unfinished basement or weatherstripping doors yourself while waiting for contractor availability.

Need help finding a certified energy advisor for your audit or insulation contractors for the upgrades? New Brunswick Insulation can match you with local professionals through the New Brunswick Construction Network. Getting started now means you'll be comfortable and saving money all winter long.

Q2

What is an EnerGuide home energy audit and do I need one in New Brunswick? | Insulation IQ?

An **EnerGuide home energy evaluation** is a standardized assessment of your home's energy performance conducted by a certified energy adviser (CEA) licensed by Natural Resources Canada. It's the foundational diagnostic step for understanding how your home uses energy, where it loses heat, and what upgrades will deliver the best return — and in New Brunswick, it's also the gateway to accessing thousands of dollars in federal and provincial rebates.

The evaluation has two components. The **advisory visit** is an on-site inspection where the certified energy adviser walks through the entire home, measuring insulation depths, examining the mechanical systems (furnace, water heater, ventilation), checking window specifications, and identifying visible air leakage paths. The adviser then sets up a **blower door test**, which depressurizes the home to a standard 50 Pascals of pressure and measures total air leakage expressed as ACH50 (air changes per hour). This single number tells you more about your home's energy performance than almost any other measurement — a typical older Moncton or Fredericton home tests at 8–14 ACH50, while a well-sealed modern home should achieve 3.5 ACH50 or better.

After the visit, the adviser enters the collected data into **HOT2000**, Natural Resources Canada's energy modelling software, which simulates your home's annual energy consumption and generates an **EnerGuide rating** on a scale of 0 to 100. A score of 0 represents maximum energy loss; 100 is a net-zero home. Most pre-1990 New Brunswick homes score in the range of **50–65**. The modelling also generates a prioritized list of upgrade recommendations with estimated energy savings and rough costs for each — effectively a roadmap for your retrofit.

Why does this matter for New Brunswick homeowners specifically? Both major funding programs currently available to NB residents require an EnerGuide evaluation:

The **Canada Greener Homes Grant** (federal) provides up to **$5,600 in grants** for eligible retrofits including attic insulation, wall insulation, basement insulation, air sealing, windows, doors, heat pumps, and HRV systems. It requires a pre-retrofit EnerGuide evaluation before any work begins and a post-retrofit evaluation after the work is complete to confirm improvements. You cannot apply retroactively for work already done — the pre-evaluation must happen first.

NB Power's Home Energy Efficiency Program offers rebates on insulation upgrades, heat pumps, and HRV systems for NB Power electricity customers. Many of the higher rebate tiers within NB Power's program also reference the EnerGuide framework and energy adviser recommendations.

The evaluation itself costs approximately **$400–$500** in New Brunswick for the pre-retrofit assessment, but the federal Greener Homes program reimburses up to **$600 for the cost of both evaluations** (pre and post), meaning most homeowners effectively get the evaluations free when they complete qualifying upgrades.

What the EnerGuide evaluation will tell you about insulation: The adviser will measure or estimate insulation levels in the attic, walls, and basement/crawl space and flag them against current NB Building Code requirements and the targets for rebate eligibility. In New Brunswick's climate zone 6, current best-practice targets are roughly **R-60 in the attic, R-24+ in the above-grade walls, and R-20+ in the basement**. Many homes built before 1990 have attic insulation at R-12 to R-20, wall insulation of R-11 or less, and minimal or no basement insulation. The modelling will show you the projected energy savings from bringing each assembly up to target levels.

The blower door result is particularly valuable because it often reveals that air leakage is a bigger heat loss mechanism than the insulation level itself. A home at R-20 in the attic but 12 ACH50 may benefit more from $2,000 of targeted air sealing than from $5,000 of additional attic insulation — the modelling makes this comparison quantifiable before you spend any money.

For **renters and low-income homeowners**, Natural Resources Canada's **Canada Greener Affordable Homes** and various provincial programs provide parallel pathways with sometimes higher grant amounts and fewer eligibility restrictions. A certified energy adviser can identify which programs apply to your specific situation.

In short: if you own a home in New Brunswick that was built before 2010 and has not had a comprehensive energy retrofit, an EnerGuide evaluation is almost certainly worth doing before making any significant insulation investment. It ensures your money goes to the upgrades that will actually make a difference in your specific home, rather than following generic advice that may not match your building's actual weaknesses.

Professionals listed through the **New Brunswick Construction Network** include insulation contractors who work regularly alongside certified energy advisers and can help you navigate both the evaluation process and the rebate applications efficiently.

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

- 3Tone Construction Ltd
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Q3

How much does a home energy audit cost in Fredericton NB? | Insulation IQ?

A home energy audit in Fredericton typically costs between **$400 and $600** for a full registered energy assessment conducted by a certified EnerGuide evaluator. This price reflects the comprehensive nature of the work: the auditor visits your home, performs a **blower door test**, inspects insulation levels throughout the building envelope, evaluates your heating and cooling systems, and produces an official **EnerGuide rating** with a detailed upgrade report. Some auditors may charge slightly more for larger homes or homes with complex systems like in-floor radiant heat, wood stoves, or multiple heating zones.

The good news for Fredericton homeowners is that a significant portion of this cost is often recoverable. Under the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** program, the federal government reimburses up to **$600 for each of the two required audits** — one pre-retrofit and one post-retrofit — effectively making the audit free if you proceed with eligible upgrades. This reimbursement covers the full cost in most Fredericton cases. NB Power's **Total Home Energy Savings** program also works in conjunction with the EnerGuide audit process, and completing the audit is

a prerequisite for accessing the deeper retrofit incentives available through both programs.

It is important to use an auditor registered with **Natural Resources Canada** and accredited under the EnerGuide for Houses protocol. The audit must be completed by a licensed **energy advisor** — not just any home inspector or contractor — for the results to be eligible for rebates. In the Fredericton area, several firms employ NRCan-registered energy advisors, and NB Power can provide referrals through their program intake process.

Beyond the rebate eligibility, the audit itself delivers genuine value. You receive a **room-by-room breakdown** of where your home is losing heat, a prioritized list of upgrades ranked by cost-effectiveness, and an EnerGuide label score that can be used when selling your home. For older homes in Fredericton's established neighbourhoods — many built before modern energy codes — the audit often reveals significant insulation deficiencies in attics, basement rim joists, and exterior walls that are costing hundreds of dollars per year in excess heating costs.

In **Climate Zone 6**, which covers all of New Brunswick, homes require substantially higher insulation levels than the national average. The audit will compare your current R-values against the **NB Building Code** minimums and the enhanced targets recommended for zone 6 performance. Most Fredericton homes built before 1990 fall short of current standards in at least two or three areas, making the audit findings directly actionable.

If you are planning any insulation upgrades — whether spray foam in the basement, blown-in attic insulation, or exterior wall improvements — scheduling the pre-audit before starting work is essential. Retrofits completed without a pre-audit cannot qualify for the grant or the NB Power rebates retroactively. The modest upfront cost of the audit is far outweighed by the rebate potential, which can reach **$5,600 through Canada Greener Homes** plus additional NB Power incentives on top.

For help connecting with certified energy auditors serving the Fredericton region and finding insulation contractors who work within the rebate programs, the **New Brunswick Insulation** directory and the New Brunswick Construction Network are useful local resources.

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Q4

What does a blower door test measure in a New Brunswick home? | Insulation IQ?

A **blower door test** is a diagnostic tool used during a home energy audit to measure the **air leakage rate** of your home's building envelope. During the test, a certified energy advisor mounts a calibrated fan and frame system in an exterior doorway — usually the front door — seals the opening around it, and then depressurizes the home to a standardized pressure of **50 Pascals** below outdoor air pressure. By measuring how much airflow the fan must maintain to hold that pressure difference, the auditor can calculate exactly how leaky your home is.

The result is expressed in several ways, but the most commonly referenced metric is **ACH50** — air changes per hour at 50 Pascals. This tells you how many times per hour the entire volume of air inside your home would be replaced if the pressure difference were maintained continuously. In New Brunswick, older homes typically test at **10 to 15 ACH50** or higher. A well-sealed modern home in Climate Zone 6 should target **3.0 ACH50 or below**, and high-performance builds aim for under **1.5 ACH50**. The current **NB Building Code** requires new construction to meet a maximum of **3.0 ACH50** confirmed by blower door testing.

What makes the blower door test particularly valuable is what happens alongside the measurement. While the home is under pressure, the energy advisor uses **infrared thermography** (thermal imaging camera) and smoke pencils to identify exactly where air is infiltrating. In New Brunswick homes, the most common leakage points include **attic hatch perimeters**, **electrical outlets and pot lights on exterior walls**, **basement rim joists**, **plumbing and wiring penetrations**, and gaps around **window and door frames**. In Saint John's older housing stock and Moncton's post-war bungalows, it is common to find significant air movement through interior partition walls that connect to unconditioned attic spaces.

Air leakage is not the same as insulation deficiency, but the two are closely related. A well-insulated wall with air gaps still loses heat rapidly because convection carries warm air through and past the insulation. This is why air sealing and insulation improvements are nearly always recommended together. In Climate Zone 6, uncontrolled air infiltration can account for **25 to 40 percent** of a home's space heating energy consumption — a substantial fraction given New Brunswick's long, cold heating seasons.

The blower door test result is also required to establish your home's **EnerGuide rating**, which is the official energy efficiency score used to calculate Canada Greener Homes Grant eligibility and NB Power rebate amounts. Without the blower door component, the audit cannot generate a valid EnerGuide label. The test is performed both before and after any retrofit work; the post-upgrade blower door result confirms improvement and is needed to claim rebates.

For homeowners, the practical implication is straightforward: **air sealing is often the highest-return investment** you can make before adding more insulation. Adding R-20 batt insulation to a leaky attic helps, but not nearly as much as first sealing the bypasses and then insulating. Certified energy advisors serving Fredericton, Moncton, Miramichi, and the rest of New Brunswick will walk you through the blower door findings and prioritize which sealing work to tackle first.

If you are considering insulation upgrades and want to understand your home's air leakage profile first, the **New Brunswick Insulation** directory and the New Brunswick Construction Network can connect you with qualified energy advisors and insulation professionals who understand the full audit-to-upgrade process.

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Q5

Is an energy audit required to get NB Power insulation rebates? | Insulation IQ?

Yes, a **pre-retrofit energy audit** is required to access the primary insulation rebates available through NB Power's **Total Home Energy Savings** program. The audit — conducted by a **Natural Resources Canada registered energy advisor** — establishes your home's baseline EnerGuide rating and documents existing insulation levels before any work begins. Without that pre-audit on record, NB Power cannot confirm the improvement achieved, and the rebate claim will be rejected. There are no exceptions to this requirement for the main program.

The audit requirement exists for good reason. NB Power's program is performance-based, meaning rebates are tied to **verified improvement** in your home's energy performance, not simply to the type or amount of insulation installed. The energy advisor measures your existing insulation depths, tests air leakage via a **blower door test**, and calculates your current EnerGuide score. After the work is done, a second post-retrofit audit confirms the upgraded conditions and establishes the new score. The **difference in EnerGuide ratings** between the two audits

determines your rebate tier.

For homeowners in Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and across New Brunswick, this two-audit structure aligns directly with the **Canada Greener Homes Grant**, which reimburses up to **$600 per audit** (pre and post combined up to $1,200 total). In practice, the audit costs are often fully offset by the federal reimbursement, making the overall process cost-neutral on the audit side while unlocking up to **$5,600 in grant money** for the retrofit work itself.

NB Power's insulation rebates under the Total Home Energy Savings program target the most impactful upgrades for New Brunswick's **Climate Zone 6** conditions. Eligible measures typically include **attic insulation** upgrades to meet or exceed R-50 targets, **basement wall and rim joist insulation**, **exterior wall upgrades**, and **crawlspace insulation**. Rebate amounts vary based on the upgrade scope and the resulting EnerGuide improvement. Historically, NB Power has also offered direct incentives for specific insulation measures (such as per-square-foot grants for attic insulation), though program terms are updated periodically and should be confirmed directly with NB Power or your energy advisor.

There is one narrow category of insulation work where an audit is not required: minor spot repairs or partial upgrades that are not being submitted for rebates at all. If you simply want to top up a cold basement wall section for comfort and are not seeking any incentive funding, you can proceed without an audit. However, for any work exceeding a few hundred dollars, the math almost always favours completing the audit and accessing the available rebates — especially given the federal reimbursement of audit costs.

It is also critical to understand the **sequencing requirement**: the pre-retrofit audit must be completed **before** any work begins. Homeowners who start insulation work before booking the audit — even if they intend to claim rebates afterward — lose eligibility. The program has no provision for retroactive audits or backdated documentation. If you are in Fredericton or Moncton and considering insulation upgrades this season, booking the audit is the correct first step, not the last.

The NB Building Code sets minimum insulation levels for new construction in Climate Zone 6, but the rebate programs are designed to incentivize existing homes to reach or exceed those same standards. Most homes built before 1990 fall significantly short of current code levels, making them ideal candidates for the full audit-and-upgrade pathway.

For guidance on finding a registered energy advisor and connecting with insulation contractors who work within the NB Power rebate program, **New Brunswick Insulation** and the New Brunswick Construction Network are helpful starting points.

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Q6

How do I find a certified energy auditor in Moncton NB? | Insulation IQ?

Finding a **certified energy auditor in Moncton** requires looking specifically for professionals registered under **Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) EnerGuide for Houses** program. These individuals hold the designation of **energy advisor** (EA) and are licensed to conduct the blower door testing, whole-home assessment, and EnerGuide rating calculations that are required for NB Power rebates and the Canada Greener Homes Grant. A general home inspector, building contractor, or HVAC technician — even an experienced one — cannot substitute for a licensed energy advisor when it comes to rebate-eligible audits.

The most direct way to find a certified auditor serving Moncton and the Greater Moncton area is through **NRCan's official energy advisor locator**, available on the Canada.ca website. You enter your postal code and it returns a list of service organizations in your region that employ registered energy advisors. Because the advisor market is service-organization based (advisors work under licensed service organizations, not always independently), searching by organization rather than individual advisor is the standard approach.

NB Power's Total Home Energy Savings program also maintains a list of approved service organizations authorized to deliver audits under their rebate program. Contacting NB Power directly at 1-800-663-6272 or through their website is a reliable way to get a current, pre-vetted list of energy advisors serving the Moncton, Dieppe, Riverview, and surrounding communities. This is particularly useful because NB Power's approved list is kept current and filters out any service organizations that may have lapsed their credentials.

When you contact a service organization, verify a few key points before booking. Confirm that the advisor is **NRCan-registered** and will produce an official **EnerGuide label** and upgrade report. Ask whether they are authorized under both the Canada Greener Homes Grant and the NB Power program, since some advisors are

registered for one program but not the other. Confirm the **fee structure**: a full pre-retrofit audit in Moncton typically runs **$400 to $600**, with the federal reimbursement of up to $600 available after the post-retrofit audit is completed.

In Moncton, the Greater Moncton area has historically had good coverage from several service organizations given the city's size and the high concentration of older housing stock — particularly post-war bungalows and split-levels in neighbourhoods like Lewisville, Elmwood Drive, and Berry Mills that were built well before modern energy codes. Many of these homes have **attic insulation at R-12 to R-20** or less, basement walls that are uninsulated or minimally insulated, and significant air leakage at rim joists and around windows — exactly the conditions that a certified energy audit is designed to identify and quantify.

Timing matters in Moncton's climate. Scheduling your audit in **late fall or winter** is ideal because the temperature differential between indoors and outdoors makes **thermal imaging** during the blower door test far more effective. Cold outside temperatures cause heat loss patterns to show up vividly on an infrared camera, helping the energy advisor pinpoint exactly where insulation and air sealing improvements are needed. Spring and summer audits can still generate a valid EnerGuide rating but may be less diagnostic on the thermal imaging side.

Once the pre-audit is completed, your energy advisor will provide a prioritized list of upgrades tailored to your specific home. You can then obtain quotes from insulation contractors in Moncton and submit for rebates after the work is done and the post-audit is completed.

For additional guidance and to connect with insulation professionals working in the Moncton area who are familiar with the rebate process from start to finish, **New Brunswick Insulation** and the New Brunswick Construction Network are useful local resources.

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Q7

What improvements does an energy audit typically recommend for NB homes? | Insulation IQ?

A home energy audit in New Brunswick almost universally returns a consistent set of recommendations shaped by the province's **Climate Zone 6** conditions, the age of the housing stock, and the construction practices of previous decades. While every home is different, the following improvements appear in the vast majority of audit reports across Fredericton, Moncton, Saint John, Miramichi, and rural NB communities.

Attic insulation upgrades are the single most common recommendation. The majority of New Brunswick homes built before 1990 have **attic insulation at R-20 or less** — far below the R-50 to R-60 target appropriate for Zone 6 and increasingly required under updated NB Building Code guidance. Because heat rises and attics are the primary escape route, upgrading attic insulation delivers the largest energy reduction per dollar of any envelope measure. The audit will document your current R-value, identify any bypasses (gaps where warm air moves from the conditioned space into the attic), and recommend a target depth, typically achieved with blown-in **cellulose or fibreglass** on top of existing material after air sealing bypasses.

Air sealing is recommended alongside — and often before — insulation upgrades. The blower door test quantifies how leaky your home is, and thermal imaging during the test shows exactly where air is infiltrating. Common leak points in NB homes include **attic hatch perimeters**, **electrical boxes and pot lights on ceilings**, **plumbing and wiring penetrations**, **rim joists at the foundation**, and gaps behind knee walls. Air sealing these locations with **spray foam, acoustic sealant, or rigid foam blocking** is often the highest-ROI intervention, since insulation alone cannot stop convective heat loss through open pathways.

Basement and rim joist insulation is another near-universal recommendation. Unfinished basements in older NB homes typically have bare concrete walls and exposed rim joists — the wooden framing just above the foundation that is notorious for air leakage and thermal bridging. Insulating rim joists with **closed-cell spray foam** (R-6 per inch, and air-sealing simultaneously) and adding **rigid foam or batt insulation** to basement walls significantly reduces heat loss through the below-grade envelope. For homes in Zone 6, the recommended R-value for basement walls is **R-12 to R-20** continuous.

Heating system efficiency is almost always addressed as well. If your home uses electric baseboard heating or an older oil furnace, the audit report will note the system's efficiency rating and may recommend transitioning to a **cold-climate heat pump**, which can deliver **200 to 300 percent heating efficiency** (3 kWh of heat for every 1 kWh consumed) even at outdoor temperatures well below freezing. NB Power's rebate programs offer significant incentives for heat pump installations, and the audit puts this recommendation in the context of your whole-home energy balance.

Window and door upgrades appear on many reports, particularly for homes with **single-pane windows**, failed double-pane seals (visible as fogging between panes), or poorly weatherstripped exterior doors. While windows are expensive relative to their energy savings, severely degraded windows in NB's climate contribute meaningfully to heat loss and condensation issues. The audit will typically rank window replacement lower than attic insulation and air sealing in terms of payback period, but will flag windows that are contributing disproportionately to discomfort.

Crawlspace and floor insulation recommendations appear in homes with unheated crawlspaces or exposed floor systems over unconditioned garages. In these cases, insulating the **floor assembly** or **crawlspace walls** prevents radiant cold floors and reduces the heating load in adjacent spaces.

Finally, many NB audit reports note **ventilation considerations**. As homes are tightened through air sealing, balanced mechanical ventilation becomes more important to maintain indoor air quality and manage **vapour** — a critical issue in NB's humid summers and cold winters where improper vapour management can lead to **mould** and structural damage. The audit will flag whether a **heat recovery ventilator (HRV)** is recommended alongside tightening work.

For homeowners across New Brunswick ready to act on audit findings, **New Brunswick Insulation** and the New Brunswick Construction Network connect you with local professionals experienced in delivering these upgrades within the NB Power rebate and Canada Greener Homes framework.

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Q8

Can an energy audit help me prioritize insulation upgrades in Saint John? | Insulation IQ?

If you own a home in Saint John and you're trying to figure out where your heating dollars are actually going, a professional energy audit is one of the most valuable investments you can make before spending a cent on insulation. Saint John's climate is notoriously challenging — the city sits in NB's Climate Zone 6, where January averages hover around -10°C and heating seasons stretch well past six months. Older homes in the South End, Uptown, and the lower west side were typically built with minimal insulation by today's standards, and without a systematic assessment, homeowners often end up guessing which upgrades will deliver the biggest return.

A **certified energy auditor** uses a combination of blower door testing, combustion safety checks, and visual inspection to paint a comprehensive picture of your home's thermal performance. The **blower door test** is particularly revealing: it depressurizes your home to 50 pascals and measures how quickly air infiltrates through gaps and cracks. The resulting number — your air changes per hour at 50 pascals (ACH50) — tells the auditor just how leaky your building envelope is. In Saint John, homes built before the 1980s routinely test at 8–12 ACH50 or higher, compared to a modern target of 3.0 or below.

Once the auditor has your baseline data, they can generate a prioritized upgrade list based on potential energy savings per dollar spent. This is where audits earn their fee. A home might have terrible basement insulation at R-10 when NB Building Code requires R-20 for new construction and recommended best practice is R-24 to R-30 for Zone 6 retrofits. Or the attic might be sitting at R-20 when it should be R-50 or higher. The auditor's software models different upgrade scenarios and shows you the projected annual savings, payback period, and GHG reductions for each.

In Saint John specifically, many homes have uninsulated rim joists — the structural band that runs around the top of your foundation wall — which are responsible for a disproportionate amount of heat loss despite their small surface area. Spray foam at the rim joist, often costing just $800–$1,500 for a typical home, can yield surprisingly large energy savings. An audit catches these high-value, low-cost wins that homeowners frequently overlook.

The cost of a **registered energy advisor (REA)** assessment in New Brunswick typically ranges from $350 to $550 for the initial pre-retrofit audit. If you're planning to apply for the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** or the **NB Power Home Energy Savings Program**, the audit is mandatory — but that cost is partially offset by federal grant coverage (up to $600 for both pre and post audits combined). This means you can effectively get a professional roadmap for your insulation project at little or no net cost if you follow through with qualifying upgrades.

The audit report itself usually arrives within one to two weeks and includes an **EnerGuide rating** — a score from 0 to 100 measuring your home's energy efficiency. Most pre-1980 Saint John homes score in the 40s or low 50s. After insulation upgrades, many homeowners push into the 60s or 70s, which translates to hundreds of dollars saved on heating bills each year. With NB's heavy reliance on electric baseboard heat and oil furnaces, those savings add up quickly.

Perhaps most importantly, the audit gives you a defensible order of operations. Without it, many homeowners add attic insulation first because it's visible and inexpensive, only to discover later that their uninsulated basement walls and leaky band joist were responsible for 40% of their heat loss. The audit eliminates that guesswork and ensures every dollar you spend on insulation is doing maximum work.

If you're ready to get started with a home energy assessment in the Saint John area, the team at **New Brunswick Insulation** can connect you with registered energy advisors and walk you through the audit and upgrade process from start to finish.

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Q9

How long does a home energy assessment take in a New Brunswick home? | Insulation IQ?

A complete home energy assessment in New Brunswick typically takes between **two and four hours**, though the exact time depends on the size of your home, its age, and the complexity of the building systems involved. For a typical 1,500 to 2,000 square foot detached home — a common footprint in neighbourhoods across Moncton, Fredericton, and Miramichi — most homeowners should plan for approximately three hours.

The assessment is conducted by a **Registered Energy Advisor (REA)**, a professional certified through Natural Resources Canada's EnerGuide program. REAs are trained to evaluate every component of a home's building envelope and mechanical systems, and the assessment follows a standardized protocol that ensures the resulting EnerGuide rating is comparable across homes and provinces.

The first phase involves a **visual inspection** of the entire home, inside and out. The REA will check attic insulation depth and type, basement wall and floor insulation, crawlspace conditions if applicable, window and door sealing, and any exposed rim joists or penetrations through the building envelope. In older New Brunswick homes — particularly those built before the 1980s energy crisis — this inspection often reveals insulation levels far below current code minimums. An attic at R-20, for example, falls well short of the R-50 that Climate Zone 6 best practices recommend.

The second and most technical phase is the **blower door test**. The REA installs a calibrated fan in one of your exterior doorframes, seals it, and depressurizes the home to a standard pressure of 50 pascals. The fan measures the volume of air flowing through it to maintain that pressure differential — and that number directly quantifies your home's air leakage rate. The test itself takes about 20–30 minutes, including setup. Many REAs use this pressurized state to walk through the home with a smoke pencil or thermal camera, physically locating where air is infiltrating so you know exactly where to focus sealing and insulation work.

Following the blower door test, the REA collects data on your **mechanical systems**: heating equipment type and age, domestic hot water heater, ventilation (HRV or ERV if present), and any auxiliary heating sources. They also gather information on your household (number of occupants, typical thermostat settings) and review two years of utility bills if you can provide them. All of this data feeds into the HOT2000 energy modelling software that NRCan uses to generate your EnerGuide rating.

After the appointment, the REA inputs all collected data and runs the simulation. The resulting **EnerGuide report** is usually delivered within one to two weeks. It includes your home's current energy rating (typically 40–60 for older NB homes), a breakdown of where energy is being lost, and a list of recommended upgrades with modelled savings projections. If you're pursuing the **Canada Greener Homes Grant**, this report forms the official pre-retrofit baseline and must be on file before you proceed with any qualifying upgrades.

For larger homes — those over 2,500 square feet, or those with complex layouts like finished basement suites, multiple additions, or cathedral ceilings — the assessment can run closer to four hours. Homes with **crawlspaces** add time because the REA must physically inspect the crawlspace for moisture, insulation, and vapour barrier conditions, which in New Brunswick's humid maritime climate can be particularly significant in coastal communities near Saint John and the Fundy Shore.

You should be present for the full assessment, or at minimum have someone available who knows the home well. The REA will ask questions throughout and will often explain what they're observing in real time — making the appointment itself an educational experience beyond just a form-filling exercise. Many homeowners find the walkthrough alone worth the $350–$550 assessment fee before any grant recovery is factored in.

The team at **New Brunswick Insulation** works regularly with energy advisors across the province and can help you understand your EnerGuide report and determine which insulation upgrades will have the greatest impact on your home's performance.

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Q10

What is the difference between an EnerGuide audit and a thermal scan in NB? | Insulation IQ?

These two assessment tools are often mentioned in the same conversation about home insulation, but they serve quite different purposes and produce very different types of information. Understanding the distinction helps New Brunswick homeowners make smarter decisions about where to spend their diagnostic dollars — and when they might benefit from using both.

An **EnerGuide audit** is a comprehensive, standardized home energy assessment conducted by a Registered Energy Advisor (REA) certified through Natural Resources Canada. It evaluates your entire home as an energy system: the building envelope, heating and cooling equipment, domestic hot water, ventilation, and even occupant behaviour factors like thermostat settings. The assessment includes a blower door test to quantify overall air leakage, a visual inspection of insulation levels throughout the home, and data collection on all mechanical systems. All of this feeds into HOT2000 energy modelling software, which produces your official **EnerGuide rating** — a score from 0 to 100 representing your home's energy efficiency relative to a standardized reference house.

The EnerGuide audit answers the question: *How energy efficient is my home overall, and what will different upgrades do for that rating?* It produces a quantified, modelled result with specific upgrade recommendations and projected annual savings. Critically, the EnerGuide audit is the **required gateway** for both the Canada Greener Homes Grant and the NB Power Home Energy Savings Program rebates. Without a pre-retrofit EnerGuide audit on file, you cannot access those incentives, regardless of how much you spend on insulation. In New Brunswick, the pre and post audit combination costs roughly $350–$550 each, with up to $600 in combined coverage available through the Greener Homes Grant.

A **thermal scan** (also called an infrared thermography inspection) is a diagnostic imaging tool, not a holistic energy assessment. A certified thermographer uses an **infrared camera** to photograph your home's surfaces — walls, ceilings, floors, windows — and capture temperature differentials invisible to the naked eye. Cold spots in walls indicate missing or settled insulation. Thermal bridges show up as linear cold streaks running along studs or joists. Air infiltration zones appear as diffuse cold patches around electrical outlets, window frames, or ceiling penetrations.

The thermal scan answers a different question: *Exactly where are my insulation and air sealing deficiencies located?* Rather than a score or a modelled projection, it produces a visual map of problem areas. A thermographer working on a 1,970s-era split-level in Fredericton might discover that the fibreglass batts in the bedroom walls have settled and left a 300mm gap at the top of every stud bay — a deficiency that would be invisible without the camera. This precision makes thermal scans especially valuable when preparing for targeted insulation retrofits.

There is one important caveat: thermal scans only work well under the right conditions. You need a **minimum 10°C temperature differential** between indoors and outdoors for the camera to detect meaningful contrasts. In New Brunswick's climate, this means thermal scans are most effective from November through March — when the Moncton and Saint John heating season is in full swing. Performing a thermal scan in July yields minimal useful data because the temperature differential across the wall assembly is too small.

Some REAs perform a basic infrared scan during the blower door test phase of an EnerGuide audit, using the depressurization to amplify air leakage signatures and make them more visible to the camera. This combined approach is the most powerful diagnostic option, but not every audit includes thermal imaging — it's worth asking your REA specifically whether infrared is part of their standard service or available as an add-on.

For most New Brunswick homeowners prioritizing the Greener Homes Grant pathway, the **EnerGuide audit is the starting point** — it's mandatory, it's partially subsidized, and it produces the upgrade roadmap you need. A thermal scan is most valuable as a supplementary diagnostic when you want room-by-room precision before major work begins, or when an audit has flagged a specific wall section or area as a problem zone and you want to confirm exactly where the deficiency lies before opening walls.

New Brunswick Insulation can help you navigate both assessment types and connect you with the right professionals to maximize your insulation project's effectiveness and rebate eligibility.

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Q11

Do I need a pre and post energy audit for the Canada Greener Homes Grant in NB? | Insulation IQ?

Yes — both a **pre-retrofit audit and a post-retrofit audit** are mandatory requirements for the Canada Greener Homes Grant program, and this requirement applies to New Brunswick homeowners just as it does across all provinces. Neither audit can be substituted, waived, or performed out of sequence. The pre-retrofit audit must be completed *before* any eligible upgrades begin, and the post-retrofit audit must occur *after* the work is finished. Reversing that order or skipping either step disqualifies your application, regardless of how much you spend on insulation.

Here is exactly how the process works in New Brunswick:

First, you **register your application** through the Canada Greener Homes portal at nrcan.gc.ca before scheduling your pre-retrofit audit. Registration establishes your file in the system and is required before an audit can be linked to your application. Do not book the audit and then register afterward — the sequencing matters.

Second, your registered application triggers the booking of a **pre-retrofit EnerGuide audit** conducted by a Registered Energy Advisor (REA). The REA visits your home, performs a blower door test, inspects all insulation and envelope components, collects mechanical system data, and enters everything into HOT2000 modelling software. The resulting EnerGuide report establishes your home's baseline energy rating — typically somewhere in the 40s or low 50s for pre-1980 homes in Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John. This baseline is your official starting point and must be on file with NRCan before any work begins.

Third, you **complete your eligible upgrades**. For insulation work in New Brunswick, this typically includes attic insulation (bringing levels to R-50 or higher from a low baseline), basement wall insulation (targeting R-20 to R-24 in Zone 6), crawlspace insulation, exterior wall insulation, and air sealing. The specific grant amounts vary by upgrade type: attic insulation, for example, qualifies for grants up to $3,500 depending on the improvement in EnerGuide rating achieved.

Fourth, you **book the post-retrofit audit** once all upgrades are complete. The same REA (or another certified REA) returns to your home, repeats the blower door test, verifies the installed insulation levels and air sealing work, and runs the updated HOT2000 model. The new EnerGuide rating reflects your improved home performance. The difference between your pre and post ratings determines your grant eligibility: larger jumps in the EnerGuide score unlock larger grants, with a maximum of **$5,600 in total grant funding** available for qualifying retrofits.

The **cost of both audits** is itself a grant-eligible expense. NRCan covers up to $600 total for the pre and post audit combination — typically structured as $300 per audit. In New Brunswick, REA audit fees generally run $350–$550 each, so the out-of-pocket cost after grant recovery is relatively modest. Some program participants find the audit fees effectively free if the total grant they receive is large enough to absorb that cost many times over.

One important timing note: the Canada Greener Homes Grant program has faced demand pressures since its launch, and **wait times for REA appointments** in New Brunswick can stretch several weeks, particularly in spring

when homeowners are motivated to act. In Moncton especially, booking well in advance of your planned renovation start date is essential. Missing the pre-audit window — starting insulation work before the audit is complete — permanently disqualifies you from the grant for those specific upgrades.

There is a separate and complementary provincial pathway worth knowing: **NB Power's Home Energy Savings Program** also uses the EnerGuide audit framework and provides rebates on top of the federal grants, meaning many NB homeowners can stack provincial and federal incentives for the same project. The audit satisfies both programs simultaneously, so you are not paying for two separate assessments to access both funding streams.

If you're uncertain whether your planned insulation project meets the eligibility thresholds or want help navigating the application process, **New Brunswick Insulation** works with homeowners across the province to ensure upgrades are designed and documented to maximize grant recovery from both the Greener Homes Grant and NB Power rebate programs.

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Q12

How does infrared thermal imaging detect insulation problems in NB homes? | Insulation IQ?

Infrared thermal imaging works by detecting **surface temperature variations** that are invisible to the naked eye but reveal exactly how heat is moving — or failing to be retained — within your home's building envelope. In New Brunswick's Climate Zone 6, where winter temperatures in Fredericton and the Saint John River Valley regularly drop to -15°C or colder, the physics that make thermal imaging so powerful are exactly the same physics that drive your heating bills: heat moves from warm areas to cold areas, and any gap, void, or weak point in your insulation system creates a pathway for that heat transfer to accelerate.

The camera itself is essentially a highly sensitive temperature measurement device. Rather than capturing visible light, its detector reads **infrared radiation** emitted by every surface in its view. Those radiation values are converted into a colour-mapped thermal image — typically showing cold areas in blue or purple and warm areas in red, orange, or yellow. The contrast between adjacent surface areas tells the story of what's happening inside the wall, ceiling, or floor assembly behind the surface.

Missing or settled insulation shows up as cold patches during winter scanning. In an exterior wall insulated with fibreglass batts, for example, it's common for the batts to have slumped over decades, leaving a gap at the top of each stud bay. From the exterior during a cold snap, the camera reveals a repeating band of cold along the top of every stud bay — a pattern that would be completely invisible from a visual inspection. In New Brunswick's older housing stock, particularly in Bathurst and Campbellton where many homes date to the 1960s and 1970s, this type of settled batt insulation is extremely common and can account for significant ongoing heat loss.

Air infiltration produces a slightly different thermal signature than missing insulation. Rather than a uniform cold patch, air leaks appear as diffuse, irregular cold zones or streaks that radiate outward from a penetration point. Around electrical outlets on exterior walls — a classic air infiltration site — the camera often shows a starburst or feathering pattern as cold outside air works its way through the outlet box and warms slightly as it spreads into the wall cavity. This distinction between conductive heat loss (from missing insulation) and convective heat loss (from air leakage) helps an experienced thermographer recommend the right fix: more insulation in the first case, air sealing in the second.

Thermal bridges show up as linear cold streaks running along structural members. In a wood-frame wall, every stud acts as a thermal bridge because wood conducts heat roughly ten times more readily than fibreglass insulation. With normal insulation between studs, this bridging is manageable — but in older construction where the stud bays are inadequately insulated, the studs stand out dramatically on the thermal image as cold lines. More serious thermal bridging occurs around steel components, window lintels, balcony connections, and uninsulated rim joists, which in New Brunswick homes are among the most common and energy-significant deficiencies found during thermal surveys.

Moisture problems are also detectable, though this is a secondary application. Wet insulation conducts heat differently than dry insulation and can appear on the thermal image as irregularly cool areas, particularly if the moisture is evaporating and producing a cooling effect. In New Brunswick's humid coastal climate near Saint John and the Bay of Fundy, moisture infiltration through failed vapour barriers or inadequate exterior cladding can damage insulation and degrade its R-value significantly before homeowners ever notice it.

For thermal imaging to work effectively, a **temperature differential of at least 10°C** between inside and outside is required. This means New Brunswick's November through March window is ideal. Thermal scans during the heating season — when the house is warm and the outside is cold — produce the clearest, most diagnostic

images. Summer scans can sometimes use air conditioning to create the necessary differential, but the results are generally less clear.

Professional thermographers often perform the scan during a **blower door test**, when the home is depressurized by 50 pascals. The artificially increased pressure drives more air through infiltration points, amplifying the thermal signature of leaks and making them easier to identify precisely. This combined approach delivers the most actionable results, showing both the location and relative severity of every insulation and air sealing deficiency.

For New Brunswick homeowners considering a thermal scan before starting an insulation retrofit, **New Brunswick Insulation** can help coordinate diagnostic assessments and use the results to develop a targeted upgrade plan that addresses your home's specific deficiencies efficiently.

Q13

What EnerGuide rating should a well-insulated New Brunswick home achieve? | Insulation IQ?

The **EnerGuide rating** is Canada's official measure of a home's energy performance, expressed as a number from 0 to 100 — where 100 represents a home that produces as much energy as it consumes, and lower numbers indicate greater energy consumption. For New Brunswick homeowners considering insulation upgrades, understanding where your home sits on this scale — and where it should be — is one of the most valuable planning tools available.

A **typical unimproved older New Brunswick home**, particularly those built before the 1980s in Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John, commonly scores between 45 and 60 on the EnerGuide scale. These homes were built with minimal insulation standards and are often riddled with air leakage that dramatically reduces thermal efficiency, especially during NB's long winters when heating degree days accumulate rapidly from November through March.

A **well-insulated New Brunswick home** should realistically aim for a rating of **74 to 82** or higher. This range reflects a home that meets or exceeds current **NB Building Code** requirements, which align with the National Building Code of Canada 2020 provisions — including requirements for **Climate Zone 6** performance. Zone 6 applies to the vast majority of New Brunswick, meaning insulation standards here are among the more demanding in the country. Achieving a rating in the 74–82 band typically requires attic insulation at **R-50 to R-60**, exterior walls at **R-20 to R-24**, basement walls at **R-20**, and a well-air-sealed building envelope with an **ACH50 blower door result below 3.0** (and ideally below 2.5).

Homes targeting the **Canada Greener Homes Grant** were required to demonstrate improvement measured by a certified EnerGuide evaluation both before and after upgrades. While the grant intake has closed, the **NB Power Home Energy Efficiency Program** continues to use EnerGuide evaluations as the benchmark for qualifying rebates. To access maximum rebates — which can total $5,000 or more depending on the measures installed — your post-retrofit EnerGuide rating needs to show meaningful improvement, generally a jump of 10 or more rating points.

A **near-Net Zero Ready home** in New Brunswick, meaning one built to the most current energy codes or voluntarily to that standard, targets EnerGuide ratings of **86 and above**. These homes combine very high levels of insulation, triple-pane windows, heat recovery ventilation (HRV), and air source or ground source heat pumps. The **NB Building Code's upcoming Step Code trajectory** is gradually pushing toward these standards, so homeowners doing major renovations today are wise to insulate beyond minimum code requirements to avoid costly re-work in the coming decade.

For a practical benchmark: a newly constructed NB home built to 2020 NBC requirements should achieve roughly **EnerGuide 80 to 83** with diligent air sealing and proper installation of all insulation layers. If your existing home scores below 65, prioritizing attic air sealing and insulation upgrades followed by basement wall insulation will typically yield the largest rating point gains per dollar invested.

The EnerGuide label also reports your home's estimated annual energy consumption in **gigajoules (GJ)**. A well-insulated 1,800 sq ft NB home should consume roughly 80–120 GJ per year for space heating, hot water, and appliances combined — compared to 180–250 GJ for an unimproved home of the same size. That gap translates directly to heating bills: with NB Power electricity and furnace oil both factored in, the difference between a rating of 55 and a rating of 78 can easily represent $2,500 to $4,000 per year in energy savings.

If you're unsure of your current EnerGuide rating, a **Natural Resources Canada certified energy advisor** can perform a formal audit using blower door testing and thermal modelling to give you an accurate baseline. New Brunswick Insulation and the contractors listed on the New Brunswick Construction Network can point you toward qualified local advisors who understand the specific building stock, climate, and upgrade priorities common in NB communities.

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Q14

Can I get a free energy audit through NB Power programs? | Insulation IQ?

Yes — **NB Power does offer subsidized energy audits** as part of its Home Energy Efficiency Program, and for many New Brunswick homeowners the out-of-pocket cost is significantly reduced or, in some qualifying cases, effectively free depending on the program stream you access and your household income level.

The standard pathway for most NB homeowners is through **NB Power's Energy Savings Program**, which has historically partnered with certified energy advisors to perform pre- and post-retrofit EnerGuide evaluations at a subsidized rate. The full cost of a certified energy audit by a **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) registered energy advisor** typically runs $400 to $600 in the Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John market. NB Power rebates have brought that cost down to as little as $100 to $175 for eligible participants, with some program years covering the full audit cost when paired with qualifying upgrades.

For **low-income households**, the picture is even more favourable. NB Power's **Low-Income Energy Savings Program (LIESP)** provides deeper support, and through coordination with federal programs like the **Canada Greener Homes Affordability Program** (the successor initiative to the original Greener Homes Grant), eligible households may qualify for a fully subsidized pre-retrofit audit at no cost. Income thresholds vary, but a household of four earning below approximately $75,000 to $90,000 annually in New Brunswick would typically qualify for enhanced support.

It's important to understand what an **energy audit actually involves** so you can assess the value. A certified evaluation includes a **blower door pressurization test** that measures air leakage in your home (reported as ACH50 — air changes per hour at 50 Pascals of pressure), a visual inspection of all accessible insulation locations (attic, walls, basement, crawlspace), window and door assessment, mechanical system review, and thermal modelling that produces your official **EnerGuide rating**. The advisor then provides a prioritized upgrade report showing which improvements would yield the greatest energy savings per dollar — an extremely practical roadmap for any NB homeowner planning insulation work.

For Climate Zone 6 homes in New Brunswick — which includes virtually the entire province — this audit report is particularly valuable because the interaction between air sealing and insulation is more consequential than in milder climates. An experienced advisor will catch air leakage paths at partition walls, ceiling/wall junctions, electrical penetrations, and plumbing chases that are invisible to the naked eye but responsible for 30–40% of a typical NB home's heat loss.

To initiate the process, the simplest step is to **call NB Power directly at 1-800-663-6272** or visit their website to check current program offerings. Program details, rebate amounts, and eligibility criteria do change year to year based on available funding, so it's worth confirming current terms before booking. NB Power can refer you to a list of registered energy advisors active in your region.

Alternatively, if your primary goal is to access upgrade rebates rather than the formal EnerGuide rating, NB Power also offers **prescriptive rebates** for specific measures like attic insulation, basement insulation, and air sealing that do not always require a full audit — though the rebate amounts are generally higher when you follow the full audit pathway. For example, installing blown-in attic insulation to R-50 in a 1,200 sq ft Fredericton bungalow might qualify for $800 to $1,500 in prescriptive rebates without an audit, but the same project supported by pre- and post-retrofit

audits could unlock $2,000 or more in total incentives when combined with other measures.

The bottom line: while a completely free energy audit isn't guaranteed for every homeowner, the combination of NB Power subsidies and federal program layering means most New Brunswick residents can access this service for well under $200 — and often at no cost if income-eligible. The team at New Brunswick Insulation and qualified contractors listed through the New Brunswick Construction Network are familiar with current program terms and can help you navigate the audit process before beginning any insulation project.

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Q15

What should I prepare before an energy auditor visits my Dieppe home? | Insulation IQ?

Preparing your home properly before a **certified energy auditor** arrives is one of the best ways to ensure you get an accurate EnerGuide evaluation and the most useful upgrade recommendations. For homeowners in Dieppe — and across the greater Moncton area — a little advance preparation can save time during the appointment and help the auditor identify issues that might otherwise be missed.

The most important thing to gather in advance is **your home's energy billing history**. Pull together 12 months of utility bills covering electricity (NB Power), heating fuel (furnace oil, natural gas, propane, or wood), and any supplemental heating sources. Your energy advisor will use this consumption data to calibrate the thermal model of your home against actual measured energy use, which makes the resulting **EnerGuide rating** far more accurate than modelling alone. NB Power customers can access usage history through their online account portal; oil delivery customers should contact their supplier for a delivery log.

Next, locate any **building documents** you have on hand: original construction drawings or permits if your Dieppe home was built in the last two decades, records of any previous insulation work or renovations, and documentation of any mechanical system upgrades such as furnace replacement, heat pump installation, or HRV addition. The auditor needs to understand the construction history to correctly assess what's already in the walls, attic, and basement.

Prepare to **provide clear access** to all areas of your home that contain or affect insulation. This specifically means:

Attic access is critical — move any stored boxes or belongings away from the hatch so the auditor can get in easily. If your attic has pull-down stairs, make sure they're operational. Attic inspections in Dieppe homes built in the 1970s–1990s frequently reveal insufficient insulation depth, damaged vapour barriers, and blocked soffit vents that dramatically undermine performance.

Basement and crawlspace access must be unobstructed. Move stored items away from perimeter walls so the auditor can inspect foundation insulation and vapour barriers. In many Dieppe bungalows and split-levels, the basement rim joist area — where the floor framing meets the foundation wall — is a major thermal weak point, and the auditor needs clear sightlines to assess it.

Mechanical room access is required. Your furnace, heat pump air handler, HRV unit, water heater, and any ventilation equipment should be accessible and visible. The auditor will note equipment age, fuel type, estimated efficiency, and ventilation strategy.

For the **blower door test** — the pressurized air leakage measurement at the heart of the evaluation — the auditor will need all exterior doors, windows, and fireplace dampers closed during the test. If you have a wood stove or fireplace, ensure the damper is closed and the firebox is cool before the appointment. Turn off any combustion appliances (gas stoves, wood stoves) during the blower door test for safety. This is standard protocol and the auditor will walk you through it on arrival.

If you have a **heat recovery ventilator (HRV)** or energy recovery ventilator (ERV), know where it is and whether it has been recently serviced. Filters clogged with dust reduce its effectiveness and can affect air quality readings. Similarly, if you have a central vacuum system with outdoor exhaust, be prepared to identify where it is.

Write down any **comfort complaints** you've noticed in your home — cold floors over the garage, drafty corners in the living room, frost forming at window edges in January, excessive humidity in the basement during summer. This experiential knowledge is invaluable context that helps the auditor focus diagnostic attention where it matters most in your specific home.

Finally, **clear a workspace** at your kitchen table or a central area where the auditor can set up a laptop and paperwork. The evaluation takes approximately **two to three hours** for a typical Dieppe home, and the advisor will want to sit with you at the end to review findings and walk through the prioritized upgrade recommendations.

Being well-prepared makes the audit more efficient and the results more actionable. New Brunswick Insulation professionals and the insulation contractors listed through the New Brunswick Construction Network are accustomed to working from EnerGuide reports and can translate audit findings into a concrete insulation upgrade plan.

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Q16

How often should I have an energy audit done on my New Brunswick home? | Insulation IQ?

The frequency of energy audits in a New Brunswick home depends on your goals — whether you're tracking long-term performance, planning phased renovations, or accessing rebate programs — but a practical framework helps most homeowners decide when a new evaluation genuinely adds value.

For the average NB homeowner who has not recently undertaken any major energy upgrades, the most important audit is the **first one**: your baseline evaluation. If you've never had a certified **EnerGuide evaluation** done, that first audit is the highest-value action you can take before spending a dollar on insulation or mechanical upgrades. Without knowing your current air leakage rate, existing insulation levels, and overall EnerGuide score, you're essentially guessing at where to invest your renovation budget — and in Climate Zone 6 homes across Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, and rural New Brunswick, the wrong sequencing of upgrades can waste thousands of dollars.

Once you have a baseline, the **standard recommendation** from Natural Resources Canada and most certified energy advisors is to schedule a **post-retrofit evaluation within 18 months** of completing significant upgrades. This second audit serves two purposes: it confirms that the installed insulation and air sealing are performing as modelled, and it generates the final EnerGuide label required to close out **NB Power rebate applications** and any federal program claims. Without the post-retrofit audit, you typically cannot access the full rebate package tied to demonstrated performance improvement.

Beyond the baseline-and-post-retrofit pair, most homeowners do not need annual audits. A well-insulated, air-sealed home that hasn't undergone structural changes should perform consistently year over year. That said, there are **specific triggers that warrant a new audit**:

A **major renovation** — adding an addition, finishing a basement, re-roofing, replacing windows, or significantly reconfiguring interior space — changes the thermal envelope in ways that render an old EnerGuide rating obsolete. Any renovation touching the building envelope should be preceded by at minimum a consultation with an energy advisor, and often a full new evaluation.

Persistent comfort problems that weren't present before — new cold spots, increased condensation on interior surfaces, unexplained spikes in heating bills — can signal insulation failure, vapour barrier damage (particularly relevant in NB's humid coastal climates near Saint John and Shediac), or new air leakage paths created by settling or pest damage. A blower door test can quickly pinpoint whether degraded air sealing is the culprit.

A change in heating system is another meaningful trigger. If you've switched from oil heat to a ducted heat pump, or added a mini-split system, your home's thermal load profile has changed. An updated energy model helps confirm that insulation levels are appropriate for the new system's operating characteristics — heat pumps are particularly sensitive to envelope performance because they lose efficiency rapidly in NB's coldest weeks when the building has high heat loss.

As a general rule of thumb: **every 8 to 12 years** is a reasonable interval for a routine re-evaluation even in the absence of major renovations, simply to catch incremental degradation and assess whether new insulation products or rebate programs make upgrades financially attractive that weren't before. Given that NB Power's energy efficiency program incentives have evolved substantially over the past decade — and will continue to evolve as provincial carbon reduction commitments tighten — checking back periodically ensures you're not leaving rebate money on the table.

For homeowners who purchased an older home (pre-1990 construction is common throughout the Miramichi, Campbellton, and Sussex areas), commissioning a first-ever energy audit is a priority regardless of how recent the purchase was. Many resale homes in New Brunswick have little documentation of prior insulation work, and an EnerGuide evaluation is the only reliable way to establish what's actually in the walls and attic.

New Brunswick Insulation professionals work regularly with certified energy advisors and can help you interpret your existing report or coordinate a new evaluation as part of planning your upgrade project. The New Brunswick Construction Network is also a useful starting point for finding qualified local advisors and insulation contractors.

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Q17

What is the best time of year to schedule an energy audit in NB? | Insulation IQ?

Timing your energy audit strategically in New Brunswick can make the evaluation more accurate, more informative, and better positioned to connect to seasonal rebate application windows. While certified energy advisors operate year-round and can conduct valid EnerGuide evaluations in any month, **late fall and winter** are widely regarded as the optimal window for most New Brunswick homeowners.

The core reason is diagnostic clarity. The **blower door test** that anchors every certified energy audit measures air leakage by pressurizing or depressurizing your home and calculating how quickly air moves through the building envelope. This test produces the same numerical result regardless of season — air leakage is a physical property of your home's construction, not the outdoor temperature. However, what changes with season is your ability to **feel and see evidence** of that leakage. When outdoor temperatures drop to -10°C or -20°C — common in Fredericton, Edmundston, and the upper Saint John River Valley from December through February — thermal drafts become perceptible and thermal bridging through framing members and poorly insulated zones shows up dramatically on an **infrared thermography camera**.

Many certified energy advisors in New Brunswick use **infrared thermal imaging** as a complement to the blower door test. This camera-based technique reveals cold spots, moisture intrusion, missing insulation in stud bays, and air leakage pathways at wall/ceiling junctions that would be completely invisible in summer. The temperature differential required for effective infrared scanning is at least **10°C between indoors and outdoors**, and ideally 15–20°C — a condition that is reliably met for five to six months of the NB year. Trying to do the same infrared scan in July, when indoor and outdoor temperatures are nearly equal, yields almost no useful thermal contrast.

Late October through early March is therefore the prime audit window for maximum diagnostic value. Within that range, scheduling in **November or early December** before the holiday period has a practical advantage: you receive your upgrade recommendations with enough time to plan and book insulation contractors before the deep winter rush, and your project can potentially be completed before the coldest weeks of January and February. Attic insulation and basement rim joist work can proceed in most winter conditions, though exterior-facing work requiring open wall cavities is better suited to shoulder seasons.

Late September and early October represent a secondary sweet spot that some advisors and homeowners prefer. Temperatures are cool enough to begin generating meaningful thermal contrast for infrared work, scheduling is easier before the heating season rush, and homeowners have a full month to review the audit report and obtain contractor quotes before winter pricing pressures kick in. Insulation contractors in Moncton, Saint John, and Fredericton often have more availability in October than in December or January.

Spring audits (April to May) are a reasonable choice for homeowners whose primary goal is accessing **NB Power rebate programs** with a post-renovation follow-up later in the same calendar year. If you complete the pre-retrofit

audit in May and finish insulation work by August, a September post-retrofit audit neatly closes out the rebate file within a single calendar year. The trade-off is reduced infrared diagnostic capability unless the advisor books on a notably cold spring day.

Summer audits are the least diagnostic for air and insulation issues, though they remain valid for EnerGuide modelling purposes and for homeowners primarily concerned with **cooling load** assessments — relevant for homes running central air conditioning or ductless mini-splits. In coastal NB communities like Shediac or Moncton's south end where summer humidity is high, a summer audit can also detect moisture-related insulation degradation in crawlspaces and rim joist areas.

One practical note on scheduling: **certified energy advisors in New Brunswick are in high demand from November through February**, and wait times of three to six weeks are common during peak heating season. If you want a January or February audit for maximum thermal imaging benefit, booking in October or early November is advisable. Advisors serving rural areas from Woodstock to Miramichi often have tighter availability windows than those based in the Moncton or Fredericton markets.

For guidance on timing your audit to align with current NB Power program intake periods, the contractors listed through New Brunswick Insulation and the New Brunswick Construction Network can help you connect with local advisors who know the current program calendar.

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