**Self Drilling vs. Self Tapping vs. Sheet Metal Screws: A Guide to Terminology**

One of the most difficult aspects of being a seller of screws is knowing what your customer is looking for when they ask for self-tapping screws.

The term “self-tapping screws” (or “tapping screws”, or “self tappers”) generally refers to a type of screw that is self starting when driven into material, whether it be wood, metal or plastic. It taps its own hole. Any screw with a point at the tip can technically be referred to as “Self-Tapping”.

**However**

When someone requests a self tapping screw, they are generally looking for one of three types of screws:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Drilling Screws</th>
<th>Type A Screws</th>
<th>Type AB Screws</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Self Drilling Screws" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Type A Screws" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Type AB Screws" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>You can find screws of this type in our Self-Drilling category page. Drill bit tip allows for self starting in most materials. No pre-drilling required. AKA self-drillers, drill screws, tek screws.</td>
<td>Commonly called <strong>Sheet Metal Screws</strong>, you can find screws of this type on our Self-Tapping category page. Type A Self-Tapping Screws are exact matches to standard wood screws, except that they are always fully threaded, while wood screws are not.</td>
<td>Also commonly called <strong>Sheet Metal Screws</strong>, you can find screws of this type on our Self-Tapping category page. Type AB Self-Tapping Screws have finer thread spacing than Type A Screws, and are often preferred, especially when going into thin or brittle material.</td>
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Many other types of screws often fall under the “self-tapping” label, but they will most commonly be referred to by a more specific name:

- Concrete Screws
- Deck Screws
- Drywall Screws
- Self-Piercing Screws
- Wood Screws

Even some screws without points are technically considered “self-tapping”, because they either cut or form the material they’re installed in to hold onto their threads:

- Type B Screws
- U-Drive Screws
- Thread Cutting Screws
  - Type 1
  - Type 23
  - Type 25
  - Type F
- Thread Forming Screws
  - High Low Screws
  - TFS for Plastics
  - TFS for Metal