

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 it's 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:

Self-Drilling Screws	Type A Screws	Type AB Screws
 <p>You can find screws of this type in our Self-Drilling category page.</p> <p>Drill bit tip allows for self starting in most materials. No pre-drilling required. AKA self-drillers, drill screws, tek screws.</p>	 <p>Commonly called Sheet Metal Screws, you can find screws of this type on our Self-Tapping category page.</p> <p>Type A Self-Tapping Screws are exact matches to standard wood screws, except that they are always fully threaded, while wood screws are not.</p>	 <p>Also commonly called Sheet Metal Screws, you can find screws of this type on our Self-Tapping category page.</p> <p>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.</p>

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