



# Potential U.S. Fastener Demanding Markets in 2026:

## DIY Fasteners



**Fasteners** rarely dominate market headlines, yet they are embedded in nearly every home improvement activity. Whether a homeowner is repairing a loose deck board, installing shelving, updating cabinet hardware, or reinforcing a fence, screws, nails, anchors, bolts, and washers are essential. As the U.S. moves into 2026, the outlook for DIY fasteners is closely tied to broader housing and remodeling trends rather than to any single trade statistic. Because HS codes classify fasteners by function and physical characteristics, such as under 7318 for screws and bolts or 7317 for nails and staples, rather than by end use, it is impossible to isolate “DIY fasteners” directly from trade data. Instead, we must extrapolate likely demand from housing activity, consumer behavior, and policy conditions.

Based on current forecasts and market signals, **2026 appears to be a year of cautious stability for DIY fasteners.** The market is unlikely to experience explosive growth, but neither does it show signs of collapse. Instead, **demand is expected to concentrate on repair-driven projects, aging housing upgrades, and smaller-scale improvements that homeowners can justify in a still-elevated interest rate environment.** At the same time, tariff uncertainty and ongoing trade measures remain critical variables that could shape pricing, sourcing, and product availability.

### Remodeling Stability and the Resilience of Small Projects

The foundation of DIY fastener demand in 2026 rests on remodeling activity. Major housing research institutions project that overall homeowner improvement spending will continue to expand, although at a slower growth rate than in prior years. Annual spending is expected to reach record levels, even as year-over-year growth moderates. This suggests a large, active remodeling base that continues to consume fastening products, albeit without the urgency or speculative energy of a boom cycle. Mortgage rates are forecast to remain above historical lows, hovering around the mid-6% range. While this may limit large, financed renovations, it reinforces the “lock-in” effect: homeowners who secured lower mortgage rates in earlier years are less inclined to move and more likely to invest in maintaining or upgrading their existing properties. An aging housing stock further supports this trend. With the median age of U.S. homes exceeding four decades, repair and maintenance are not optional but rather inevitable. Aging decks need reinforcement, fences require replacement sections, doors need re-hanging, drywall requires patching, and exterior trim must be secured or replaced. All of these tasks are fastener intensive.



**The median age of US homes has been over 4 decades.**

In my view, repair and maintenance projects represent the most reliable demand engine for DIY fasteners in 2026. These are not discretionary lifestyle upgrades; they are functional necessities. Even in slower economic periods, homeowners continue to purchase wood screws, masonry anchors, corrosion-resistant exterior fasteners, and general hardware assortments to address structural or safety concerns. Small projects may not generate high ticket values, but collectively they produce steady unit volume.

Additionally, aging-in-place modifications are quietly expanding the demand base. As more homeowners adapt properties for long-term occupancy, installations such as grab bars, reinforced railings, and accessibility fixtures require secure anchoring into studs or masonry. These projects often require higher-grade anchors and structural fasteners, supporting demand for more specialized fastening solutions. Even when professional contractors perform the installations, products frequently move through the same retail channels that serve DIY customers.

Outdoor living and exterior upgrades also remain important contributors. When budgets are constrained, homeowners often prioritize visible improvements with manageable scope, such as repairing decks, replacing fence boards, upgrading pergolas, or assembling sheds. Exterior work typically requires corrosion-resistant screws, galvanized nails, structural connectors, and weather-treated fasteners. Seasonal demand peaks are likely to persist, particularly in spring and summer, sustaining consistent movement through retail outlets.

Transaction-driven DIY demand may also provide incremental support. While existing-home sales are not projected to surge, modest improvements in inventory and transaction volume could trigger “move-in” projects. New homeowners frequently undertake quick installations such as shelving, curtain rods, storage systems, and minor hardware replacements. These seemingly minor tasks translate into high turnover for wall anchors, cabinet screws, and assorted fastener kits. Even a slight uptick in transactions can ripple through fastener aisles.

Overall, the remodeling and housing backdrop suggests that DIY fastener demand in 2026 is more likely to be steady-to-moderately positive rather than contractionary. Growth may be uneven, but the structural need for maintenance and small-scale upgrades provides a resilient foundation.



## Tariff Pressure, Trade Policy, and Pricing Volatility

While underlying demand appears stable, tariff dynamics introduce complexity into the 2026 outlook. Fasteners are heavily steel-dependent, and U.S. trade policy continues to shape cost structures. Section 232 steel tariffs were increased in mid-2025 from 25% to 50% on covered steel articles and derivative products from most countries, with certain exceptions such as the United Kingdom. These tariffs apply to a broad range of steel items, including many fastener classifications within Chapter 73 of the tariff schedule.



In addition to Section 232 measures, Section 301 tariffs related to imports from China remain in force and continue to evolve through scheduled modifications. Layered onto these broad tariff frameworks are product-specific antidumping duty orders, such as those covering certain steel nails and threaded rod from China. Together, these measures affect sourcing strategies, landed costs, and supply chain decisions for importers and retailers.



For DIY fasteners, which are highly price-sensitive and often sold in competitive retail environments, tariff-driven cost fluctuations can quickly influence shelf prices. When input costs rise, retailers face the choice of absorbing margin pressure or passing increases to consumers. In a cautious consumer environment, higher prices may encourage project downsizing rather than outright cancellation. A homeowner might choose to repair a deck instead of replacing it or buy value-pack screws instead of premium coated options.

**The greater risk in 2026 is not a collapse in demand but a lack of pricing stability.**

From my perspective, the greater risk in 2026 is not a collapse in demand but a lack of pricing stability. Tariff changes, compliance complexities related to steel-content valuation, and potential shifts in trade remedies can produce short-term supply disruptions. Smaller importers and private-label programs may feel disproportionate strain, particularly if sourcing must pivot rapidly to alternative countries. Inventory cycles could become uneven, with periods of stock buildup followed by destocking as buyers adjust to cost changes. Tariff uncertainty also influences strategic planning. Long-term contracts become more difficult to price accurately, and annual purchasing cycles may require built-in contingencies. In such an environment, supply chain agility becomes a competitive advantage. Companies capable of diversifying sourcing, maintaining core inventory availability, and communicating clearly about price drivers are likely to outperform.



## Outlook: Cautiously Optimistic Demand, Conditional Stability

Taking all factors into account, the 2026 outlook for U.S. DIY fasteners can best be described as cautiously optimistic. The remodeling base remains large, repair activity is structurally supported by aging housing stock, and small-scale projects continue to resonate with homeowners navigating higher mortgage rates. Exterior upgrades, aging-in-place modifications, and move-in installations are likely to sustain volume across common fastener categories. However, optimism must be tempered by recognition of tariff-driven volatility. Elevated steel duties under Section 232, continuing Section 301 adjustments, and existing antidumping orders mean that pricing calm cannot be assumed. Demand may remain steady, but cost structures could shift unpredictably.

In practical terms, 2026 may be characterized by steady unit movement rather than dramatic expansion. Growth is likely to cluster in repair-oriented and safety-driven categories, while large discretionary remodel-related fastener demand may remain more sensitive to financing conditions. The winners in this environment will not necessarily be those chasing aggressive volume growth, but those maintaining product availability, cost discipline, and flexible sourcing strategies. Ultimately, fasteners benefit from an inherent advantage: they are indispensable. Homes require constant upkeep, and even modest improvement cycles translate into recurring fastener consumption. If homeowners continue to repair, reinforce, and refresh their living spaces, the baseline demand for DIY fasteners in the U.S. should remain fundamentally sound in 2026, even amid the ongoing uncertainty of global trade policy. ■

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**Bear Fastening Solutions, Inc.**

Office: No. 140-1, Zhuanzijing, Madou Dist.,  
Tainan City 721008, Taiwan.  
Tel: +886 6 571 5928 Fax: +886 6 571 2845  
Email: lionel@bearfs.com.tw

[www.bearfs.com.tw](http://www.bearfs.com.tw)






