

Drywall Screw Installation Guide

Tip: Set your PDF viewer to "**Actual size**" before printing to maintain scale.

PROPER DEPTH SETTING (CRITICAL)

- Perfect depth: Screw head 1/32" to 1/16" below surface (forms small "dimple")
- Paper must remain intact: No torn or broken paper fibers visible
- Too shallow (flush or proud): Prevents compound application, creates visible bump
- Too deep (over-driven): Breaks paper face, loses holding power, causes screw pop
- Adjust clutch on screw gun to stop at correct depth automatically
- Test settings on scrap drywall before starting actual installation

SCREW SPACING REQUIREMENTS

- Wall field area: 12" on center along each stud
- Wall edges/perimeter: 8" on center along all edges
- Ceiling field area: 12" on center along each joist
- Ceiling edges/perimeter: 7" on center (tighter than walls due to gravity)
- Edge distance: 3/8" minimum from any drywall edge or end
- Never skip screws to save time - causes sagging and joint problems

DRIVING TECHNIQUE

- Hold screw gun perpendicular (90°) to drywall surface at all times
- Apply firm, steady pressure into drywall while driving screw
- Use medium drill speed - too fast causes over-driving and torn paper
- Let adjustable clutch do the work - stop when clutch disengages
- Use Phillips #2 bit - replace worn bits frequently (every 500-1000 screws)
- If screw spins without gripping, back out and use longer screw or relocate

QUALITY CHECKS

- Run your hand over surface to feel for any proud (raised) screws
- Look for torn paper around screw heads - add new screw 2" away if found
- Check that all screws have proper "dimple" depression for joint compound
- Tap on sheet edges to ensure tight contact with framing (no hollow sound)
- Mark any screws that missed framing with circle - remove and relocate
- Fix all problems immediately before moving to next sheet - don't defer

COMMON INSTALLATION MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Using coarse thread screws in metal studs (won't grip - use fine thread)
- Forcing drywall sheets into place (causes stress cracks - trim or adjust framing)
- Installing drywall in freezing temperatures (brittle and prone to cracking)
- Reusing stripped screw holes (never works - always relocate 2" away)
- Skipping edge screws to save time (causes edge lifting and joint cracks)