

From lumber to lighting: How Trump's tariffs drive up home construction costs

NBC News modeled out a 3-bedroom home and found tariffs added more than \$4,000 to total costs.



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Lumber from Canada? That will be another \$534.

Major appliances from China? Add a cool \$445.

New homes in the United States are set to get more expensive thanks to President Donald Trump's tariff agenda, which is expected to raise the costs of a wide variety of materials that go into building houses.

An NBC News analysis of building materials and import data found that the total cost of building a mid-range single-family home could rise by more than \$4,000 – an estimate that industry experts who reviewed the analysis called conservative. An [April survey from the National Association of Home Builders](#) estimated tariff impacts at \$10,900 per home. Neither analysis included labor costs.

Robert Dietz, chief economist at the National Association of Home Builders, said the tariffs have an impact beyond their direct cost as they send uncertainty rippling through the supply chain and leave builders unsure how to plan for the future.

"About three-quarters of home builders right now are having difficulty pricing their homes for buyers because of uncertainty due to construction input costs," Dietz said.

The United States remains in [a housing shortage](#) that has driven up costs. The [NBC News Home Buyer Index](#), which measures how difficult a local housing market is, has remained at an extreme difficulty level for more than two years. And conversations about how to encourage building more housing has become a major part of U.S. political discussions, especially [among some Democrats](#).

Trump, meanwhile, has continued to pursue an aggressive tariff agenda while promising that the United States would sign trade deals, [most of which](#) have yet to materialize.

Whether tariffs are implemented, paused or reversed, the timeline for cost impacts will vary significantly across suppliers, materials and regions. Dietz said that while some

suppliers may initially absorb parts of tariff costs, "generally speaking, in the long run, you would expect consumers to pay most of the tariff."

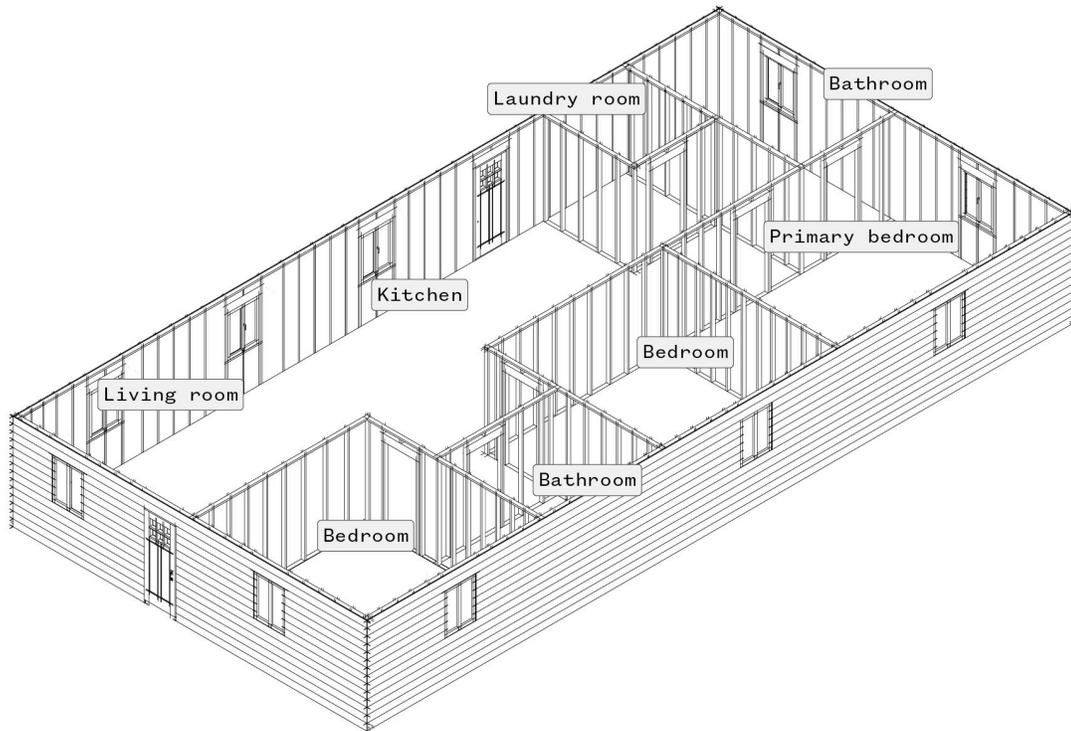
NBC News modeled the cost of materials for an 1,800 square-foot single-family house and then analyzed import and survey data from the U.S. Trade Commission and the Census Bureau's annual manufacturing survey to determine which countries dominate the home construction supply chain. While some foundational materials like concrete are sourced domestically, others – such as electrical equipment, lighting and fixtures – depend heavily on imports.

Products from China, Mexico and Canada – countries that are currently tariffed at high rates – are responsible for the largest projected cost increases in our model home. We reached this by calculating a weighted tariff rate for each item based on the share of imports from each country and the tariff rate for that country, with the assumption that the full cost of each tariff was passed on to the consumer.

Materials primarily imported from China would add \$1,708 to per-home costs, Canadian products would contribute \$1,300, and Mexican imports would add \$981.

Take lumber, for example. NBC News calculated that a typical 1,800-square-foot home requires about 14,400 board feet of framing lumber, totaling roughly \$7,762 at [wholesale prices](#). Almost one-third of the U.S. lumber supply is imported, and [Canada supplied nearly 80%](#) of the United States' \$14.5 billion in annual imports in 2021. A weighted 23% tariff could increase lumber prices by 7% – adding roughly \$534 to home framing costs alone.

Scroll down to see how tariffs could raise prices during each phase of construction.



Model of home

NBC News designed a single-family house model structure for our analysis. Our model is:

- 1,800 square foot
- Three bedrooms
- Two bathrooms
- A combined living room and kitchen

- A laundry room

Foundation and framing

The backbone of U.S. homes is largely dependent on major trading partners that have faced some of Trump's most aggressive tariffs. **Canada** supplies the majority of U.S. imported material in the first phase of construction, including 24% of framing lumber. Rebar, the long steel bars that help reinforce concrete, faces a 5% price increase thanks to its Canadian and Mexican origins. And there are plenty of smaller pieces crucial to home building, such as anchor bolts and framing nails: Taiwan provides 19% of those, which will cost 8% more.

SITE PREP/FOUNDATION		\$24,469
Material	Top importer share	Projection
Grading gravel	Brazil - 0.2%	+0.1%
Framing lumber	Canada - 23.5%	+6.9%
Sheet goods	Canada - 25.1%	+7.7%
Waterproof membrane	Canada - 1.8%	+0.6%
Concrete	Canada - 0.0%	0.0%
Rebar	Canada - 5.8%	+5.5%

NOW: \$25,607

Building envelope

Many of the materials necessary to seal a home's exterior from water and weather face similarly steep tariffs. Costs for windows and exterior doors from **Canada**, which supply 2% of U.S. homes, are expected to rise by just 1%. And 20% of door locks and viewers come from **China**, which will mean a 10% jump. Others face smaller increases.

EXTERIOR		\$16,155
Material	Top importer share	Projection
House wrap	China - 6.9%	+5.2%
Windows and exterior doors	Canada - 2.0%	+1.2%
Asphalt shingles	Canada - 1.8%	+0.6%
Roof underlayment	Canada - 1.8%	+0.6%
Gutter sealant	Germany - 1.8%	+1.4%
		NOW: \$16,528

Utilities

Mexico and **China** split supply across key categories in the electrical phase: switches/outlets increase 14%, wiring rises 13%, and safety devices increase 11%. Service panels and breakers rise 11%, with 22% of supply from Mexico.

ELECTRIC		\$6,111
Material	Top importer share	Projection
Electrical tape	China - 15.4%	+4.0%
Plastic boxes and mounting	China - 15.4%	+3.9%
Wire staples	China - 12.2%	+6.8%
Boxes and mounting	China - 26.7%	+9.4%
Nail plates	China - 26.7%	+9.4%
		NOW: \$6,833

The plumbing system is dominated by **Chinese** imports, with 4% increases for lines/fittings, 13% increases for toilets and bathroom sinks, and a 9% increase for water heaters.

PLUMBING		\$7,895
Material	Top importer share	Projection
PVC primer and cement	Germany - 1.8%	+1.4%
Showers/tubs	China - 3.7%	+1.2%
Toilet seats	China - 3.7%	+1.2%
Plumbing lines and fittings	China - 15.4%	+3.9%
Teflon tape	China - 15.4%	+3.9%
		NOW: \$8,318

To regulate indoor temperature, the HVAC system includes a combined heating and cooling unit and ductwork – both sourced primarily from **Mexico** with a 6% increase – along with a thermostat, up 8%.

HVAC		\$5,648
Material	Top importer share	Projection
Duct mastic sealant	Germany - 1.8%	+1.4%
Condensate drain pipe	China - 15.4%	+4.0%
Equipment pad	Canada - 0.0%	0.0%
Metal duct tape	China - 26.7%	+9.4%
Air filters	China - 14.5%	+8.7%
		NOW: \$5,980

Interior finishes

Window blinds increase 12%, with 15% of supply sourced from **China** (32%). Stone countertops face 8% increases, sourced equally from **India** and **Brazil** (8% each). Lighting fixtures and tile both increase 7%. Lighting is dominated by Chinese imports, while tile comes primarily from **Italy** (9%) and **Spain** (7%).

INTERIOR		\$23,806
Material	Top importer share	Projection
Carpeting	India - 11.0%	+6.0%
Interior doors	Canada - 2.0%	+1.2%
Interior trim	Brazil - 4.5%	+3.0%
Laminate flooring	Brazil - 4.5%	+3.0%
Drywall tape	China - 3.7%	+3.8%
Paint and	Canada - 1.6%	+1.1%
		NOW: \$25,151

Exterior finishes

The build completes with exterior details and landscaping. **China** supplies the majority of higher-impact items: house numbers (9% increase), exterior lighting (7% increase), and mulch 6% increase). Landscaping materials experience minimal 1% increases, with **Canada** providing 3% of U.S. imports.

LANDSCAPING		\$2,433
Material	Top importer share	Projection
Shrubs and flowers	Canada - 2.7%	+1.1%
Topsoil	Canada - 2.7%	+1.1%
Grass seed	Canada - 2.0%	+1.5%
Landscape gravel	Canada - 0.2%	+0.1%
Mulch	China - 17.1%	+6.2%
		NOW: \$2,504

Altogether, the impact of tariffs across the homebuilding process adds \$4,405 to the materials cost – raising the total cost of materials from \$86,516 to \$90,921 for a typical 1,800-square-foot home.

CATEGORY	BEFORE	NOW
Site prep / framing	\$24,469	\$25,607
Building envelope	\$16,155	\$16,528
Electric	\$6,111	\$6,833
Plumbing	\$7,895	\$8,318
HVAC	\$5,648	\$5,980
Interiors	\$23,806	\$25,151
Exterior finishes	\$2,433	\$2,504
TOTAL	\$86,516	\$90,921

Methodology

As the basis for the analysis, NBC News designed a typical 1,800-square-foot single-family home, cataloged all required construction materials, calculated precise quantities using industry standards and collected current market prices primarily from national vendors. Each material was mapped to its corresponding North American Industry Classification System code to align with the official U.S. Census Bureau trade data.

NBC News calculated import dependency as total imports for a given item category divided by its total domestic supply, using data from the U.S. Trade Commission and the Annual Survey of Manufactures.

For each material category, we calculated a weighted average tariff rate based on the amount the United States imports from each tariffed country, then estimated total price impacts by multiplying import dependency by the weighted tariff rate.

This analysis provides a snapshot of potential cost impacts using national averages and simplified assumptions, but it does not account for long-term market adjustments, regional variations, supply chain adaptations or uneven cost absorption across the supply chain.