FIELD INTELLIGENCE

Issue 001 Monday, August 17, 2026 · Biweekly, 4 pages

Build & Renovate

Roofing · Restoration · Garage Door · Exteriors · General Contracting · Home Building

Six trades, one publication. Every item is something that moves a number on your P&L, changes what you must do by law, or changes what parts and labor cost you.

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TRADE · EVERY TRADE IN THIS ISSUE

A 50% tariff on Canadian cement, plywood and furniture takes effect August 19 under a century-old trade law, even as softwood lumber duties keep falling.

A 50 percent tariff on Canadian cement, plywood, furniture, wine and dozens of other categories takes effect August 19, 2026, two days after this issue publishes. Trump invoked Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930 on July 20 — first use in nearly a century — covering roughly $20 billion a year of Canadian imports, 5.2 percent of last year's total. USMCA status does not exempt a shipment. Duties don't apply to energy, potash, critical minerals, fish, or goods under Section 232 metals tariffs. Trigger: Canada's tariffs on U.S. autos, alcohol and dairy, plus a $46.4 billion 2025 trade deficit.

Four days after Section 338, a separate tariff regime changed underneath it. The temporary 10 percent global tariff under Section 122 expired by statute July 24, 2026, after its maximum 150 days, and Section 301 forced-labor duties took effect the same day on imports from roughly 80 countries, at 10-12.5 percent. Section 232 goods are excluded; Brazil carries an extra 25 percent under a July 15 action. For a contractor buying windows, doors, hardware or finish materials from outside Canada and off the metals-tariff list, this duty now applies, stacked on whatever tariff already existed.

Softwood lumber is the one input moving the other way, though relief is partial. Commerce's April 14, 2026 preliminary results set countervailing duty rates of 15.93 percent for West Fraser, 11.70 percent for Resolute, and 14.17 percent for 215 non-selected producers — with antidumping, roughly 24.83 percent, down from 35.16 percent prior. A separate 10 percent Section 232 lumber tariff applies on top, so the effective rate is closer to 34.83 percent. On August 6, Commerce reinstated Les Produits Forestiers D&G and Portbec at 1.05 percent. Final AR7 results are still pending.

None of this shows up as a single line item; it shows up in the bid. AGC's analysis of BLS data, released July 15-23, 2026, found the producer price index for nonresidential construction inputs up 7.1 percent for the year to June, with diesel up 65.8 percent, aluminum mill shapes up 52.4 percent, copper/brass mill shapes up 26.0 percent, and steel mill products up 16.9 percent. Bid prices for new nonresidential buildings rose a modest 3.5 percent. "Steep tariffs on aluminum, steel and products containing copper have continued to push up construction costs," AGC economist Ken Simonson said.

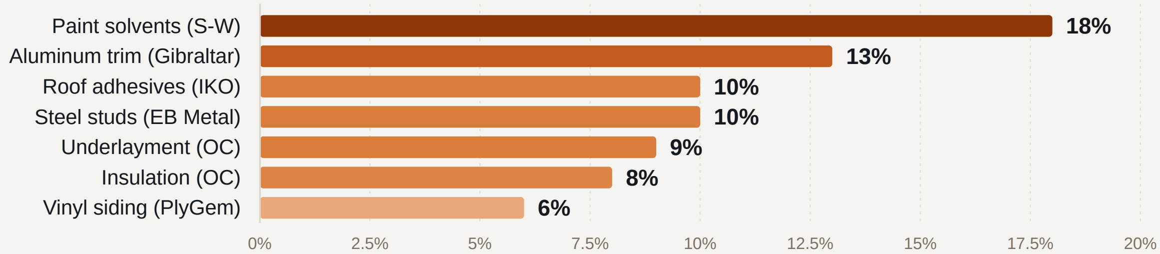
What to do about it: Check the country-of-origin and expected customs-entry date on every open Canadian purchase order — goods entering on or after August 19 pay the new 50 percent Section 338 duty regardless of when they were ordered, and USMCA paperwork will not stop it. For anything sourced outside Canada, confirm your supplier's country of origin against the Section 301 list and ask in writing whether the 10-12.5 percent forced-labor duty is already built into your quoted price. If you buy Canadian softwood lumber, ask your supplier for the specific producer name — the countervailing duty rate ranges from 11.70 to 15.93 percent among named producers versus 14.17 percent for everyone else, and it changes with each Commerce notice. Put a material-price-escalation clause in every contract you sign this month, and shorten quote validity to 15-30 days on anything containing imported metal, wood panel, or lumber.

Blaming Canada: Trump Leans On Smoot-Hawley Tariff Authority — Forbes / Tax Notes, August 3, 2026 · Certain Softwood Lumber Products From Canada: Preliminary Results and Partial Rescission of Countervailing Duty Administrative Review; 2024 — Federal Register, April 14, 2026 · Certain Softwood Lumber Products From Canada: Notice of Amended Final Results of Countervailing Duty Expedited Review; Notice of Reinstatement of Countervailing Duty Order — Federal Register, August 6, 2026 · U.S. Softwood Lumber Duty Cut: Preliminary Rate Drops to 24.83% in 2026 — IndexBox · Construction Input Costs Remain Sharply Higher Than A Year Ago Despite June Decline As Aluminum, Copper And Steel Prices Continue To Climb — AGC of America data, republished July 23, 2026

INFOGRAPHIC 1 / MATERIAL PRICE HIKES

Seven building-material price increases announced this spring ranged from 6 to 18 percent.

Announced list-price increases by category, percent, distributor notices for spring-summer 2026 compiled by the Structural Building Components Association.



Seven manufacturers across five categories raised list prices between March and July 2026, none citing a specific tariff. Paint solvents and aluminum trim moved most, roughly double the rise on steel studs and vinyl siding. Price-letter increases, unlike tariff surcharges, are hard to isolate on an invoice or pass through as a line item. A contractor bidding off a spring price book is out of date. Source: Price Increases Sweep the Building Materials World — Structural Building Components Association

ROOFING

TWO ITEMS

REGULATION

OSHA proposed $172,324 against a Fort Lauderdale roofer after two workers fell from a roof into an empty pool, one fatally.

Why it matters: OSHA cited Max Home Services LLC (Pasat Roofing and Solar Energy) $172,324 on April 24, 2026, for one willful and two serious violations after two workers fell more than 20 feet installing a tarp on a two-story residence on September 24, 2025; one died, the other was seriously injured. Cited: no fall protection at height, no documented fall-hazard training, no hazard communication for on-site chemicals. The company is contesting before the OSH Review Commission, so the penalty and willful classification could still change — but a willful citation multiplies future penalties and follows a company into its next inspection. Pull your written fall-protection program and training records now, and confirm every crew above six feet has anchor points, harnesses and a competent-person sign-off on file.

OSHA News Release — Region 4 (Atlanta), April 24, 2026

MONEY

Five roofing-material manufacturers raised list prices 4 to 8 percent between March 23 and May 11, 2026.

Why it matters: TAMKO raised prices 4-5 percent (March 23), Atlas Roofing 5-8 percent on shingles, underlayment and ventilation (April 1), GAF 5-8 percent on residential roofing (April 15), CertainTeed up to 8 percent (April 15), and Owens Corning's synthetic underlayment 5-9 percent (May 11), per distributor notices. Stacked since 2024, cumulative increases run an estimated 12-18 percent; the BLS producer price index for asphalt shingles hit 360.6 in February 2026, near the all-time high of 370.0 set August 2025. A 28-square architectural shingle reroof costing $13,500-$15,500 in April 2026 in the Mid-Atlantic market tracked is forecast to run 3-6 percent higher by October. These are new price sheets on roughly 30 days' notice, not tariff line items — a contractor who quoted six weeks ago absorbs the difference unless the contract says otherwise. Re-quote anything not under signed contract, and add a materials-escalation clause on jobs scheduled more than 60 days out.

Roofing Price Report 2026: What Mid-Atlantic Homeowners Are Paying — Cool Water LLC

RESTORATION

TWO ITEMS

INSURANCE

Trade press is telling restorers that a dry moisture reading after a hurricane does not clear a structure, and a claim built on one may not survive review.

Why it matters: An industry piece (July 16, 2026) argues dry materials don't always mean stable indoor conditions after a storm, since microbial growth can begin within 24 to 48 hours in drywall, insulation and HVAC components, and points restorers to IICRC S500 and S520 as the standards for testing and verification before, during and after remediation. Visual inspection and a single moisture reading aren't sufficient documentation — how a policy responds to flood, wind or storm-related electrical failure changes drying timelines and equipment strategy on the same loss. A scope built on incomplete documentation is one an adjuster or attorney can challenge later, after equipment is gone and the invoice is due. With the 2026 Atlantic season peaking in August and September, jobs written now face the most scrutiny ahead. Build S500/S520-referenced testing and photo documentation into every water-loss file before releasing equipment, not after the adjuster asks.

After a Hurricane, Dry Does Not Mean Safe — Restoration & Remediation, July 16, 2026

MONEY

A new estimating-and-claims-closure service prices restoration claim support at 4 percent of the approved claim for estimating only, 10 percent for full service.

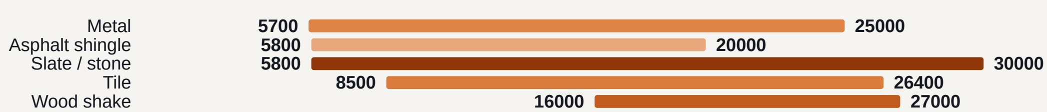
Why it matters: magicplan and Elkmont Estimates announced a partnership (August 14, 2026) pairing magicplan's field documentation — floor plans, photos, moisture readings — with Elkmont's estimating and carrier-facing claims-closure staff, who operate in more than 40 states. Elkmont's standard rate is 4 percent of the approved claim for estimating alone and 10 percent for full service through final carrier approval, discounted to 3.5 percent and 8 percent for a contractor's first ten projects. That is now a public benchmark for what third-party estimating and claims-closure support costs against your top line, whichever vendor you use. Deciding whether to hire an in-house estimator, build the capability internally, or pay a vendor a percentage of every claim, run this number against your overhead and win rate on your next five jobs, and read the fine print on what "full service" covers before assuming it handles a disputed line item.

magicplan and Elkmont Estimates Partner to Connect Documentation and Estimating — Restoration & Remediation, August 14, 2026

INFOGRAPHIC 2 / ROOF COST SPREAD

A roof replacement runs from under $6,000 for basic metal to $30,000 for high-end slate or stone.

National average installed cost range by roofing material, 2026 pricing data, Angi.



The low end of every material's range clusters near $5,700-$8,500; the real spread is at the top: slate and wood shake run three to five times basic metal or shingle work. That top end is driven mostly by material cost and installer availability, not tariffs — a homeowner asking why one quote is triple another's needs a materials talk, not a tariff explanation. Spread can exceed $20,000. Source: How Much Does Roof Replacement Cost? [2026 Data] — Angi

GARAGE DOOR

TWO ITEMS

REGULATION

New gate-safety provisions approved for the 2027 model codes require ASTM-compliant hardware on commercial gates seven feet tall and up.

Why it matters: Code officials approved new provisions in May 2026 for the 2027 I-Codes covering commercial manual and automatic gates seven feet tall or taller — slide gates must meet ASTM F1184 and swing gates ASTM F900, on top of existing ASTM F2200 and UL 325 requirements for vehicular gate operators. The rules require keepers, latches, positive stops and lateral stability so a gate can't start moving under its own weight or fall on someone nearby. Residential gates get an optional appendix, not a mandatory rule, so most driveway gates aren't directly affected yet. The 2027 I-Codes are on track to publish by end of 2026; states and counties then adopt on their own calendars, some within a year, others taking several. If you install or service commercial slide or swing gates, ask your hardware supplier now whether current stock meets F1184/F900 — retrofitting a gate installed last year to meet a code nobody flagged is a bad conversation with a customer.

Tech Corner — Building Codes and Gates, Summer 2026 — DASMA

REGULATION

DASMA is telling dealers, again, that no federal tax credit exists for garage doors and to stop implying otherwise to customers.

Why it matters: A February 2026 DASMA bulletin restates that there is no ENERGY STAR specification for garage doors and therefore no Section 25C tax credit for them, however insulated, because garages are unconditioned space and the energy-savings case never qualified. A Qualified Manufacturer Identification number — the code needed to claim window, exterior-door or HVAC tax credits on IRS Form 5695 — cannot legitimately be requested or issued for a garage door, and DASMA tells dealers directly to stop using tax credits to sell them. That matters this year because homeowners are actively shopping tax credits on windows, exterior doors and HVAC equipment, and a salesperson who lets a customer assume the garage door qualifies too is setting up a return call, a bad review, or a state consumer-protection complaint once the customer's accountant says no. Check your sales scripts, website copy and financing materials for anything implying a garage door tax credit exists.

DASMA Special Bulletin — QMIDs and Tax Credits, February 2026

EXTERIORS

TWO ITEMS

MONEY

Aluminum-frame impact windows and sliding glass doors are running 8 to 15 percent higher this year, pushing a typical south Florida project up $1,200 to $2,250.

Why it matters: Aluminum-frame impact windows are up 8-15 percent and aluminum-frame sliding doors up 10-15 percent, driven by the Section 232 aluminum tariff rising to 50 percent on most trading partners plus a separate 10 percent tariff on finished aluminum window imports effective April 2026; vinyl-frame windows, with far less aluminum exposure, are up a comparatively modest 4-6 percent. A full-home impact-window project that cost $15,000 in 2024-2025 now runs $16,200-$17,250 at current retail pricing in the south Florida market examined. The retail-to-in-stock pricing gap has widened to roughly 42-45 percent, so a contractor buying from a distributor holding pre-tariff stock has a real, temporary cost edge over one buying to order. Aluminum-committed customers feel the tariff far more than those who can accept vinyl or composite. Quote both frame types side by side on every hurricane-zone bid this fall, and get in-stock inventory pricing in writing before it rolls to retail.

Impact Windows Price Increase 2026: How Tariffs Affect South Florida Homeowners

SUPPLY

Vinyl siding makers PlyGem and CertainTeed both raised list prices up to 6 percent this spring, part of a wider exterior-materials price wave.

Why it matters: PlyGem's vinyl siding list price rose up to 6 percent effective May 1, 2026, and CertainTeed raised vinyl and metal siding prices up to 6 percent the same season, per distributor letters. The increases arrived alongside other exterior-supply moves: Owens Corning synthetic roofing underlayment up 5-9 percent (May 11), IKO roofing accessories up to 10 percent (April 23), and Gibraltar aluminum trim up 10-13 percent (March 16). None cite a specific tariff — manufacturers point to general manufacturing and input costs instead, making an increase harder to dispute and easier for the next notice to stack on. A siding bid still using a price book from before March 2026 is out of date, and the gap compounds with every notice you haven't seen. Ask your supplier for the current, dated price sheet before bidding the next exterior job, and build a 60-day price-hold limit into every siding proposal.

Price Increases Sweep the Building Materials World — Structural Building Components Association

GENERAL CONTRACTING

TWO ITEMS

LABOR

California more than doubled minimum fines for contractors without required workers' compensation coverage, to $10,000 for a sole owner and $20,000 for everyone else.

Why it matters: SB 291, effective January 1, 2026, raises California's minimum civil penalty for a licensed contractor without required workers' compensation coverage to $10,000 for a sole owner and $20,000 for everyone else, and tightens verification of the "no employee" exemption some use to avoid carrying it. SB 779, effective July 1, 2026, raises the minimum penalty for unlicensed contracting from $200 to $1,500, and lets the Contractors State License Board adjust both minimums for inflation every five years. The Attorney General also gained authority in 2026 to pursue contractors with unpaid wage judgments directly, alongside the CSLB. If you operate in California with subcontractors or per-project labor, confirm your workers' comp coverage is current and any "no employee" exemption you claim is accurate — the cost of being wrong just went up sharply. Other states tend to follow California's playbook within a few years, so audit your coverage even elsewhere.

7 New California Laws Contractors Must Know Before 2026 — Construction Owners Association

MONEY

Sherwin-Williams raised paint prices 9 percent and bulk solvent prices 18 percent effective May 1, 2026, with Pittsburgh Paints close behind.

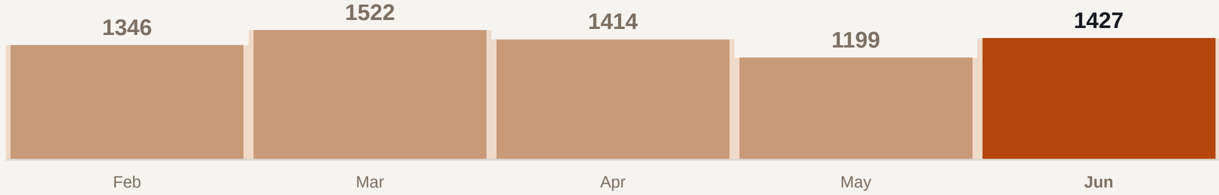
Why it matters: Sherwin-Williams' May 1, 2026 increase applies 9 percent to paint and up to 18 percent to bulk solvents; Pittsburgh Paints followed with 8 percent on paint and 10-18 percent on solvents the same date. Paint, primer, sealant and adhesive costs sit across nearly every trade's material list — roofing, siding, interior finish, restoration — so the increase doesn't stay contained to one vertical the way a shingle or lumber move does. Combined with steel-stud, insulation and aluminum-trim increases the same spring, a general contractor holding a fixed-price bid written before May 2026 is now absorbing several stacked increases on one job at once. None of these letters name a specific tariff, making the increase harder to pass through as a surcharge the way a Section 232 line item can be. Reprice any open bid with meaningful paint, coatings or sealant scope, and get the current price sheet rather than last quarter's numbers.

Price Increases Sweep the Building Materials World — Structural Building Components Association

INFOGRAPHIC 3 / STARTS WHIPSAW

Total housing starts swung by more than 300,000 units a month for four straight months.

Seasonally adjusted annual rate, thousands of units, U.S. Census Bureau New Residential Construction data via FRED, through June 2026.



Starts fell from March's 1.52 million pace to May's 1.20 million, then rebounded to 1.43 million in June — a round trip of more than 300,000 units in three months. That is not ordinary noise; it reads as a market reacting to tariff and rate uncertainty, not settling into a trend. July data, due August 18, shows whether June's rebound holds. Scheduling crews off one month's figure builds on sand. Source: New Privately-Owned Housing Units Started: Total Units (HOUST) — FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

HOME BUILDING

TWO ITEMS

REGULATION

Colorado's modified 2024 energy code took effect in July 2026, and Maryland is one of several Mid-Atlantic states now moving toward the same standard.

Why it matters: Colorado's new statewide minimum energy code — a modified 2024 IECC favoring high-efficiency electric systems over fossil-gas — took effect July 2026; Illinois finalized the 2024 IECC as its base code in November 2025, with a voluntary stretch code still in development. Rhode Island adopted 2024 IECC with electric-ready provisions, and Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York are all pursuing similar adoption, so a Mid-Atlantic builder should expect a tighter code cycle within a year or two. Meanwhile Missouri's HB 2384 would cap jurisdictions at the 2009 IECC, Washington's HB 2141 would freeze code updates for a decade, and Nebraska's LB 1134 would block stricter local codes through 2031. The 2027 IECC is on track to publish by year-end 2026. Check your state's and county's code-adoption calendar this quarter — a package priced to today's code may not meet next year's.

2026 Energy Codes Outlook — Institute for Market Transformation

DEMAND

Total housing starts swung between 1.2 million and 1.5 million units a month for four straight months through June 2026.

Why it matters: Census data show seasonally adjusted annual-rate starts at 1,346,000 in February, 1,522,000 in March, 1,414,000 in April, 1,199,000 in May and back up to 1,427,000 in June 2026 — a swing of more than 300,000 units, month to month. Permits followed a similar pattern, from 1,540,000 in February down through the 1,360,000-1,420,000 range for the following four months. That volatility makes any single month's number hard to read, and a builder sizing crews or ordering material off the latest release risks whipsawing between over- and under-committed within a quarter. July data releases August 18, 2026 — the day after this issue publishes — so treat any June-based read as provisional. If you bid or schedule off housing-start trends, use a three-month moving average, and build slack into next quarter's material and labor commitments.

New Privately-Owned Housing Units Started: Total Units (HOUST) — FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, data through June 2026 · New Privately-Owned Housing Units Authorized in Permit-Issuing Places: Total Units (PERMIT) — FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, data through June 2026

THE BACKGROUND SIGNAL

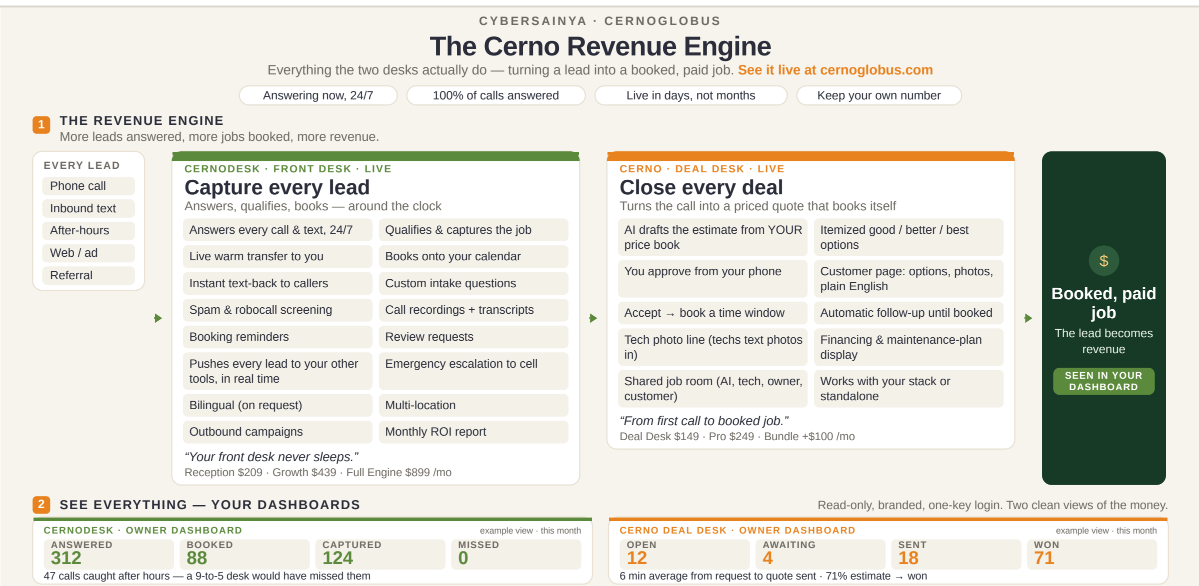
The fraud that reads your invoices before it sends one

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center took 24,768 business email compromise reports in 2025, with losses of $3.05 billion — a record, after dipping to $2.77 billion in 2024 from $2.95 billion in 2023. Across all internet crime it logged 1,008,597 complaints and $20.88 billion in losses. Reported cases only, so read it as a floor.

Business email compromise, not ransomware, is the one that should concern a mechanical contractor. Someone gets into a mailbox, reads until they understand how you invoice and who pays you, then sends a real-looking progress billing with different bank details. No malware, no warning — just a payment that never arrives and an argument about who eats it. A trade that emails quotes, change orders and supplier invoices all day is the shape this is built for. The quieter number is adoption: under 20% of firms with fewer than 20 staff use AI at all.

> **What to do about it:** You don't need a security program. You need multi-factor authentication on email and your accounting login, and one rule everybody follows: nobody changes bank details on the strength of an email or a call — you ring the number you already had on file and confirm. That covers most of it, and costs nothing. The part it doesn't — how the systems are set up — is the day job of our parent company, CyberSainya.

FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center, 2025 Internet Crime Report — reported cases only, rounded from $2,946,830,270, $2,770,151,146 and $3,046,598,558. U.S. Census Bureau, Business Trends and Outlook Survey, May 3, 2026.



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