How to connect patch cords to armored fiber optic cables



Overview

Armored Fiber Optic Cable Installation Guide | FiberManiaThis guide provides a complete installation process for armored fiber optic cords, explaining each.

Key Takeaways

To connect patch cords to armored fiber optic cables, carefully strip the armor, clean the fiber, and securely attach compatible connectors while maintaining proper bend radius and alignment.

Understanding Armored Fiber Cables

Armored fiber optic cables are reinforced with steel, aluminum, or aramid fibers (Kevlar) to protect against crushing, bending, abrasion, and environmental hazards. They come in tight-buffered or loose-buffered designs, suitable for indoor or outdoor use. Pre-terminated armored cables may already have connectors, but field termination requires careful handling to avoid damaging the fiber core.

Tools and Materials Needed

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Fiber optic stripper (to remove outer jacket and armor without damaging fibers)Precision cleaver (for clean, perpendicular fiber cuts)Fiber optic crimper or connector assembly kitCleaning tools (fiber cleaning pens, wipes, isopropyl alcohol)Visual Fault Locator (VFL) to check continuityPolishing tools (for UPC/APC connectors if field-terminated)Cable management tools (Velcro ties, trays, labeling tools)Step-by-Step Connection ProcessPrepare the Cable: Carefully strip the outer armor and jacket using a fiber optic stripper. Expose the inner strength members (Kevlar or fiberglass) and fiber core without nicking or scratching the fiber.

Clean the Fiber: Use fiber cleaning pens or wipes with isopropyl alcohol to remove dust, oils, or debris from the fiber endface. Clean connectors immediately before mating to prevent signal loss. Attach the Connector: For field-terminated connectors, insert the stripped fiber into the connector ferrule and secure it using a crimper or adhesive method.

Ensure the fiber is properly cleaved and aligned to minimize insertion loss and maintain return loss standards. Test the Connection: Use a Visual Fault Locator (VFL) or optical power meter to verify continuity and signal quality. Check for proper insertion loss and ensure no microbends or macrobends are present.

Manage and Label: Route the patch cord carefully, maintaining the minimum bend radius (typically 400mm for patch cables). Label both ends of the patch cord for traceability in ODF frames, distribution boxes, or network cabinets.

Best Practices

Avoid cross-mating incompatible connectors (e.g., SC/APC with SC/UPC) to prevent damage. Maintain neat, organized routing to prevent stress on the fiber and facilitate future maintenance. Use armored patch cords when connecting to armored trunk cables for enhanced durability in outdoor or industrial environments.

By following these steps and adhering to proper handling, cleaning, and testing procedures, you can ensure a reliable, low-loss connection between patch cords and armored fiber optic cables.

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Article Content

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The FOA Reference For Fiber Optics

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By following these steps and tips, you can ensure that your fiber patch cords are properly installed and terminated, providing reliable and efficient signal transmission in your optical fiber

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