

How to strip buried optical cables



Overview

How to quickly and cleanly remove the outer covering of optical fiber. Use the Wire Stripper/Splitter to strip a variety of fiber optic and coaxial cable.

Key Takeaways

Stripping buried optical cables requires careful removal of the outer jacket, strength members, and buffer coatings using specialized tools while maintaining fiber integrity. Safety First

Always wear safety glasses and work in a clean, well-lit area to prevent injury from sharp fiber shards or chemicals. Dispose of fiber scraps properly, as they can cause skin or eye damage. Ensure the cable is de-energized and follow any local regulations for working with buried utilities.

Tools Needed

- Fiber optic cable stripper (adjustable for cable diameter)
- Utility knife or hook blade for outer jacket
- Fiber optic cleaver for precise end-face preparation
- Alcohol wipes or cleaning solution
- Fiber inspection microscope or Visual Fault Locator (VFL)

- Protective gloves and disposal container for fiber scraps

Step-by-Step Process

- Expose the Cable Carefully excavate the buried cable without nicking or bending it. Avoid sharp bends that can damage the fibers.
 - Mark and Score the Jacket Decide how much cable you need for termination. Mark the jacket and make a circular score around the outer jacket 7–10 inches from the end. Use a hook blade or outer jacket cutter to avoid cutting the inner fibers .
 - Remove the Outer Jacket Bend the scored section gently; the plastic should break along the score. Use the ripcord (if present) to pull back the remaining jacket. Expose the aramid yarn (strength members) carefully without cutting them, as they provide tensile strength .
 - Strip Strength Members and Buffers Using a fiber optic stripper, remove the aramid yarn and buffer coatings layer by layer. Each layer should be stripped progressively to avoid damaging the fiber. Adjust the stripper blade depth according to the cable diameter .
 - Clean the Fiber Wipe the stripped fiber with alcohol or a cleaning solution to remove dust and debris. Ensure the fiber end is clean and smooth for termination or splicing .
 - Cleave and Inspect Use a fiber optic cleaver to create a perpendicular, defect-free end face. Inspect the cleaved fiber with a microscope or VFL to ensure it is free of cracks or irregularities .
 - Repeat for Multiple Fibers If the cable contains multiple fibers, repeat the stripping, cleaning, and cleaving process for each fiber individually, maintaining consistency and precision .
- #### Best Practices
- Strip fibers progressively, not all at once, to prevent damage.
 - Keep tools sharp and well-maintained.
 - Avoid excessive force when removing jackets or yarns.
 - Maintain a clean workspace to prevent contamination of fiber ends . Following these steps ensures that buried optical cables are stripped safely and prepared for reliable splicing or termination, maintaining optimal network performance.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

A direct burial installation typically involves heavy machinery and places the optical cable underground in direct contact with the earth

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