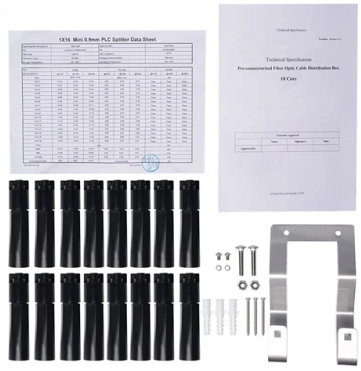
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Developing Optical Cable Cutover Plans



Overview

The FOA Guidelines For Fiber Optic Project PlannersOne contractor subcontracted a landscaping company to dig trenches - they cut several fiber optic cables.

Key Takeaways

A successful optical cable cutover requires meticulous pre-planning, thorough testing, precise execution, and detailed post-cutover verification to ensure minimal service disruption.Understanding Cutover

A cutover is the controlled process of transferring live network traffic from an existing fiber infrastructure to a new one. Unlike a fresh installation, cutovers occur on active networks where customers are using the circuits, making it a high-risk operation. The primary goal is zero or minimal downtime, with the actual transition window measured in minutes rather than hours .

Pre-Cutover Planning

Preparation is critical, as 90% of cutover success depends on planning. Key steps include:

• Network Readiness Verification: Ensure the new fiber path is fully built, tested, and validated before the cutover window.

• OTDR Testing: Perform end-to-end optical time-domain reflectometer tests on every fiber to verify splice losses are within specifications (typically ≤ 0.1 dB for fusion splices) and document all events .

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• Insertion Loss Testing: Measure total link loss using a calibrated light source and power meter, comparing results against the calculated loss budget.

• Connector Inspection: Clean and verify every connector in the new path.

• Documentation: Maintain detailed records of fiber routes, splices, and test results to support troubleshooting and post-cutover verification .

Day-of Execution

During the cutover:

• Coordinate Teams: Ensure all technicians, engineers, and stakeholders are aware of their roles and the cutover schedule.

• Controlled Traffic Transfer: Disconnect the old fiber and activate the new fiber in a coordinated manner to minimize downtime.

• Monitoring: Continuously monitor network performance and signal integrity during the transition.

Post-Cutover Verification

After the cutover:

• Functional Testing: Verify all circuits are operational and meet performance specifications.

• Rollback Procedures: Have a pre-defined rollback plan in case of unexpected failures, allowing traffic to revert to the legacy network without extended downtime .

• Closeout Documentation: Update network diagrams, test results, and operational records to reflect the new infrastructure.

Best Practices

• Plan for Future Growth: Install extra fibers and spare ports to accommodate future bandwidth needs, following the “Dig Once” principle to minimize future construction costs .

• Protect Existing Infrastructure: Coordinate with contractors and use utility location services to avoid damaging underground or aerial infrastructure during installation .

• Managerial Oversight: Managers should understand network design, installation standards, and testing procedures to effectively evaluate progress and ensure quality .

• Stakeholder Coordination: Engage all relevant parties, including network engineers, contractors, and IT teams, to ensure alignment on objectives, schedules, and risk mitigation . By following these structured steps, operators can execute optical cable cutovers efficiently, minimizing service interruptions while ensuring the new network is fully operational and future-ready.

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Design of the fiber optic cable plant requires coordinating with everyone who is involved in the network in any way, including IT

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The major activity during the fiber optic cable plan project planning is based on the Design. The following processes are included in

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A cutover plan ensures a smooth and controlled switch with minimal disruption to business operations. Cutover planning is critical to

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A rough draft can be helpful at this point. Keep in mind that you still need to develop detailed plans for each step of

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Conclusion: A strong cutover strategy followed by a well defined cutover plan is indicator of success in transiting the

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This document is for preliminary research. Verify specifications against current standards, product documentation and project requirements.

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