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Fiber Testing Best Practices for Today's Data Centers



**Data Center
Solutions**

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Contents

Introduction	2
Best Practice 1: Fiber Inspection and Cleaning	4
Best Practice 2: Loss-Length Fiber Testing Tier 1 Certification	6
Best Practice 3: Fiber Plant Characterization with an OTDR Tier 2 Certification	10
Best Practice 4: Test Results and Documentation	13
Best Practice 5: Troubleshooting	16
Fiber Test and Troubleshooting Instruments	18

Introduction

Data center capacity is rapidly increasing to support cloud adoption and emerging applications like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), virtual reality, and advanced data analytics. The data center market is forecast to reach \$613 billion by 2033, up from \$237 billion in 2024, with the capacity of hyperscale data centers expected to triple by 2030.

For high-performance computing (HPC) workloads like AI, switch speeds are rapidly migrating to 400 and 800 Gigabit speeds, with 1.6 Terabit on the horizon. GPU-based servers are already connecting at 200 and 400 Gigabit to support accelerated parallel processing. Even general-purpose workloads in traditional enterprise data center environments increasingly leverage 200 and 400 Gigabit switch speeds and 25, 50, and 100 Gigabit server speeds for efficient data transfer. These speeds are primarily supported by fiber optic cabling.

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Whether you're a large hyperscale or cloud service provider rolling out AI or an enterprise digitally transforming your business, fiber testing is essential to ensure the performance of your critical data center links and their ability to support the bandwidth, speed, and latency requirements of today's data center applications. Fluke Networks designed this Data Center Fiber Testing e-book to educate those who operate, manage, and deploy fiber links in the data center about important optical fiber handling, testing, and troubleshooting best practices, including:

- Fiber inspection and cleaning
- Loss-length fiber testing (Tier 1 certification)
- Fiber plant characterization with an OTDR (Tier 2 certification)
- Test results and documentation
- Troubleshooting

Depending on the data center environment and its various functional areas, you will encounter different applications, types of fiber cable, and connectivity.

For switch-to-switch links, such as connections between core switches in the main distribution area (MDA) and aggregation, access, and SAN switches in the horizontal distribution area (HDA), you will likely be dealing with single-mode or multimode fiber cables that typically use multi-fiber MPO connectivity. MPO connectors support 200, 400, or 800 Gigabit parallel optic applications that transmit and receive over multiple fibers.

For switch-to-server links, such as connections between switches in the HDA to servers in the equipment distribution area (EDA), you will likely be dealing with multimode fiber. These connections could use MPO connectivity for high-speed server connections in HPC environments or duplex connectivity for lower-speed 25, 50, or 100 Gigabit server connections in traditional data center environments.

Best Practice 1: Fiber Inspection and Cleaning

When should you do it?

Best practice is to inspect all fiber end faces before mating any connectors to check for dirt, scratches, and other end face irregularities — whether on patch cords and trunks within the data center or on the test reference cords you connect to your tester. Clean the end face, if necessary, and re-inspect to check if it is clean.

Why should you do it?

Contaminated fiber end faces are the #1 cause of fiber link failures. Dirty end faces can cause signal loss and reflections that degrade performance. They can also damage the fiber ports they mate to, including those on expensive data center switches, routers, and servers.



Inspection and Cleaning Procedure

- 1** Inspect the entire ferrule end face surface for loose particles using a large field of view (LFOV) microscope for MPO connectors and a small field of view (SFOV) microscope for single fibers.
- 2** If loose particles are present, attempt to clean the end face using mechanical cleaning devices, solvents, wipes, or swabs specially designed for cleaning fiber end faces. (Cleaning should only be done if needed — unnecessarily cleaning a clean end face can run the risk of contaminating or damaging the end face.) After several cleaning attempts, any remaining particles should be considered imperfections.
- 3** Inspect individual fiber end faces for scratches and defects in the core and cladding critical zones using a compliant inspection tool that provides automated PASS/FAIL based on the IEC 61300-3-35 standard that defines cleanliness criteria.
- 4** If inspection fails in the critical zone, attempt to clean the end face again as in Step 2.
- 5** If the end face fails after several attempts to clean it, test the optical performance (typically Tier 1 testing). If the connector meets the specified performance, it is suitable for use.



What instruments should you use?

- A video microscope is preferred for inspection as it both offers the best eye protection and the ability to look into bulkhead ports. Microscopes with autofocus/autocentering capability can make inspection faster and easier.
- For inspecting MPOs, look for the capability for total end face visibility and the ability to zoom in on an individual fiber.
- For individual ferrules and array connectors, look for the ability to certify to the industry standard IEC 61300-3-35 for automated pass/fail acceptance testing of fiber end faces.
- Choose a range of cleaning materials specially designed for fiber end faces and ports. Click-style cleaners are simple and effective for most contaminants. They vary by the specific type of connector being used. A fluid clean is best performed with a solvent for fiber optic connectors. Non-specific solvents, such as isopropyl alcohol, can leave behind residue or attract dust to the end face.



FI-3000
FiberInspector™ Ultra

FI2-7000
FiberInspector™ Pro

FI-500
FiberInspector™ Micro

Fiber Optic
Cleaning Kits

Best Practice 1: Fiber Inspection and Cleaning

Best Practice 2: Loss-Length Fiber Testing

Basic / Tier 1 Certification

When should you do it?

After any fiber installation to ensure the fiber link meets the length, loss budget, and polarity requirements of the design specification, cabling infrastructure standards, and/or cabling vendor requirements.

Why should you do it?

Tier 1 certification testing is the only way to ensure support for current and future applications in the data center and is typically required for a warranty from your cabling manufacturer. If you are installing fiber links, certification testing is also the best way to prove the quality of your installation and avoid costly installer or contractor callbacks. Certification testing also provides the detailed performance benchmark information needed to troubleshoot any future problems efficiently.

What are you measuring?

Insertion loss, measured in decibels (dB), is the primary performance parameter in fiber optic data center links. It is essentially the energy a signal loses as it travels along the links. If insertion loss is too high, it can prevent the signal from properly being received and interpreted by active equipment. Certification testing measures the total insertion loss over the distance of a fiber optic cabling link, as well as the link length.

Maximum loss values and link lengths are published by industry standards for specific applications and used to determine loss budgets early in the data center design phase to ensure application support.



Loss budgets are calculated by adding the insertion loss for the fiber length and each planned connection point in the channel based on manufacturer specifications, as well as the maximum specified loss of any splices. The active equipment also needs to be considered based on any specified differences between transmitters and receivers, as well as some margin to account for loss of power over time that can occur due to transmitter age.

In addition to loss, Tier 1 certification testing checks for continuity and polarity to ensure that the fiber link's transmit signal (Tx) corresponds to its receiver (Rx) at the other end.



What instruments should you use?

An optical loss test set (OLTS) is the mainstay for Tier 1 certification testing because it provides the most accurate method for determining the total loss of a link. An OLTS includes a light source and a power meter. The light source produces a continuous wave at specific wavelengths connected to one end of the fiber. The power meter uses a photodetector connected to the opposite end of the fiber link, which measures optical power at the same wavelengths the light source produces. These devices work in concert to determine the total amount of light lost.

A light source/power meter (LSPM) can also accurately measure loss but does not include some of the key OLTS features that facilitate testing, such as testing duplex links, preloading of loss limits, length measurement, and other advanced features. Length is especially critical because application limits are a combination of a loss budget and maximum length. OLTS models such as the Fluke Networks CertiFiber™ Pro measure both loss and length, providing a clear pass/fail result that will assure application support.

How do you certify links with MPO connectors?

Most high-speed 100 to 800 Gigabit fiber links in the data center rely on MPO connectors. Testing a multi-fiber MPO fiber link with a duplex tester is highly time-consuming and lends itself to inconsistencies, because each fiber pair (send and receive) must be tested separately using fan-out cords or cassettes — all while keeping each end face clean during the process. Testing MPO-based links is most easily done using a tester with an onboard MPO connector like the Fluke Networks MultiFiber™ Pro MPO tester, which can scan all fibers simultaneously and display insertion loss results for the entire link.

Fiber polarity, which ensures that each transmit fiber corresponds to its receive fiber, is more complex with MPO cables and connectors. When testing MPOs, using a certification tester like MultiFiber Pro that can test fiber links for correct polarity is ideal.

Tier 1 Fiber Certification Procedure

Loss measurements should be made using purpose-built test reference cords (TRCs). Fluke Networks TRCs are constructed of reference-grade cable and connectors with a very low loss of better than 0.1dB for multimode and 0.2dB for single-mode. Anything other than a true TRC can lead to increased uncertainty.

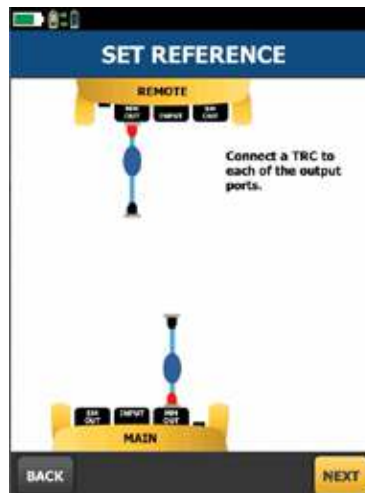
The first step in Tier 1 testing is setting the reference, which is similar to “zeroing” a scale before weighing. For common connectors, the reference should be set using the “one jumper method,” since it provides the most accurate measurement results. The exacting process is described below. It must be done correctly or all subsequent measurements will be incorrect.

When conducting Tier 1 fiber testing, the CertiFiber Pro tester offers a Set Reference Wizard that automatically guides you through steps 1-4.

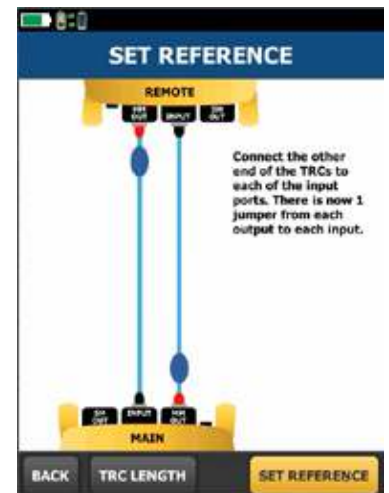
- 1** Before testing, connect the stabilized source to the meter with a test reference cord (TRC), a patch cord with a known negligible loss.
- 2** Set and record a reference power level from the source as the baseline for the subsequent power loss measurement.
- 3** Disconnect the TRC from the meter and connect a second TRC to the meter port. Connect the two TRCs together with a precision bulkhead adapter.
- 4** Measure the loss to ensure your TRCs are good (≤ 0.15 dB for MM, ≤ 0.25 dB for SM) and save the test.

With the reference set, disconnect at the bulkhead adapter, connect to the link under test, and measure the loss.

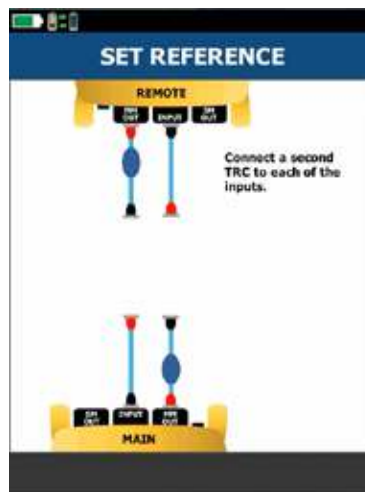
An OLTS will display results as a PASS or FAIL. An LSPM will only measure the loss. When using an LSPM (instead of OLTS like the CertiFiber Pro), a Visual Fault Locator (for polarity checking), fiber length meter, and manual calculations are required.



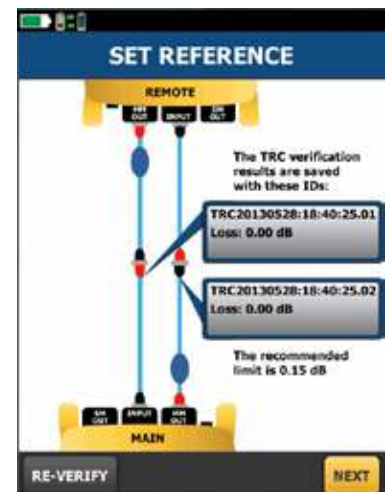
Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4

Some data centers use only interconnects at active equipment, creating a two-connector channel with a permanent link between the patch panels. Others use a separate cross-connect in between to enable changes or connect service provider equipment and tenant equipment quickly, essentially creating a four-connector channel.

When testing links that include cross-connects, it is best to test through the cross-connect from the interconnect panel at the near-end active equipment to the interconnect panel at the far-end active equipment, including the patch cords at the cross-connect. If you test from the patch panel at the switch to the first patch panel in the cross-connect, repeat the process from the second patch panel in the cross-connect to the patch panel at the far end, and then combine the results, it's very unlikely that the loss of multiple links added together will accurately portray total link loss. Use quality patch cords throughout your testing.

How do you test non-standard connector types?

With fiber density exploding as data centers pack in more servers, switches, and storage to handle emerging applications like AI with clusters that can encompass hundreds or even thousands of interconnected GPU-based servers, connector manufacturers have introduced new very small form factor (VSFF) connectors to combat space limitations in high-density environments. These include SN and MDC duplex connectors that offer 3X the density of the LC and are designed to fit four connectors into a 400 Gig transceiver to support 4X100 Gig breakout applications. New VSFF SN-MT and MMC multi-fiber connectors are also available and are significantly smaller than traditional MPOs. These sorts of connectors can be tested, albeit with less accuracy, by using a three-jumper reference.

The adoption of VSFF connectors will likely grow among hyperscale and cloud data centers over the next decade as they continue to migrate to 800 Gigabit and 1.6 Terabit speeds in the future. Fluke Networks is keeping an eye on market adoption for these new connector variants and will develop VSFF interfaces for our fiber certification testers as needed to meet demand. When these solutions are ready, they will allow for a one-jumper reference. In the meantime, testing VSFF connectors on patch cords or installed cabling may require the three-jumper method using breakout TRCs on either side of the cabling under test. If you need to test new VSFF connectors, Fluke Networks technical experts can help you determine the best fiber test solution and testing method.



Tier 1 Certification

Fluke Networks Loss-Length Fiber Testing Solutions



**CertiFiber™ Pro Optical
Loss Test Set (OLTS)**



**SimpliFiber™ Pro
Optical Power Meter
and Light Source**



**MultiFiber™ Pro
MPO Tester**

Best Practice 2: Loss-length Fiber Testing • Tier 1 Certification

Best Practice 3: Fiber Plant Characterization

Tier 2 /Extended Certification

When should you do it?

Tier 2/extended certification is recommended for fiber testing by industry standards and is required if the project specifies fiber plant characterization. If required, Tier 2 testing should be executed before loss-length Tier 1 testing with an OLTS, since OLTS insertion loss test results are required for definitive proof of compliance. Using an OTDR does not replace the OLTS because its total insertion loss measurement does not necessarily depict the total loss that will occur on a link once it is live.

Why should you do it?

Fiber plant characterization is valuable as part of a complete data center testing strategy. It verifies that the quality of the installation meets design specifications and ensures that there are no unplanned loss events due to poor cable management or installation errors. Characterizing a fiber link is the only way to see the performance of specific connection points and their location within the link to easily identify any questionable connection points that may need to be addressed due to air gaps, poor fiber core alignment, lack of cleanliness, or other problems that can occur during installation. It is also the only way to measure reflectance of specific connections, which is essential for emerging short-reach single-mode applications.

What instrument should you use?

An Optical Time Domain Reflectometer (OTDR) is required for Tier 2/extended certification testing. Unlike the OLTS, which measures the amount of light coming out of the far end, the OTDR characterizes a fiber link using special pulsed laser diodes to transmit high-power light pulses into a fiber and measuring the amount of light reflected when the pulses meet connections, breaks, cracks, splices, sharp bends, or the end of the fiber. The OTDR uses these measurements to detect events in the fiber that reduce or reflect the power in the source pulse.



OptiFiber® Pro OTDR

Why should you test for reflectance?

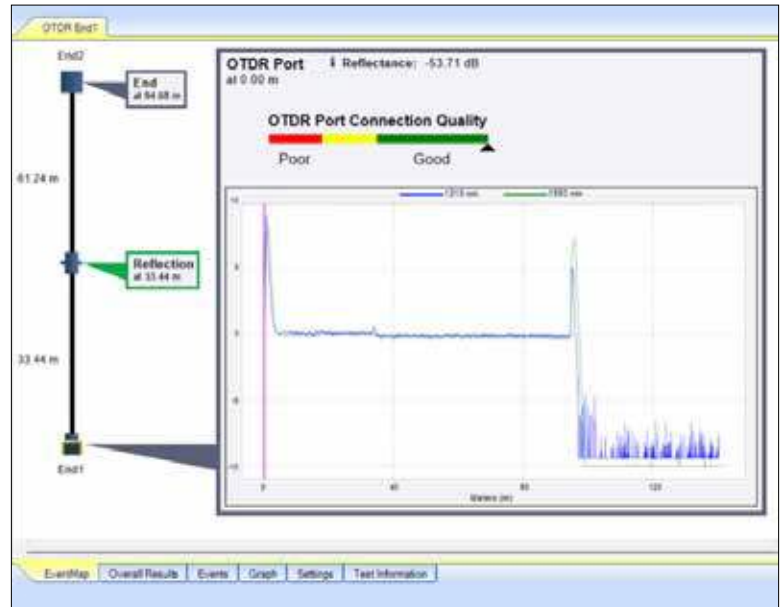
Reflectance is expressed in dB units as a negative value and is the amount of light reflected relative to the source pulse, with values closer to 0 representing larger reflectance. Reflectance has become increasingly important for emerging short-reach single-mode applications ideal for fiber links up to 500 meters in larger data centers, including 100GBASE-DR, 200GBASE-DR4, 400GBASE-DR4, and 800GBASE-DR4.

Short-reach single-mode applications use power-conserving lasers that are significantly less expensive than long-distance single-mode lasers. However, because short-reach single-mode transceivers are more susceptible to reflectance, industry standards specify insertion loss limits based on the number and reflectance of connections for these applications. If the reflectance requirements cannot be met, the maximum channel insertion loss is reduced.

When performing bidirectional testing with an OTDR, it's important not to disconnect the launch and tail fibers to maintain the same alignment for both tests and ensure accuracy. The SmartLoop™ feature on the Fluke Networks OptiFiber™ Pro makes it easy to test in both directions from one end by using a loop at the remote end of a duplex link and automatically averaging the two readings.

Tier 2/Extended Fiber Certification Procedure

To accurately measure the first and last connector on a fiber link using an OTDR, you need to use a launch and tail fiber. Testing with an OTDR is done bidirectionally, and the loss results are averaged to get a more accurate result. This is because the loss of specific connectors and splices depends on the test direction. OTDR testing performed in only one direction can result in a loss value that is less than it is or even negative (referred to as a gainer), which can create a false positive and lead to the misconception that there is plenty of headroom. Likewise, testing in the other direction can result in a false negative where measured loss is greater than actual loss.



- 1** Before you start, run a test with your launch and tail fibers to check that they and their connectors are in good condition. You should not see more than 0.25 dB of loss for them. Also, check the port quality, it should be pegged all the way to the right (“Good”).
- 2** Connect the OTDR to one end of the fiber link-under-test using a launch fiber. Attach a tail fiber to the connector at the far end.
- 3** Configure or select the appropriate limits to test against. It is recommended to use a limit with an “RL” value that will check that the connections have good reflectance properties.

How do you read an OTDR trace?

OTDRs characterize any reflective and non-reflective events in a fiber link by displaying trace results that plot reflected and backscattered light versus distance along the fiber. Traces typically begin with an initial pulse resulting from the reflection of the OTDR connection and then gradually decline with insertion loss. This decline may be interrupted by shifts caused by connectors, splices, or breaks. The end of the fiber is identified by a large spike, after which the trace drops down.

Experienced OTDR users can typically recognize reflective trace events for launch cords, connectors, mechanical splices, fusion splices, mismatched fibers, and the end of the link. However, interpreting OTDR traces can be intimidating to novice users. Advanced OTDRs, like the OptiFiber Pro, automatically interpret the trace and provide a detailed graphical map (EventMap™) of events that indicates the location of connectors, splices, and anomalies.



Fluke Networks Fiber Characterization (Tier 2 Certification) Solution with EventMap™ displays fiber faults in an easy-to-understand format.



OptiFiber® Pro OTDR

Best Practice 4: Test Results and Documentation



When should you do it?

After you have completed a measurement, you should always save the results. Advanced testers like Fluke Networks CertiFiber Pro and OptiFiber Pro feature Auto Save functionality that automatically saves your results when testing. Even if you don't have Auto Save enabled, the testers will alert you that a result has not been saved.

Once you're done testing, upload your results to a computer for documenting results via cable test management software or to a cloud-based service for storing and reporting on test results.

Why should you do it?

Testing data center fiber links after installation doesn't mean anything without proof. Documenting the results is the only real way to ensure installation accountability and integrity, resolve disputes, and facilitate more efficient troubleshooting. Even if the customer or a manufacturer's warranty doesn't require documented test results, documentation is still the best practice and your best protection. If you certify a fiber link that later fails, and you don't have the documentation to prove it, how else do you provide evidence that the link was functioning properly and that it met the specification at the time of installation?

What documentation software should you use?

LinkWare™ PC Cable Test Management Software lets you manage all the results from multiple testers using one PC application. It helps you quickly organize, edit, view, print, save, or archive test results. It also integrates all fiber test types (Tier 1, Tier 2, and Inspection) into a single report, simplifying documentation and allowing you to generate professional reports in a common format that is consistent across multiple data center sites.

LinkWare PC also works with LinkWare Live, a cloud service from Fluke Networks that allows you to upload results over Wi-Fi, track tester status and location, and set up tests from your PC or tablet. LinkWare Live also integrates with leading labeling software providers like Brady, Brother, Dymo, Epson, and Silver Fox to synchronize cable ID data and simplify cable label creation.

LinkWare™ PC





Cable ID/ Test ID: 010B

Date / Time: 05/07/2025 09:18:21 AM n = 1.482000 (850 nm)
Cable Type: OM4 Multimode 50 n = 1.479000 (1300 nm)
Backscatter Coefficient: -68.0dB (850 nm) Backscatter Coefficient: -75.8dB (1300 nm)

Test Summary: PASS

Modal Bandwidth: 4700MHz-km (850 nm)
Modal Bandwidth: 500MHz-km (1300 nm)

Loss (R->M)

PASS

2 Test Limit: TIA-568.3-E Multimode (REF)

Limits Version: 7.11

Date / Time: 05/07/2025 09:18:21 AM

Operator: Bill Ding

Main: Versiv

S/N: 194909199

Software Version: V6.13 Build 2

Module: CertiFiber Pro (CFP-QUAD)

S/N: 2427612

Remote: Versiv

S/N: 17450151

Software Version: V6.13 Build 2

Module: CertiFiber Pro Remote (CFP-QUAD)

S/N: 2427616

Propagation Delay (ns)	263	
Length m	53.2	PASS
Limit 2000.0		
	850 nm	1300 nm
Result	PASS	PASS
Loss (dB)	0.65	0.61
Limit (dB)	1.16	1.08
Margin (dB)	0.51	0.47
Reference (dBm)	-22.81	-22.58

Number of Adapters: 2
Number of Splices: 0
Connector Type: SC
Patch Length1 (m): 2.0
Reference Date: 05/07/2025 08:57:28 AM
1 Jumper 4

Loss (M->R)

PASS

Test Limit:

Limits Version:

Date / Time:

	850 nm	1300 nm
Result	PASS	PASS
Loss (dB)	0.53	0.38
Limit (dB)	1.16	1.08
Margin (dB)	0.63	0.70
Reference (dBm)	-23.15	-22.77

Compliant Network Standards: A

10/100BASE-SX	1000BASE-LX	1000BASE-SX
100BASE-FX	100GBASE-SR10	100GBASE-SR4
10BASE-FL	10GBASE-LRM	10GBASE-LX4
10GBASE-SR	40GBASE-SR4	ATM155
ATM155SWL	ATM52	ATM622 Fiber Optic
ATM622SWL Fiber Optic	FDDI Fiber Optic	Fibre Channel 100-M5-SN-I
Fibre Channel 100-M5E-SN-I	Fibre Channel 1200-M5-SN-I	Fibre Channel 1200-M5E-SN-I
Fibre Channel 133	Fibre Channel 1600-M5E-SN-I	Fibre Channel 1600-M5F-SN-I
Fibre Channel 200-M5-SN-I	Fibre Channel 200-M5E-SN-I	Fibre Channel 266
Fibre Channel 266SWL	Fibre Channel 400-M5-SN-I	Fibre Channel 400-M5E-SN-I
Fibre Channel 400-M5F-SN-I	Fibre Channel 800-M5E-SN-I	Fibre Channel 800-M5F-SN-I

How do you read a test report?

If your fiber was certified and documented with a CertiFiber Pro, just look at the lower left of the test report under “Compliant Network Standards” and you’ll see which applications the fiber will support based on its loss and length (look for the “A” in the figure above).

There are two basic things you should look for in a test report and three others that experts will look for with — but anyone can check these key factors. Refer to the results below to find the corresponding part of the report.

The basics:

- 1 Look at whether the test passed (green check) or failed (red X) in the upper right corner.
- 2 Make sure the right limits were used in the test. You can test against TIA/ISO standards or application standards.

Now, let's look for the things that the experts look for:

3 Check out the actual loss measurements. In the case of the CertiFiber Pro OLTS, loss results are most commonly reported in pairs. A negative number in the "Loss" row for any wavelength indicates that the signal got stronger as it traveled through the fiber — a physical impossibility and an indication that the tester was set up incorrectly.

Note that the CertiFiber Pro OLTS will flag this as an error, but not all testers will.

4 Look at the reference setting. The one-jumper method is recommended for most situations. Before making any tests, set a reference and then test the cords used for all the subsequent tests. The first set of tests in a LinkWare report are for these cords. Click on these to access the detailed reports and make sure that the losses aren't too large, which indicates poor quality cords that can lead to all measurements made with these cords being inaccurate.

Propagation Delay (ns)	263	
Length m	53.2	PASS
Limit 2000.0		
Result	850 nm	1300 nm
Loss (dB)	PASS	PASS
Limit (dB)	0.65	0.61
Margin (dB)	1.16	1.08
Reference (dBm)	0.51	0.47
	-22.81	-22.58

Result	850 nm	1300 nm
Loss (dB)	PASS	PASS
Limit (dB)	0.53	0.38
Margin (dB)	1.16	1.08
Reference (dBm)	0.63	0.70
	-23.15	-22.77

Number of Adapters: 2
Number of Splices: 0
Connector Type: SC
Patch Length1 (m): 2.0
Reference Date: 05/07/2025 08:57:28 AM
1 Jumper

Why are some of my loss results positive and some negative?

The most common cause of this is setting the reference incorrectly, and it means that all measurements — including the positive ones — are also wrong. Be aware that there can be confusion over whether loss numbers should be positive or negative. If you use some power meters to measure the loss, the reference will be set to 0 dB, and the resulting displayed measurement of the signal at the far end will be less than that, or negative. Fluke Networks power meters show the loss correctly — positive — when used in this mode. That's because standards declare that fiber losses are expressed as positive numbers (a negative loss would be a gain — that's math). And any time you get mixed positive and negative loss results, that indicates a potentially serious error with them all.

Best Practice 5: Troubleshooting

What can go wrong with my data center fiber links?

Problems within a fiber link can occur due to a wide variety of reasons. It could be that a connector is not fully engaged, which is often difficult to notice in a crowded patch panel. It could also be caused by the quality of the connector itself, such as poor end face geometry. A more common cause is poor field termination that results in air gaps and high insertion loss or scratches, defects, and contamination on the connector's end face.

A faulty fusion splice, misalignment, or incorrect polarity could also cause an issue. Poor cable management can put strain on a fiber connector, which can cause misalignment, or the connector may not be properly seated and connected with its mate. Worn or damaged latching mechanisms on connectors or adapters are sometimes the culprit. Within the link itself, the fiber may have experienced microbends or macrobends, or it could have been damaged with a break somewhere along the length of the fiber.

The overall design of the link can also be the cause of insertion loss and performance issues. Even if all the connectors are high quality, free of contamination, and properly terminated, if there are too many connections in a channel, or if you've violated distance limitations, the loss may exceed specifications for a given application.



What instruments should you use?

You can use a variety of tools to troubleshoot fiber links in the data center.

Visual Fault Locators (VFLs): This simple, inexpensive tool uses a bright laser beam (typically red) that can be easily seen by the human eye for tracing and testing continuity and polarity from one end of the link to the other. It's ideal for locating breaks and severe bends in cables and identifying bad connectors and splices. The Fluke Networks VisiFault™ VFL offers a long battery life and is compatible with various connector types via simple changeable adapters.

Light Source and Power Meter (LSPM) or Optical Loss Test Set (OLTS): Primarily used for Tier 1 certification, an LSPM or OLTS can also be used for troubleshooting. By comparing the loss of the link to the requirements of the technology, you can determine whether or not the fiber link is the source of a problem. They can also be used to verify output power from a device such as a switch, as well as continuity and polarity.

Optical Fault Finder: Optical fault finders such as the Fluke Networks Fiber QuickMap™ quickly and efficiently measure length and identify high-loss splices, connections, and breaks in a fiber link. It uses technology similar to an OTDR, sending a laser light pulse through the fiber and measuring the power and timing of light reflected from events and the end of the fiber. The QuickMap also detects live optical signals before testing and is extremely handy for finding MPO connections where both are unintentionally unpinned — a common problem that causes connection failure and can be challenging to find in patch panels where you can't easily or safely stare into the port to see if the pin is there or not.

Live Fiber Detector: A live fiber detector like the Fluke Networks FiberLert™ is a fast, accurate, and safe non-contact solution for checking transceivers, connectors, and cables without a long, complicated setup process. It is ideal for verifying fiber activity, polarity, and connectivity. Simply place the FiberLert in front of the fiber end face or port. A light and tone will indicate an active fiber (850 nm to 1625 nm). Because its detector operates without contact, FiberLert reduces the risk of contamination and damage, so it can also safely verify disconnection before a routine inspection. FiberLert is suitable for troubleshooting single-mode and multimode ports, patch cords, and optical transceivers.

OTDR: While you may be able to pinpoint a problem with a VFL, optical fault finder, or live fiber detector, sometimes you need to know more. While an OTDR is used for Tier 2 /extended certification testing, it is also considered the ultimate troubleshooting tool because it characterizes events in a fiber link versus distance. It can be used for locating fiber breaks, bends, splices, and connectors and for measuring the loss and reflectance of specific events.




Fluke Networks

Fiber Test and Troubleshooting Instruments

	Inspection and Cleaning				MPO Testing
	 FI-5000 FiberInspector™ Micro Fiber Inspection Scope	 FI-3000 FiberInspector™ Ultra Video Microscope	 FI-7000 FiberInspector™ Pro Video Microscope	 Fiber Optic Cleaning Kits	 MultiFiber™ Pro MPO Tester
Check end-face contamination or damage	✓	✓	✓		
End-face inspection grading		✓	✓		
Port Illumination	✓	✓			
Auto-focus	✓	✓			
Clean contamination				✓	
Check connectivity					✓
Check polarity					✓
Verify loss over entire link to ensure loss budget not exceeded					✓
Dual-fiber loss testing					
Singlemode Tier 1 certification					✓
Multimode Encircled Flux Compliant Tier 1 Certification					EF compliant at the bulkhead
Pinpoint faults					
Tier 2 certification					
Pass/fail results		✓	✓		✓
Document test results		✓	✓		✓
Fiber types supported	Multimode, Single-mode	Multimode, Single-mode, MPO	Multimode, Single-mode, MPO	Multimode, Single-mode, MPO	MPO (Multimode and Single-mode)
Source type					LED, FP Laser

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Fiber Test and Troubleshooting Instruments

	Loss Length Testing Tier 1 Certification		Plant Characterization and Troubleshooting Tier 2 Certification			
						
	SimpliFiber™ Pro Power Tester and Fiber Test Kits	CertiFiber™ Pro Optical Loss Test Set	FiberLert	VisiFault™ Visual Fault Locator	Fiber QuickMap™	OptiFiber™ Pro OTDR
Check end-face contamination or damage		✓ i-version				✓ i-version
End-face inspection grading		✓ i-version				✓ i-version
Port Illumination						
Auto-focus						
Clean contamination						
Check connectivity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Check polarity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Verify loss over entire link to ensure loss budget not exceeded	✓	✓				
Dual-fiber loss testing		✓				
Singlemode Tier 1 certification	✓	✓				
Multimode Encircled Flux Compliant Tier 1 Certification	with EF TRC's	✓				
Pinpoint faults				✓	✓	✓
Tier 2 certification						✓
Pass/fail results		✓				✓
Document test results	✓	✓				✓
Fiber types supported	Multimode, Single-mode	Multimode, Single-mode	Multimode, Single-mode	Multimode, Single-mode	850 nm Multimode	Multimode, Single-mode
Source type	LED, FP Laser	LED, FP Laser		Laser	Laser	LED, FP Laser



Data Center Solutions

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