# Program Information

## Lesson:

### *Fiber Optic Testing*

## Training:

## Fiber Optics

## Time frame:

### 60-90 minutes

# Instruction Section

## Learning Objectives:

# Identify what parameters need to be tested in fiber optic systems.

# Identify and use instruments for fiber optic testing.

# Explain how to perform basic fiber optic testing procedures.

# Discuss measurement uncertainty in fiber optic testing.

# Troubleshoot common problems in fiber optic systems.

## Assessment Tools/Methods:

# Participants should be assessed based on participation in group discussions and activities.

## Learner Prior Knowledge:

## Prior to class, participants will need to read:

## Reference Guide: Fiber Optic Testing (<https://www.thefoa.org/tech/ref/basic/test.html>)

## Reference Guide: Fiber Optic Test Instruments (<https://www.thefoa.org/tech/ref/testing/Instruments/instr.html>)

## Reference Guide: 5 Different Ways to Test Fiber Optic Cables According to International Standards (<https://www.thefoa.org/tech/ref/testing/5ways/fiveways.html>)

## Reference Guide: OTDR Testing (<https://www.thefoa.org/tech/ref/testing/OTDR/OTDR.html>)

## Reference Guide: Reading an OTDR Trace (<https://fiberu.org/OTDR_Trace/index.html>)

## Reference Guide: FOA Standards (<https://www.thefoa.org/tech/ref/1pstandards/index.html>)

## Reference Guide: What Loss Should You Expect? (<https://www.thefoa.org/tech/loss-est.htm>)

## Reference Guide: Loss and Power Budgets (<https://www.thefoa.org/tech/lossbudg.htm>)

## Prior to class, the participants will need to watch:

## [FOA Lecture 12: Fiber Optic Testing Overview](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqc3b4A-B_k&list=PLC7CC6B17EF009849&index=16&feature=plpp_video)

## [FOA Lecture 15: Five Ways To Test Fiber Optic Cable Plants](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7q820Yw5LQ&list=PLC7CC6B17EF009849&index=13&feature=plpp_video)

## [FOA Lecture 17: OTDR Testing](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h_KHvl0AxI&list=PLC7CC6B17EF009849&index=10&feature=plpp_video)

## [FOA Lecture 26: Loss Budgets](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=as6AXnGjdUE)

## Instructional Activities:

# Introduce the importance of fiber optic testing and the parameters involved.

# Activity 1: Parameters in Fiber Optic Testing :

# Ask participants to discuss why fiber optic testing is crucial for network performance and reliability.

# Sample answers may include: Fiber optic testing ensures that the network meets performance standards, detects faults, and verifies that the installation adheres to specifications. Proper testing minimizes downtime and prevents costly errors.

# Have participants refer to the Overview of Fiber Optic Testing Parameters Handout as you introduce each parameter.

# Ask participants to list other parameters they think might be important and discuss their ideas with the group.

# Activity 2: Instruments for Fiber Optic Testing

1. Break participants into small groups and assign them one of the following types of testing instruments to discuss and understand its application.
   1. Optical Time Domain Reflectometer (OTDR)
      1. Answers may include: Measures the length and quality of the fiber by sending pulses of light and analyzing reflections. Useful for locating faults and splices.
   2. Optical Power Meter (OPM)
      1. Answers may include: Measures the power of the signal transmitted through the fiber. Helps in assessing signal strength.
   3. Light Source
      1. Answers may include: Provides a stable light signal for testing. Often used in conjunction with an optical power meter.
   4. Fiber Identifier
      1. Answers may include: For detecting the presence of signals in fiber cables.
   5. Chromatic Dispersion Tester
      1. Answers may include: For measuring dispersion in fiber.
2. Have groups present the information about their testing equipment with the whole group.

# Activity 3: Basic Fiber Optic Testing Procedures

1. Discuss the importance of proper connections between the testing instruments and the fiber.
2. Review the steps required to calibrate instruments before testing to ensure accuracy*.*
3. Discuss common calibration procedures and the importance of following manufacturer guidelines.
4. Talk about the necessary steps for preparing fiber before testing, including cleaning and inspecting connectors, and ensuring no damage to the fiber.
5. Handout the Basic Fiber Optic Testing Procedures Handout to participants and assign them into small groups based on the following tests: OTDR, OPM and Light Source, Fiber Identifier, and Chromatic Dispersion Tester.
6. Each group will focus on one type of test and outline the procedures, including preparation, execution, and interpretation of results.
7. Groups will share their guides with the class, discussing the key points and any challenges they foresee in the testing process.
8. Facilitate a discussion on best practices and common issues encountered during activity.

# Activity 4: Measuring Uncertainty and Troubleshooting Fiber Optic Problems

1. Hold a group discussion about how measurement uncertainty affects fiber optic testing results.
   1. Answers may include: Measurement uncertainty can lead to inaccurate readings, which might cause incorrect conclusions about fiber performance. Factors contributing to uncertainty include instrument calibration, environmental conditions, and operator skill.
2. Ask participants to refer to the Troubleshooting Scenario Handout to work independently or in pairs to identify potential causes and troubleshooting steps to each scenario.
3. Allow time for participants to discuss their answers.

# Activity 5: Calculating and Analyzing Loss Budgets

1. Explain that the loss budget is a critical component in designing a fiber optic network. It represents the total amount of loss allowed in the fiber optic link to ensure signal quality.
2. Ask participants to list various factors that contribute to loss budget calculations, including fiber attenuation, connector losses, splice losses, and other potential losses.
3. Provide a brief example to illustrate how to calculate the loss budget, using the formula: Loss Budget = Fiber Attenuation + Connector Losses + Splice Losses
4. Have participants work independently or in small groups to complete the Loss Budget Calculation Worksheet. Note: Answers are provided on the Loss Budget Calculation Instructor Handout to assist participants if needed.
5. After participants have had time to complete the work, review the answers as a whole group.
6. Recap key points of the entire lesson.
7. Open the floor for any remaining questions or clarifications from the group.

## Resources:

# Whiteboard, markers or display to record discussion points

# Calculator

# Overview of Fiber Optic Testing Parameters Handout

# Basic Fiber Optic Testing Procedures Worksheet

# Basic Fiber Optic Testing Procedures Instructor Handout

# Loss Budget Calculation Worksheet

# Loss Budget Calculation Instructor Handout

# Reflection Section

How confident do you feel about performing and interpreting fiber optic tests on your own? What challenges do you anticipate facing when setting up and calibrating fiber optic testing equipment in real-world scenarios? How can you apply the knowledge of loss budget calculations to ensure the integrity and efficiency of fiber optic networks in your future work?

*This lesson is supplemental to the Fiber Optics lesson within FOA's Fiber U curriculum and not part of the FOA required curriculum to obtain the Certified Premises Cabling Technician certification. If interested in becoming an approved school and/or obtaining a certification, please contact FOA at* [*thefoa.org/contact-foa.html*](https://www.thefoa.org/contact-foa.html)*.*

*Note: AI, specifically ChatGPT 3.5, was used to generate scenarios for this contextualized lesson plan.*

# Overview of Fiber Optic Testing Parameters Handout

Refer to the following information when discussing parameters.

**Fiber Optic Testing Parameters**

| **Parameter** | **Description** | **Units** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Attenuation** | Measures signal loss over a fiber link. | dB/km |
| **Reflectance** | Measures the amount of signal reflected back due to mismatches. | dB |
| **Chromatic Dispersion** | Measures the spreading of light pulses due to different wavelengths traveling at different speeds. | ps/nm-km |
| **Polarization Mode Dispersion (PMD)** | Measures the differential delay of light polarized in different modes. | ps/√km |
| **Insertion Loss** | Loss of signal power resulting from the insertion of a component or connector in the optical path. | dB |
| **Return Loss** | Measures the amount of light reflected back towards the source. | dB |

**Notes:**

* **Attenuation** affects signal strength and quality.
* **Reflectance** can cause signal degradation and potential system failures.
* **Chromatic Dispersion** impacts high-speed data transmission.
* **PMD** can affect the performance of high-speed optical networks.
* **Insertion Loss** is crucial for assessing component efficiency.
* **Return Loss** indicates connector quality and alignment.

# Basic Fiber Optic Testing Procedures Worksheet

1. **Form Groups:** Divide into small groups
2. **Assign Instruments:** Each group will be assigned one of the following instruments:
   * OTDR
   * OPM and Light Source
   * Fiber Identifier
   * Chromatic Dispersion Tester
3. **Discussion and Creation:** Use the space provided to create a detailed step-by-step guide for setting up and performing tests with your assigned instrument. Discuss and agree on the steps within your group before documenting them.

**Step-by-Step Guide for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**1. Preparation**

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**2. Calibration**

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**3. Conducting the Test**

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1. **Analyze Data**
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**5. Final Steps/Post-Test**

* + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Group Notes and Observations**

* **What challenges did you encounter during the exercise?**
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* **How did you resolve these challenges?**
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* **What additional tips would you offer for using this instrument effectively?**
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# Basic Fiber Optic Testing Procedures Instructor Handout

Sample answers for the activity are provided below to provide participants with assistance as needed.

1. **Testing with OTDR (Optical Time-Domain Reflectometer)**

Step-by-Step Guide:

1. Preparation:
   * Inspect the Fiber: Ensure the fiber is clean and properly connected. Use a fiber inspection scope if available.
   * Connect the OTDR: Attach the OTDR's test lead to the fiber under test. Ensure connections are secure and free from dust or damage.
2. Setup:
   * Power On the OTDR: Turn on the OTDR and let it initialize.
   * Select Test Parameters: Choose the appropriate wavelength, pulse width, and range based on the fiber type and length. Common wavelengths are 1310 nm and 1550 nm.
   * Calibrate: Perform a calibration if necessary according to the OTDR’s user manual. This may include setting the zero point and adjusting for any specific fiber characteristics.
3. Conducting the Test:
   * Launch the Test: Initiate the OTDR test by pressing the start button. The OTDR will send a pulse of light into the fiber and measure the reflected signals.
   * Monitor the Results: Observe the trace on the OTDR display. The OTDR will provide information on fiber length, loss, and event locations (e.g., splices, connectors).
4. Analyze Data:
   * Review the Trace: Interpret the OTDR trace to identify any issues such as splice losses or reflections. Look for anomalies that may indicate problems.
   * Save and Document Results: Save the test results and document key parameters and observations for reporting.
5. Post-Test:
   * Disconnect the OTDR: Carefully disconnect the OTDR from the fiber, ensuring no damage to the fiber or connectors.
   * Clean Up: Ensure all equipment is properly stored and fibers are cleaned and protected.

2. **Testing with OPM (Optical Power Meter) and Light Source**

Step-by-Step Guide:

1. Preparation:
   * Inspect the Fiber: Check the fiber for cleanliness and proper connection. Clean the fiber ends if necessary.
   * Connect the Light Source: Attach the light source to one end of the fiber, ensuring it is securely connected.
   * Connect the OPM: Attach the optical power meter to the other end of the fiber.
2. Setup:
   * Power On the Instruments: Turn on both the light source and the optical power meter.
   * Select Wavelengths: Set the light source to the desired wavelength (e.g., 1310 nm, 1550 nm) and ensure the optical power meter is set to the same wavelength.
   * Calibrate the OPM: If required, calibrate the optical power meter according to the manufacturer's instructions. This may involve setting a reference power level.
3. Conducting the Test:
   * Send Light Through Fiber: Activate the light source to send light through the fiber.
   * Measure Power Levels: Use the OPM to measure the optical power at the receiving end. Record the power level readings.
4. Analyze Data:
   * Calculate Loss: Compare the measured power levels with the expected values to determine fiber loss. Use the formula:

Loss (dB)=Source Power (dBm)−Measured Power (dBm)\text{Loss (dB)} = \text{Source Power (dBm)} - \text{Measured Power (dBm)}Loss (dB)=Source Power (dBm)−Measured Power (dBm)

* + Evaluate Results: Assess whether the measured loss is within acceptable limits for the fiber and connections.

1. Post-Test:
   * Disconnect the Instruments: Carefully remove the optical power meter and light source from the fiber.
   * Clean Up: Store equipment properly and ensure fiber connectors are protected.

3. **Testing with Fiber Identifier**

Step-by-Step Guide:

1. Preparation:
   * Inspect the Fiber: Ensure the fiber is clean and the connections are secure.
   * Power On the Fiber Identifier: Turn on the fiber identifier and select the appropriate wavelength.
2. Setup:
   * Attach the Fiber Identifier: Connect the fiber identifier to the fiber under test. This device will detect the presence of light and identify the specific wavelength and signal.
3. Conducting the Test:
   * Activate the Identifier: Turn on the fiber identifier and allow it to detect signals passing through the fiber.
   * Read the Results: Observe the display to determine the signal wavelength and activity on the fiber.
4. Analyze Data:
   * Identify Fiber and Signal: Confirm the fiber and signal characteristics as displayed by the fiber identifier. This helps in identifying the specific fiber in a bundle or determining active signals.
5. Post-Test:
   * Disconnect the Identifier: Remove the fiber identifier from the fiber.
   * Clean Up: Store the fiber identifier properly.

4. **Testing with Chromatic Dispersion Tester**

Step-by-Step Guide:

1. Preparation:
   * Inspect the Fiber: Ensure the fiber is clean and properly connected.
   * Connect the Tester: Attach the chromatic dispersion tester to the fiber under test.
2. Setup:
   * Power On the Tester: Turn on the dispersion tester and initialize it.
   * Select Parameters: Choose the appropriate test wavelength and other parameters based on the fiber specifications.
3. Conducting the Test:
   * Run the Test: Activate the chromatic dispersion tester to send light through the fiber and measure dispersion.
   * Monitor Results: Observe the tester’s display to review dispersion values.
4. Analyze Data:
   * Interpret Results: Evaluate the dispersion results to ensure they are within acceptable limits for the fiber. Excessive dispersion can affect signal quality.
5. Post-Test:
   * Disconnect the Tester: Carefully remove the tester from the fiber.
   * Clean Up: Store the dispersion tester properly and ensure fiber connectors are protected.

# Troubleshooting Scenario Handout

Use the following information to answer the questions regarding the given scenarios.

**Troubleshooting Common Fiber Optic Problems**

| **Problem** | **Possible Causes** | **Troubleshooting Steps** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **High Attenuation** | Fiber bend, dirty connectors, damaged fiber. | Inspect and clean connectors, check for bends, re-test. |
| **High Reflectance** | Connector end-face contamination, improper splicing. | Clean connectors, check splice quality, re-test. |
| **No Signal** | Broken fiber, disconnected components, faulty equipment. | Verify connections, check for breaks, test equipment. |
| **Fluctuating Signal** | Loose connections, fiber movement, equipment issues. | Secure connections, ensure fiber is stable, check equipment. |

**Notes:**

* **High Attenuation:** Often caused by installation issues.
* **High Reflectance:** Indicates possible connector or splice issues.
* **No Signal:** Requires checking the entire signal path.
* **Fluctuating Signal:** May involve environmental factors or mechanical issues.

 **Scenario 1:** High attenuation in a fiber link.

* **Possible Causes:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Troubleshooting Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 **Scenario 2:** High reflectance readings.

* **Possible Causes:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Troubleshooting Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Loss Budget Calculation Worksheet

**Instructions:** For each scenario, calculate the total loss budget by summing the fiber attenuation, splice losses, and connector losses. Use the provided values for attenuation per kilometer, splice loss, and connector loss.

**Problem 1:** A premises cabling link 150 meters long uses singlemode fiber (0.4 dB/km @ 1310nm) and has three connections in the middle as well as two connectors on the ends (0.75 dB/connection).

**Problem 2:** A link 200 meters long uses multimode fiber (2.5 dB/km @ 850nm) and has one splice in the middle and four connectors (0.50 dB/connector).

**Problem 3:** A campus network link 500 meters long uses singlemode fiber (0.5 dB/km @ 1550nm) and has two splices and three connectors (0.75 dB/connector).

**Problem 4:** A backbone link 1 km long uses multimode fiber (3.5 dB/km @ 850nm) and has three connectors and one splice (0.3 dB/splice).

**Problem 5:** A long-haul link 10 km long uses singlemode fiber (0.4 dB/km @ 1550nm) with five connectors and two splices.

**Problem 6:** An industrial link 300 meters long uses multimode fiber (3.2 dB/km @ 850nm) and has one splice and four connectors.

**Problem 7:** Recalculate the loss budget of a premises cabling link 120 meters long with two connections and connectors on each end using TIA 568 worst case component losses (fiber at 3.5 dB/km and connections at 0.75 dB/connection).

**Problem 8:** Recalculate the loss budget of a premises cabling link 250 meters long with three connections and connectors on each end using TIA 568 worst case component losses (fiber at 3.5 dB/km and connections at 0.75 dB/connection).

# Loss Budget Calculation Instructor Handout

Answers to the participant worksheet are provided below.

**Problem 1 Solution:**

1. Fiber attenuation: 0.4 dB/km × 0.15 km = 0.06 dB
2. Connection loss: 3 connections × 0.75 dB = 2.25 dB
3. Connector loss: 2 connectors × 0.75 dB = 1.5 dB
4. Total loss budget: 0.06 dB + 2.25 dB +1.5 dB = 3.81 dB

**Problem 2 Solution:**

1. Fiber attenuation: 2.5 dB/km × 0.2 km = 0.5 dB
2. Splice loss: 1 splice × 0.3 dB = 0.3 dB
3. Connector loss: 4 connectors × 0.5 dB = 2.0 dB
4. Total loss budget: 0.5 dB + 0.3 dB + 2.0 dB = 2.8 dB

**Problem 3 Solution:**

1. Fiber attenuation: 0.5 dB/km × 0.5 km = 0.25 dB
2. Splice loss: 2 splices × 0.3 dB = 0.6 dB
3. Connector loss: 3 connectors × 0.75 dB = 2.25 dB
4. Total loss budget: 0.25 dB + 0.6 dB + 2.25 dB = 3.1 dB

**Problem 4 Solution:**

1. Fiber attenuation: 3.5 dB/km × 1 km = 3.5 dB
2. Splice loss: 1 splice × 0.3 dB = 0.3 dB
3. Connector loss: 3 connectors × 0.5 dB = 1.5 dB
4. Total loss budget: 3.5 dB + 0.3 dB + 1.5 dB = 5.3 dB

**Problem 5 Solution:**

1. Fiber attenuation: 0.4 dB/km × 10 km = 4.0 dB
2. Splice loss: 2 splices×0.3 dB = 0.6 dB
3. Connector loss: 5 connectors × 0.75 dB = 3.75 dB
4. Total loss budget: 4.0 dB + 0.6 dB + 3.75 dB = 8.35 dB

**Problem 6 Solution:**

1. Fiber attenuation: 3.2 dB/km × 0.3 km = 0.96 dB
2. Splice loss: 1 splice × 0.3 dB = 0.3 dB
3. Connector loss: 4 connectors × 0.5 dB = 2.0 dB
4. Total loss budget: 0.96 dB + 0.3 dB + 2.0 dB = 3.26 dB

**Problem 7 Solution:**

1. Fiber attenuation: 3.5 dB/km× 0.12 km = 0.42 dB
2. Connection loss: 2 connections × 0.75 dB = 1.5 dB
3. Connector loss: 2 connectors × 0.75 dB=1.5 dB
4. Total loss budget: 0.42 dB + 1.5 dB + 1.5 dB = 3.42 dB

The loss budget now becomes 3.42 dB.

**Problem 8 Solution:**

1. Fiber attenuation: 3.5 dB/km × 0.25 km = 0.875 dB
2. Connection loss: 3 connections × 0.75 dB = 2.25 dB
3. Connector loss: 2 connectors × 0.75 dB = 1.5 dB
4. Total loss budget: 0.875 dB + 2.25 dB + 1.5 dB = 4.625 dB

The loss budget now becomes 4.625 dB.