

Fiber Optic Troubleshooting and Maintenance

Mike Dee
Senior Field Engineer
22 January 2026

CLEARED
For Open Publication

Jan 20, 2026

Typical Avionics Fiber Testing Application

Typical Fiber Testing Requirement

Characterization and location of fiber optics components (mainly connectors)

Fault location: dirty, loose or bad connectors, bends and breaks

Fiber end-face inspection in **HARD TO REACH** locations

Typical Optical Components characteristics:

Multimode “harsh environment” fiber cable assemblies and harnesses
(50, 62.5 μ m, or larger core)

Singlemode (9 μ m)

Length: 25 cm to 100 m

Highly reflective connectors \leq - 20 dB



Test Equipment Requirement

- Multimode OTDR
 - High Resolution (short dead zones & high dynamic range at short pulsewidths)
 - Reliable OTDR trace analysis (immune to high reflectance)
 - Easy/Auto modes for measurement setting and result analysis
 - Lightweight and compact
- Inspection & Cleaning Tools
 - Fiber End Face Microscopes
 - MIL tips for avionic/tactical termini
 - Inspection Assistant Guides for avionic connectors
 - Cleaners (sticks, wipes, solvent...)
 - Skipping Education/Training on Inspection/Cleaning today. Focus is on the inspection application and test requirement

Common Avionic Tools – OTDR and Inspection

Installation/Maintenance



Hi-Res OTDR



OneAdvisor 800 Fiber



Inspection probe
with MIL/avionic tips

P5000i Fiber Inspection Microscope with HD4i Display

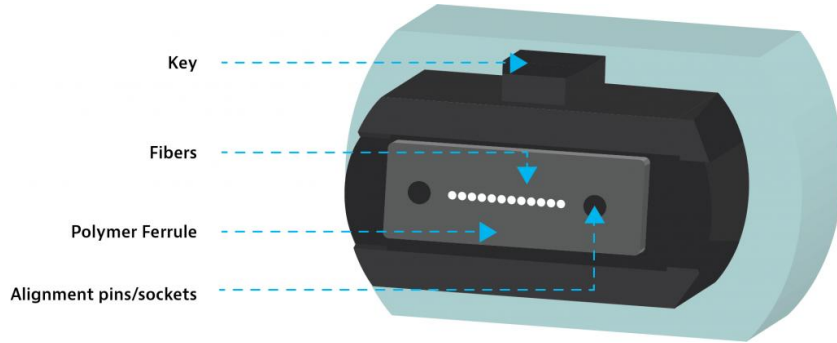


Inspection Devices Must be Able to Inspect Avionic and Tactical Fiber Optic Connectors



Specific Aircraft Tips and Guides

Commercial MTP/MPO







FBP3-MT-MB-JSF-V2-T	JSF		JSF MT Motherboard Tip for FBP3 (Tip Only)	FBPT-P3-xxx
FBPT-P3-1100	Barrel Assemblies		Long Barrel Extension with 1-row RibbonDrive™ 11 Inch*	
FBPT-P3-750	Barrel Assemblies		Long Barrel Extension with 1-row RibbonDrive™ 7.5 Inch*	

* For visual image assessments (automated image analysis not supported)

FBPT-MT-MB-JSF-V2-T	JSF		Tip 1-Axis Pan for JSF MT Motherboard	None
FBPT-MT-MB-JSF-V3-T	JSF		Tip 2-Axis Pan for JSF MT Motherboard	None
FBPT-MT-MB2-JSF-V2-G	JSF		Guide for 2-Position JSF MT Motherboard	FBPT-MT-MB-JSF-V2-T, FBPT-MT-MB-JSF-V3-T
FBPT-MT-MB6-JSF-V2-G	JSF		Guide for 6-Position JSF MT Motherboard	FBPT-MT-MB-JSF-V2-T, FBPT-MT-MB-JSF-V3-T

Specific Aircraft Tips and Guides

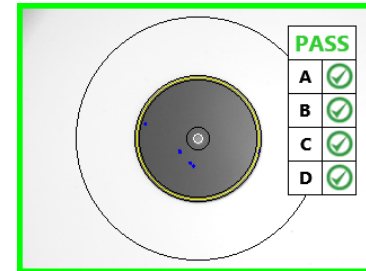
FBP3-MT-MB2-JSF-V2	JSF		JSF MT Motherboard 2-Position Tip and Guide Kit for FBP3 (FBP3-MT-MB-JSF-V2-T and FBPT-MT-MB2-JSF-V2-G)	FBPT-P3-xxx
FBP3-MT-MB6-JSF-V2	JSF		JSF MT Motherboard 6-Position Tip and Guide Kit for FBP3 (FBP3-MT-MB-JSF-V2-T and FBPT-MT-MB6-JSF-V2-G)	FBPT-P3-xxx
FBPT-MT-MB2-JSF-V2	JSF		Tip and Guide Kit for 2-Position JSF MT Motherboard (FBPT-MT-MB-JSF-V2-T and FBPT-MT-MB2-JSF-V2-G)	None
FBPT-MT-MB6-JSF-V2	JSF		Tip and Guide Kit for 6-Position JSF MT Motherboard (FBPT-MT-MB-JSF-V2-T and FBPT-MT-MB6-JSF-V2-G)	None



Example of 2-position MT Guide Inserted into Shell



P5000i Fiber Inspection Microscope and HD4i Display TAA Compliant



P5000i Controls

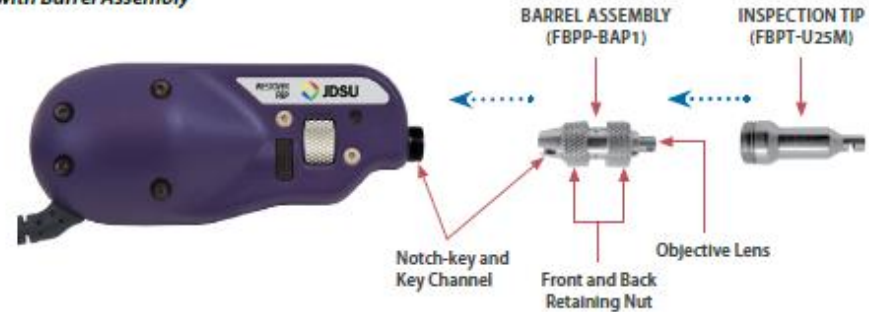


Removable Lens/Barrel Assembly

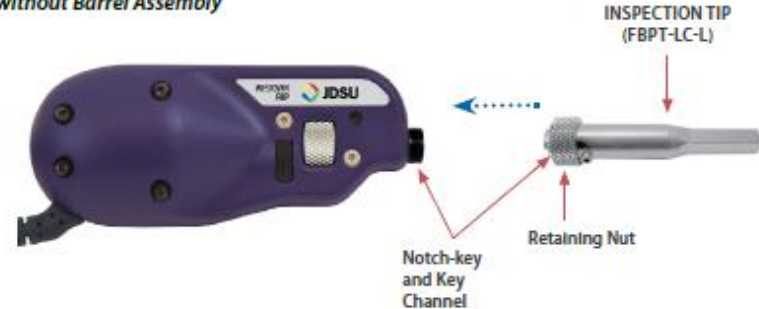
- Allows for lens/barrel to be replaced in the field instead of a Depot/Service Center Repair – no need to return microscope
- Allows for “specialty” tips to be used for avionic/tactical inspection
- The P5000i is so common in avionic applications that other companies make tips and guides for it
- Allows all connectors to be inspected
- The BAP3 and other MIL BAPs can inspect over 70+ different avionic connectors



with Barrel Assembly



without Barrel Assembly



Application Requirements

- Pass/Fail end face inspection images according to commercial industry standards AND include JSF and Navy inspection profiles. Internet/WF/BT/USB can't be used to add profiles
- No WiFi/BT on fiber inspection microscope
- No use with phone/tablet/laptop/PC
- No built-in display. Scope can be used where the display is NOT visible so an external display is required
- Access in small places required
- Must be able to inspect nearly all and any avionic connectors with either generic or custom tips and guides
- “Extender” option needed if a person can't reach or get access to the connector
- Removable lens is extremely useful so a broken lens is a field swap with no need to ship the scope for service
- Commonly needs to be “kitted” for protecting tools, easy storage, and inventory control
- Add your own or edit the above list

High Resolution OTDR



Fiber Optics Usage in Avionics and Aerospace Applications

Military Aircraft/ Unmanned Aerial Vehicles(UAV)

- Use with sensors, radar signals
- Weapon control and electronic warfare systems
- Flight navigation and guidance system control
- External and night vision cameras

Commercial Aircrafts:

- Transmission of sensors, radars signals
- Flight navigation and guidance system control
- IFE (In-Flight Entertainment system) and internet access



Why There is a Need for New Hi-Res OTDR

- Fiber Optic test equipment developed for the telecommunications field is inadequate
 - Resolution is not tight enough
- Fiber Optic test equipment currently available for avionic/aerospace industry is
 - Too expensive (\$50,000 to \$100,000+/unit) – such as an OBR
 - Not suitable for harsh/confined environment
 - Too complex (user interface)
 - Too big/heavy

VIAVI has developed the industry's most compact, lightweight and portable high resolution multimode OTDR solution

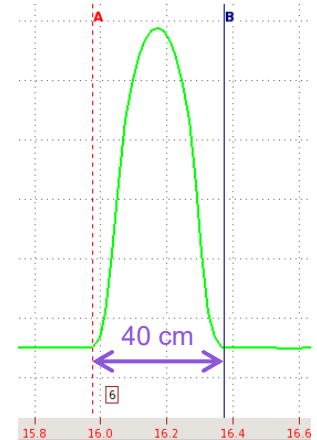
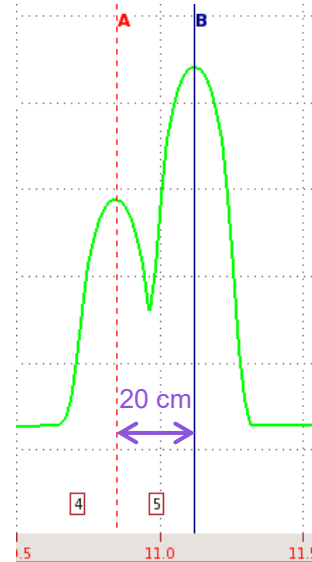
OTDR Critical Parameters: Resolution (called Dead Zones)

Event Dead Zone (EDZ)

- Minimum distance where two consecutive reflective events, such as connectors, can still be distinguished
- In this case, the loss of each event cannot be measured (see ADZ). The OTDR reports the cumulative loss on the last event

Attenuation Dead Zone (ADZ)

- Minimum distance after a reflective event where a non-reflective event, a splice for example, can be measured
- Minimum distance to be able to measure insertion loss after a reflective event



OTDR Critical Parameters: Dynamic Range

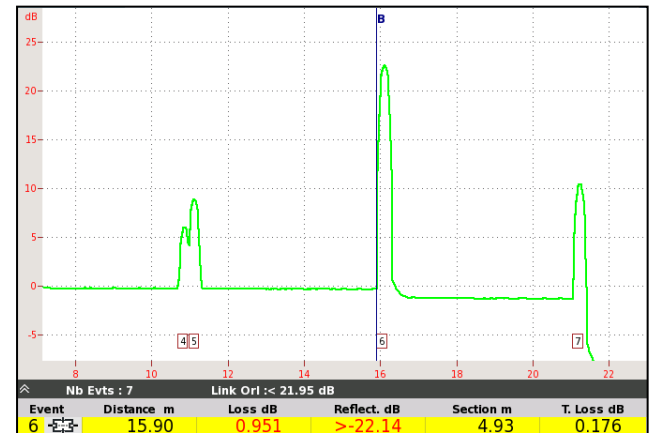
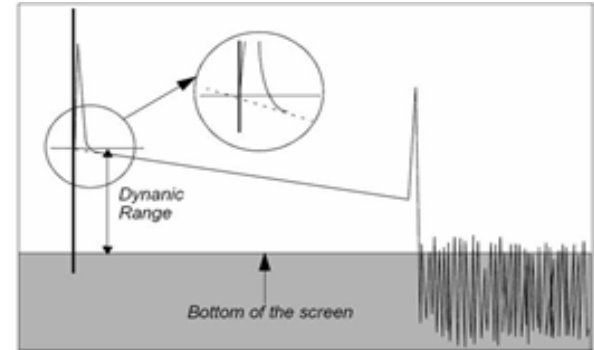
Total Budget Loss

- Difference between backscatter signal and noise floor
- Dynamic range is specified at shortest pulse-width for short fiber links (>10 dB IEC)

Maximum reflectance above noise floor

- Reflectance = ratio of reflected power to incident power at a discrete location
- MM connector reflectance is usually high, it shouldn't be a limited performance factor

VIAMI High Res. OTDR is not sensitive to high reflectance



VIAVI High Resolution MM OTDR Solution... What is It?

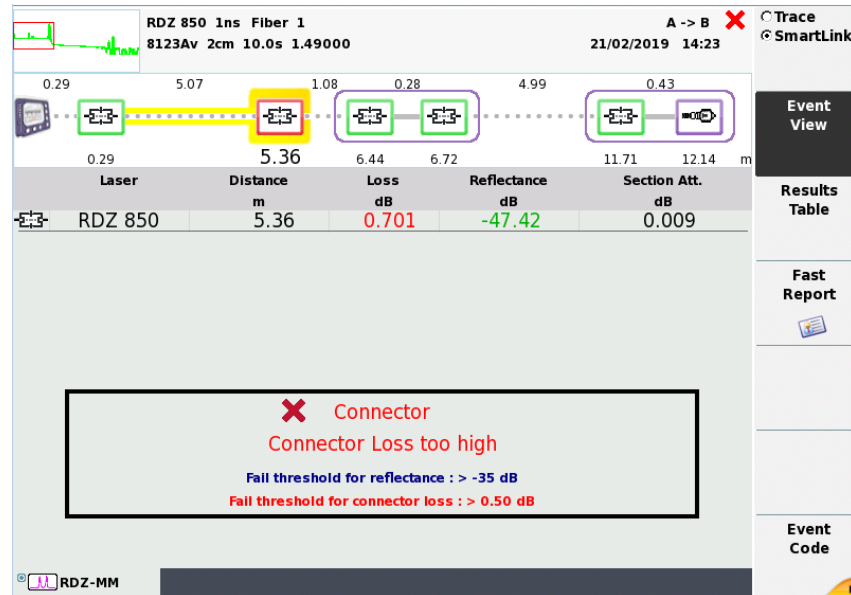
- Industry's most compact, lightweight and portable high resolution multimode OTDR module
- Specific user interface designed to simplify OTDR testing, results interpretation
- One data set, 3x results views, to match user profile and preference without application switching
 - SmartLink Mapper
 - Trace
 - Table



Wavelengths	EDZ (m)	ADZ (m)	Dyn. Range (dB RMS) at 1ns
850 / 1300nm	MM: 0.2 / 0.2	MM: 0.4 / 1	16

SmartLink Mapper View

- Get detailed information of the highlighted optical event and section
- Analyze the cause of the failure (excessive loss and/or reflectance due to a loose and/or dirty connection)
- No analysis of an OTDR/OBR trace required

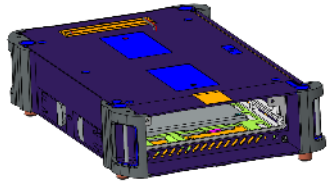


Supported on OneAdvisor 800 Fiber Platform

- Battery-operated, field-portable instrument
- Familiar touch gesture control user interface with assistant apps to guide techs through instrument usage
- Streamlined and error-free setup
- Automated pass/fail connector inspection software
- FastReport on-board PDF generation
- All-in-one fiber test tool: OTDR, a visual fault locator (red light), an optical powermeter and compatible with fiber end-face inspection microscope

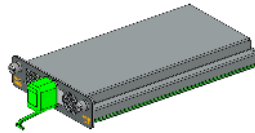


Fiber Module Carrier



Fiber Module Carrier
p/n E81FMC2

+



8100-Series Module

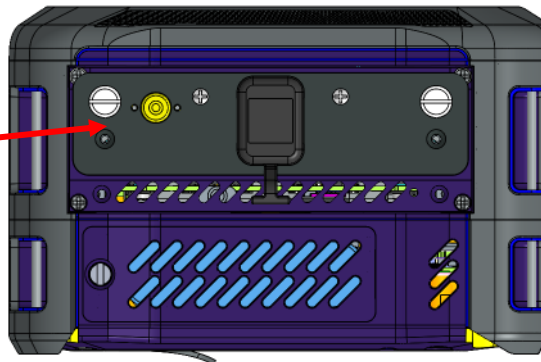
+



OneAdvisor 800 mainframe
p/n ONA-800A-F

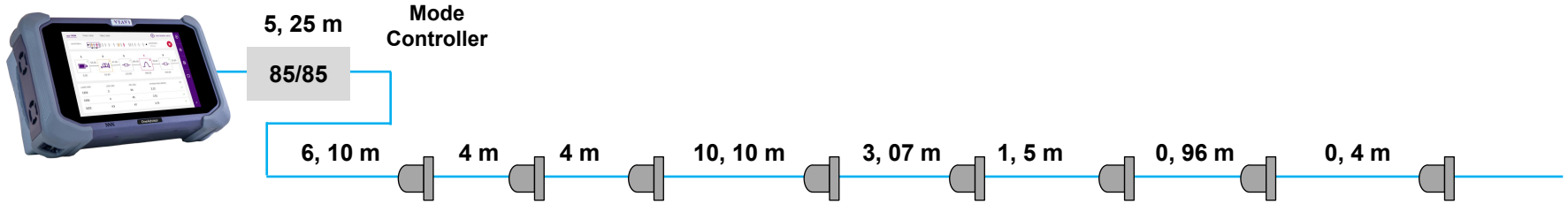
=

HR MM OTDR module



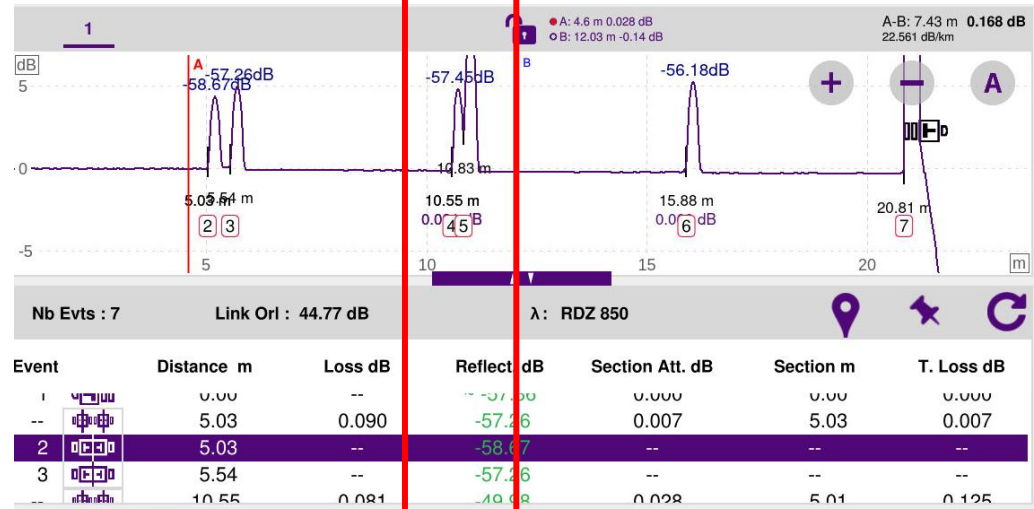
Fiber Module Carrier

Example of an Avionic Fiber Assembly Test with an OTDR



Mode Controller

It is recommended to use a mode controller between the OTDR and the multimode fiber to improve the measurement accuracy and repeatability. Please refer to your Methods and Procedures



VIAVI Hi-Res OTDR Multimode OTDR Streamlined User Interface

- Specific OTDR Mode called RDZ (Reduced Dead Zone) leading to an extremely simplified Set-up menu
- Results are displayed with icon-based map-view (SLM)



RDZ
OTDR

Acquisition	
Range	200m
Time	00:10
Otdr Connector Test	No












The screenshot displays the SmartLink interface for a fiber link test. At the top, a status bar shows 'Home', 'Fiber', and system icons. Below, the 'SmartLink' section features a 'Trace' view with a map showing a fiber path between 'Loc A' and 'Loc B' (20.81 m). The map is divided into five segments, each with an icon and a green checkmark. A table below the map provides summary data:

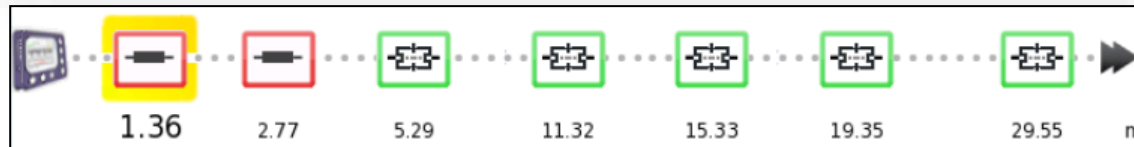
Laser ()	Link Loss (dB)	Link ORL (dB)	Average Loss (dB/km)
RDZ 850 (1ns)	0.290	44.77	1.936

Callouts highlight key features: 'Global Pass/fail Verdict' points to a red 'X' icon in the top right; 'Total Link Loss and ORL' points to the table data; 'Total link length' points to the '20.81 m' label on the map. A sidebar on the right contains navigation options like 'START', 'Real Time', 'Setup', 'File Explorer', and 'Fast Report'.

Example of Avionic Fiber Assembly (Table of Results)

⤴ Nb Evts : 11 Link Ori : 26.74 dB

Event	Distance m	Loss dB	Reflect. dB	Section m	T. Loss dB
1 	1.36	2.424		1.36	0.001
2 	2.77	0.626		1.41	2.424
3 	5.29	0.018	-60.36	2.52	3.096
4 	11.32	0.019	-25.52	6.03	3.132
5 	15.33	0.341	-39.04	4.01	3.163
6 	19.35	-0.056	-42.06	4.03	3.512
7 	29.55	0.060	-57.38	10.20	3.479
8 	32.66	0.051	-61.78	3.10	3.542
9 	34.15	0.049	-55.05	1.49	3.606
10 	35.07	0.000	-30.01	0.92	3.676
11 	35.51		-23.97	0.43	3.676



Application Requirements

- Must be cost feasible
- Size must allow the unit to be functional
- Users must be able to set up unit, obtain results, and analyze results with minimal outside assistance
- Battery power is needed in case AC power is not available
- Determination if high-cost solution is required or if a lower cost solution will work – pro/con analysis of each tool
- Different views for results to allow both a novice and an expert to use the tool
- Must be designed to work on short spans(very short)
- Commonly needs to be “kitted” for protecting tools, easy storage, and inventory control
- Add your own or edit the above list

Solutions Availability and Support

- Commonly sold through System Integrators who focus on DoD/MIL/Avionic applications so “kits” can be created
- Viavi Field Engineering Team and TAC is available for support – US FE Team and TAC support DoD outside of the US(globally) but International TAC locations are available
- Viavi has Quick Cards and Short Training Videos for all products, but can create custom training tools if requested



VIAVI Solutions

viavisolutions.com