
NEW PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Detectable Muletape® Traces Cable Conduit

Knowing precisely where to dig and where not to dig can not only make or break a project-it can save lives. Helping make that determination more accurately is a product called Detectable Muletape® by NEPTCO.

One user of the product is Chuck Cernicky, Engineering Construction Superintendent for the Northeast Division of MCI WorldCom, a global telecommunications company providing fully integrated local long distance, international and Internet services. Cernicky works with state DOTs and private developers to coordinate the relocation of conduit. That means whenever a highway is being moved, Cernicky is dispatched to the site to, among other things, path the line. As a 25-year veteran of the fiber optic cable industry, Cernicky knows firsthand the dangers associated with relocating and re-routing underground plants. He's seen crews mistakenly backhoe their own lines, and worse. He, like many in the industry, has lost co-workers when a crew struck a gas line that wasn't properly delineated on project drawings.

In fact, relying solely on the accuracy of an as-built is an accident waiting to happen. A plant originally placed 40 years ago may have since undergone countless changes, and the chances are good that not every modification was recorded. Unfortunately, documentation isn't always updated and that's why accurately pathing the line before you start a new project is critical.

Cernicky uses Detectable Muletape to path his lines. He started using the product years ago as an alternative to polyrope. Back then, the problem was burn-through. The poly-rope he was using to pull the cable was generating so much friction it actually burned right through the conduit. Since damaged conduit can be particularly destructive to fiber optic cable, Cernicky started looking into alternative pulling products.

Today, it's the superior detection properties of Muletape that Cernicky relies on most. "It takes the guesswork out of what are sometimes unreliable records.

Using detectable tape, crews can locate empty duct and dielectric cables with relative ease. They simply strip the tape's jacket back approximately two inches to lock onto the conductor. Once they put a signal onto the tape and ground it, it's ready for detection. Detectable Muletape is compatible with all detection equipment currently used in the telecommunications and electric utility industries.

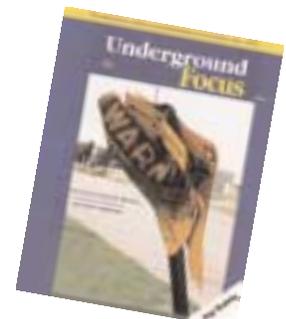
"I don't know why more people don't use it," says John H. Cooke, Fiber Optics Specialist for the Eastern U.S. at Radiodetection. Radiodetection designs and manufactures a broad range of products and equipment to assist in the location, fault location, monitoring and mapping of pipes and cable. The company's experience with detectable tapes has been quite favorable and, when appropriate, they often recommend it as an alternative to more expensive insulated tracer wire.

"We have had great success with detectable tape and over the years the industry has responded by increasing the overall strength and durability of the product." Cooke typically uses

detectable tape to proof duct runs. "It's a great way to check the integrity of the conduit and verify continuity from point 'A' to point 'B' and so on." But, since you can also thread, measure and pull with the same product, Cooke envisions a variety of applications and capabilities for Detectable Muletape. "It has unlimited potential."

Due to deregulation of the telecommunications and utility industries and the explosion of the Internet, underground real estate is at a premium and "location" is everything. As we continue to lay new cable and re-route existing plants, detectable tape is one proven way to help lay the groundwork for improved crew safety.

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As seen in
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