

Calculating Power Margin for Fiber-Optic Cable for M Series, MX Series, and T Series Routers

After calculating a link's power budget you can calculate the power margin (P_M), which represents the amount of power available after subtracting attenuation or link loss (LL) from the power budget (P_B). A worst-case estimate of P_M assumes maximum LL:

$$P_M = P_B - LL$$

A P_M greater than zero indicates that the power budget is sufficient to operate the receiver.

Factors that can cause link loss include higher-order mode losses, modal and chromatic dispersion, connectors, splices, and fiber attenuation. Table 1 lists an estimated amount of loss for the factors used in the following sample calculations. For information about the actual amount of signal loss caused by equipment and other factors, refer to vendor documentation.

Table 1: Estimated Values for Factors Causing Link Loss

Link-Loss Factor	Estimated Link-Loss Value
Higher-order mode losses	Single-mode—None
	Multimode—0.5 dB
Modal and chromatic dispersion	Single-mode—None
	Multimode—None, if product of bandwidth and distance is less than 500 MHz–km
Connector	0.5 dB
Splice	0.5 dB
Fiber attenuation	Single-mode—0.5 dB/km
	Multimode—1 dB/km

The following example uses the estimated values in Table 1 to calculate link loss (LL) for a 2 km-long multimode link with a power budget (P_B) of 13 dB:

- Fiber attenuation for 2 km @ 1.0 dB/km = 2 dB
- Loss for five connectors @ 0.5 dB per connector = 5(0.5 dB) = 2.5 dB
- Loss for two splices @ 0.5 dB per splice = 2(0.5 dB) = 1 dB
- Higher-order loss = 0.5 dB
- Clock recovery module = 1 dB

The power margin (P_M) is calculated as follows:

$$P_M = P_B - LL$$

$$P_M = 13 \text{ dB} - 2 \text{ km} (1.0 \text{ dB/km}) - 5 (0.5 \text{ dB}) - 2 (0.5 \text{ dB}) - 0.5 \text{ dB [HOL]} - 1 \text{ dB [CRM]}$$

$$P_M = 13 \text{ dB} - 2 \text{ dB} - 2.5 \text{ dB} - 1 \text{ dB} - 0.5 \text{ dB} - 1 \text{ dB}$$

$$P_M = 6 \text{ dB}$$

The following sample calculation for an 8 km-long single-mode link with a power budget (P_B) of 13 dB uses the estimated values from Table 1 to calculate link loss (LL) as the sum of fiber attenuation (8 km @ 0.5 dB/km, or 4 dB) and loss for seven connectors (0.5 dB per connector, or 3.5 dB). The power margin (P_M) is calculated as follows:

$$P_M = P_B - LL$$

$$P_M = 13 \text{ dB} - 8 \text{ km} (0.5 \text{ dB/km}) - 7 (0.5 \text{ dB})$$

$$P_M = 13 \text{ dB} - 4 \text{ dB} - 3.5 \text{ dB}$$

$$P_M = 5.5 \text{ dB}$$

In both examples, the calculated power margin is greater than zero, indicating that the link has sufficient power for transmission and does not exceed the maximum receiver input power.

- Related Topics**
- Attenuation and Dispersion in Fiber-Optic Cable on M Series, MX Series, and T Series Routers
 - Calculating Power Budget for Fiber-Optic Cable for M Series, MX Series, and T Series Routers
 - Routing Engine Interface Cable and Wire Specifications for MX Series Routers

Published: 2010-01-27