

# Coms Cabling Regulations & Standards Update

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## Australian Communications Industry Forum

### What Do You Know About ADSL?

No doubt you have already been asked by friends or clients what ADSL is and how it works. You may know how to cable it, but it always helps to have a basic understanding of how it works.

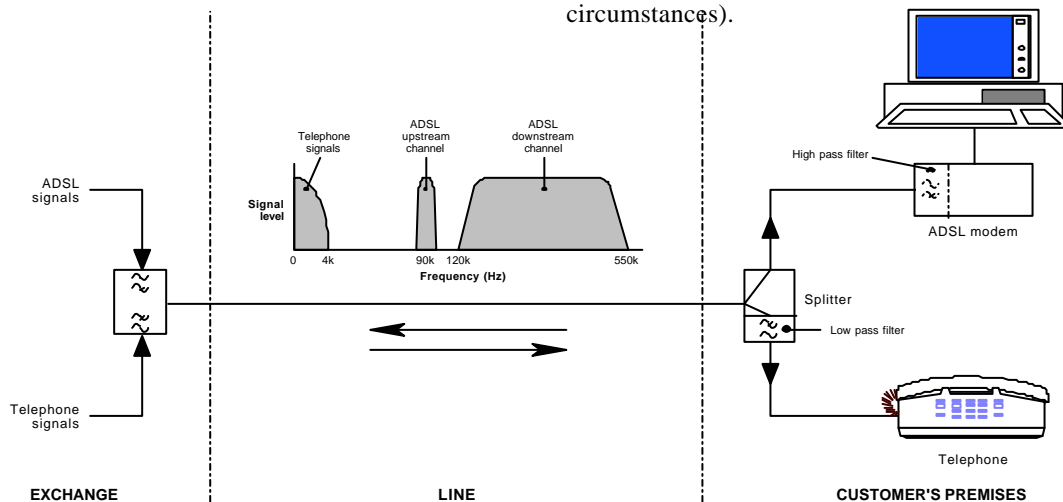
ADSL is one of a variety of methods used to supply high-speed ("broadband") Internet access to end-users. It is not available in all areas because special equipment is required in the carrier's network to support it. Other methods currently used (and that may be available where ADSL isn't) include ISDN, "cable" (coaxial cable), satellite, wireless and FTTP (Fibre To The Premises).

ADSL is the acronym for Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line. "Asymmetric" means that the receive ("downstream") and send ("upstream") data rates are not the same. Typically, data speeds of up to 256 kbit/s upstream and 1.5 Mbit/s downstream may be provided depending on the quality of the line and the ADSL plan the end-user is paying for.

ADSL uses the customer's standard telephone line. The telephone service occupies the lower Voice Frequency (VF) bandwidth while the ADSL service uses a higher frequency bandwidth. These frequency bands are combined at the carrier's exchange, transmitted over the same pair of wires, then filtered out of the line at the customer's premises. Telephone equipment (including such things as tone ringers) must be connected to the line via a low pass filter that blocks the ADSL signals, whereas the ADSL equipment must be connected via a high-pass filter that blocks the telephone signals.

All ADSL modems have a built-in high-pass filter, so only the low-pass filter, known as a "splitter", needs to be installed in series with the telephone equipment at the customer's premises. There are two ways of doing this:

- distributed splitters ("in-line filters") connected in series with each telephone device (these are usually connected in the line cord so customers can do it themselves); or
- a single remote splitter ("central filter") connected into the permanent wiring (this must be installed by the carrier, ADSL service provider or a cabling provider, as appropriate to the circumstances).





## Regulations by ACA

### Industry to develop a Skills Maintenance Program for customer cableers

During 2004 the ACA engaged Gibson Quai-AAS to facilitate industry discussion on the possible introduction of a Skills Maintenance Program (SMP) for the customer cabling industry. A discussion paper on the issue was released in June 2004 and two industry workshops were held in August and October. The workshops were attended by a broad cross-section of the cabling industry, including industry associations, training bodies, employers, union representatives and cabling registrars.

An SMP is a program designed to maintain skills and knowledge. Industries that have introduced an SMP recognise there is potential for some attrition of skills or knowledge over time, particularly those skills that are less frequently called upon but are nevertheless essential.

Additionally, in many industries, including the cabling industry, skills and knowledge must be updated as technology develops, field specialisations evolve, and work practices alter.

SMPs provide an opportunity for workers to check that their skills and knowledge of regulatory requirements and work practices are current. They provide quick refreshers for skilled workers who are often too busy to investigate and commit to training options during the course of their normal working life.

During the consultation, industry members expressed widespread agreement that the customer cabling industry would benefit from the introduction of an SMP. The introduction of a cabling SMP was seen as a potential tool to help improve the quality of cabling installation and maintenance practices, and to enhance skills and knowledge across the cabling profession. Industry also considered the potential benefits of developing programs to promote industry specific up-skilling for cableers.

It was agreed by industry that an SMP should:

- be responsive to possible changing needs;
- not place an undue impost on industry;
- be easily understood and acted upon by all parties;
- recognise and promote industry self regulation;
- be developed and owned by industry; and
- cater for the diversity of different sections of the industry.

Industry interest in the development of an SMP code is strong with both the Cabling Industry Committee and NECA separately indicating their intention to commence the development of a code to underpin SMPs. While industry arrangements are still being finalised, the ACA is keen to see code development work commence in February 2005. During the development of an SMP code there will be broad industry consultation and the ACA will post progress updates on its Website at [www.aca.gov.au](http://www.aca.gov.au) (click on Standards and Compliance at the top of the screen, and then Cabling at the left of the screen) and through relevant industry publications.

## Time is running out

Only 8 months left for those cableers with a current ACA cabling licence.

The industry managed registration system which replaced the old ACA cableer licensing system has been phasing in since October 2000 and will be complete when **the last licence expires in October 2005.**

Cableers need to register with an ACA accredited registrar PRIOR to their current licence expiring. *If you hold a current cabling licence, you are automatically eligible for registration under the industry managed registration scheme (no further training required)*

Performing cabling work without a current licence or registration is a criminal offence which can attract fines up to \$13,200

## Australian Cableer Registration Service

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