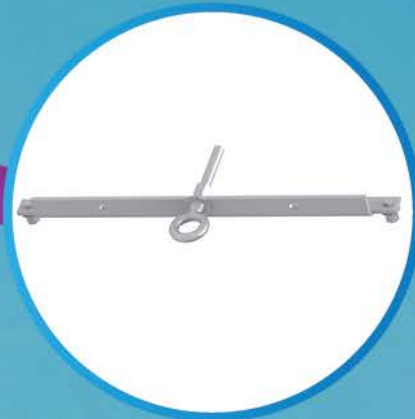




THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF ENGINEERED ATTACHMENT POINTS FOR WIRE MESH GRIPS

DISH MARKS 5G DRIVE TEST MILESTONE, VALIDATING ITS NETWORK SPEEDS

Innovative attachment point solutions for hoisting grip installations



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A Quarterly Publication

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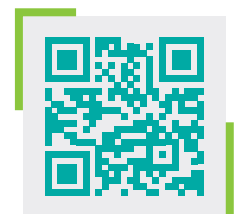
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THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF ENGINEERED ATTACHMENT POINTS FOR WIRE MESH GRIPS (HOISTING GRIPS)

Introduction

The seamless operation of cell towers, the backbone of modern telecommunications networks, relies on meticulous planning and precision during installation and maintenance. One often overlooked but critically important aspect of this process is the attachment point for hoisting grips. Engineered attachment points are essential for the safe and reliable installation of hoisting grips on cell tower structures. Explore why having a properly engineered attachment point is paramount and how CommScope, a leader in the telecommunications industry, has provided innovative solutions to support these installations.

Ensuring cable stability

The primary purpose of hoisting grips is to support and secure cables that transmit data, power, and signals up the cell tower. These cables are often subjected to various environmental factors, including wind, weather, and mechanical stress. Without a properly engineered attachment point, the cables may sag, sway, become damaged over time, or damage the tower—leading to network disruptions and compromised service quality.

Preventing cable damage

Cables are integral to the cell tower infrastructure, and any damage to them can have significant consequences. Hoisting grips that are attached to engineered attachment points ensure the cables are held in place with a product that is designed to support the cable.

This prevents cables from rubbing against the tower structure or other cables—minimizing the risk of abrasion and damage. Protecting the integrity of these cables is vital for maintaining network reliability.

Enhancing worker safety

The safety of technicians and climbers tasked with installing and maintaining cell tower cables should be a top priority. A properly engineered attachment point provides a secure and stable anchor for hoisting grips. This stability reduces the risk of accidents and injuries caused by cable slippage, sudden movements, or structural instability. Ensuring worker safety not only protects lives but minimizes downtime and costly accidents.

Filling the gaps in standards

The telecommunications industry is subject to strict standards and regulations that govern the installation and maintenance of cell tower equipment. Historically, engineered attachment points for cables have been overlooked in this space. CommScope is looking to change that to ensure safe and reliable installations. Filling the gaps in standards The telecommunications industry is subject to strict standards and regulations that govern the installation and maintenance of cell tower equipment. Historically, engineered attachment points for cables have been overlooked in this space. CommScope is looking to change that to ensure safe and reliable installations.

CommScope's innovative solutions

The CommScope Structures business, a renowned leader in the telecommunications industry, has recognized the critical importance of engineered attachment points in hoisting grip installations. The company has consistently delivered innovative solutions that address the unique challenges of the industry. CommScope's engineered attachment point solutions are designed to provide a reliable and robust solution for hoisting grip installations.

By offering a diverse range of attachment point solutions, CommScope caters to the specific needs of telecom companies—ensuring their cell towers are equipped with the highest quality attachment points for hoisting grips. These innovative solutions enhance cable stability, protect against damage, and contribute to the long-term reliability of cell tower infrastructure.

Conclusion

In the world of telecommunications, every detail matters, and the attachment points for hoisting grips are no exception. Properly engineered attachment points ensure the stability of cables, prevent damage, enhance worker safety, and contribute to the advancement of cell site infrastructure. CommScope's commitment to delivering innovative attachment point solutions underscores a dedication to helping telecom companies safeguard their investments, maintain network reliability, and continue to deliver uninterrupted service to their customers. With the support of CommScope, the future of cell tower technology looks even brighter.

CommScope Hoisting Grips

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AT&T, FIRSTNET UNVEIL \$8B INVESTMENT

AT&T and the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) announced the next phase of FirstNet with a series of investments totaling more than \$8 billion over 10 years.

This next phase will create a 5G standalone (SA) core and support the transition of public safety's Band 14 spectrum from LTE to 5G. It will also expand mission-critical services – such as voice, video, data and location – and prepare the network to evolve beyond 5G.

The build includes 1,000 new cell sites within the next two years and upgrades to public safety's dedicated fleet of deployable network assets with 5G connectivity.

Starting in March, FirstNet will be “the first and only wireless network” to provide America's first responders with always-on priority and preemption across 5G, expanding to include all of AT&T's 5G commercial spectrum, according to a press release.

A Verizon spokesperson said Verizon Frontline offers “all eligible public safety customers always-on priority and preemption” on its LTE and 5G nationwide networks. The services are included in its public safety plans at no additional cost to the customer.

Fierce reached out to T-Mobile as well to inquire about its always-on priority and preemption services on 5G and will update this story with their response.

Update: A T-Mobile spokesperson provided the following statement: “T-Mobile customers with Wireless Priority Service (WPS) get always-on priority and preemption for voice, and always-on priority for data, across both 5G and LTE.”

FirstNet 3.0 begins now

During an event at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue station in Virginia today, FirstNet CEO Joe Wassel called AT&T one of the best partners ever and said “we're not done. FirstNet 3.0 begins right here, right now,” fueled in part by over \$8 billion that will transform the network.

AT&T was awarded the 25-year FirstNet contract in 2017 and now boasts more than 5.5 million connections and about 27,500 public safety agencies and organizations on its system.

AT&T and FirstNet say that FirstNet is the only network built with and for America's first responders and the extended public safety community, but that has not stopped Verizon and T-Mobile from trying to woo public safety agencies to their networks.

Verizon has served public safety agencies for decades and had the lion's share of the public safety market, a situation that Verizon executives didn't see changing with AT&T's win of the FirstNet contract. As for T-Mobile, it started more aggressively targeting public safety with its “Connecting Heroes” program in 2020.

When AT&T won the FirstNet contract, it also obtained access to FirstNet's 20 MHz of 700 MHz low-band spectrum, aka Band 14.

The \$8 billion investment announced today includes \$6.3 billion for delivering full 5G capabilities on FirstNet, expanded mission-critical services and enhanced coverage. The FirstNet Authority expects an additional \$2 billion in ongoing investments for coverage enhancements, which is “currently under discussion by the parties,” according to the press release.

AT&T said the investment does not change AT&T's financial guidance provided during its January 2024 earnings, when it reiterated capital investment in 2024 will be in the range of \$21 billion to \$22 billion.

In a note for investors, New Street Research analyst Philip Burnett said today's \$8 billion announcement simply guarantees AT&T the funding that it had already expected.

“It was always likely AT&T would win the next leg of funding from FirstNet, as the agency would otherwise have to select another carrier and create a new FirstNet network from the ground up,” Burnett said. “Nevertheless, because FirstNet is subject to federal acquisition rules, the agency was ‘prohibited from contractually committing to a specific vendor’ [ie, AT&T] for future FirstNet investments beyond those first five years.”

In December, FirstNet certified that AT&T had met its initial five-year buildout requirements under the first leg of the 25-year contract.

Article Credit: <https://www.fiercewireless.com/5g/att-firstnet-unveil-8b-investment>

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DISH MARKS 5G DRIVE TEST MILESTONE, VALIDATING ITS NETWORK SPEEDS

Dish Network might be floundering when it comes to the number of customers actually using its network, but it's winning accolades for building the world's first commercial-grade open RAN 5G network in record time.

The latest development in Dish's 5G journey is a letter its parent EchoStar (NASDAQ: SATS) filed with the FCC this week certifying that its nationwide 5G network provides download speeds of 35 Mbps or greater to over 70% of the U.S. population.

A recap for those who don't walk around with encyclopedic brains: In June, Dish announced that it was offering 5G broadband service to over 70% of the U.S. population, meeting one of its 5G FCC buildout requirements as part of the deal that enabled T-Mobile to acquire Sprint. Remember: Dish was supposed to take Sprint's place as the nation's fourth facilities-based wireless carrier.

As Dish's financial troubles mounted last year, the FCC provided a vote of confidence for Dish in the fall when it formally issued a statement saying Dish had met its band-specific 5G commitments thus far. The FCC gave Dish six months to conduct drive testing and submit those results.

This being roughly six months later, Dish delivered the goods, but guess what? The results are under wraps because Dish considers the information to be proprietary and could result in "substantial competitive harm" if disclosed.

The drive test results contain the details of, among other things, Dish's 5G wireless network performance throughout the United States, so, yeah, they probably want to keep that under wraps. The last thing they need is some rival using it to gain an advantage. These days, Dish needs all the help it can get.

VoNR progress

Last month, Dish announced that the Boost wireless network is now available with 5G voices services – or Voice over New Radio (VoNR) in industry parlance – to more than 200 million people nationwide.

In a recent note for investors, analysts at TD Cowen said the VoNR announcement is a good sign on the progress made toward the shot-clock deadline and a bullish sign to attract suitors (like Amazon or Vodafone) for a potential partnership. "We note a potential partnership would be highly bullish" for EchoStar and "highly disruptive for the wireless industry," they said.

Tough year

During EchoStar's March 1 quarterly conference call, EchoStar Chairman Charlie Ergen was noticeably absent, although EchoStar CEO Hamid Akhavan said they wanted to "give him a day off" for his birthday. It just so happened that the day before, EchoStar revealed in a 10K SEC filing there's "substantial doubt" about its ability to continue as a going concern.

Akhavan stressed the awesomeness of Dish's 5G network and called 2024 a "transition year." He essentially asked for a year to figure it all out. The company expects to meet its immediate debt repayment obligations this month and then needs to find additional financing to pay off a \$2 billion debt maturity due in November.

But analysts at MoffettNathanson aren't too hopeful. In a March 1 note for investors, analyst Craig Moffett noted that Dish has lost 2.6 million subscribers since entering the wireless business in 2020 through the Boost Mobile acquisition, posting a subscriber gain only once in 14 quarters, and that was a paltry 1,000 net additions in Q3 2022.

"To state the obvious, neither the Boost prepaid business nor the nascent 5G business looks like a meaningful operating asset in the likely event of a bankruptcy," Moffett wrote. "Spectrum salvage is all there is here."

However, whether spectrum sales of any size would be allowed isn't entirely clear, he said. And for the past decade, spectrum auction results have been inflated by the consistent presence of a wildcard bidder – Dish Network itself.

"With Dish as the seller rather than a buyer and with the balance sheets of the Big Three badly overburdened by years of spending on spectrum, can anyone be confident about what auctions would bring?" In addition, "there will inevitably be questions about whether EchoStar and/or its creditors actually own the AWS-4 spectrum or whether that spectrum is actually owned by U.S. taxpayers."

Article Credit: <https://www.fiercewireless.com/5g/dish-marks-5g-drive-test-milestone>

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NTIA'S SPECTRUM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ELICITS MOSTLY PRAISE

Perhaps in the spirit of “don’t bite the hand that feeds you,” spectrum-hungry groups released mostly positive statements after the Biden Administration unveiled its National Spectrum Strategy Implementation Plan on Tuesday.

The plan, which is a public roadmap to meet the goals of the previously outlined National Spectrum Strategy, sets up timelines for further study on 2,786 megahertz of spectrum. That includes studying the potential for repacking, compression and relocation of airborne radars and other federal users in the lower 3 GHz to make way for commercial use.

The lower 3 GHz band is of particular interest because wireless carriers have their eyes on it but it’s occupied by the Department of Defense (DoD). Other promising mid-band spectrum for wireless carriers is the 7-8 GHz band, but that’s also appealing to cable and Wi-Fi camps.

Quick takes

Similar to some other groups, CTIA said it’s encouraged by the implementation plan. “We are pleased to see the Administration restore NTIA leadership over spectrum studies, right the course on the lower 3 GHz band, and set up a critical review of the 7/8 GHz band,” said CTIA President and CEO Meredith Attwell Baker in a statement.

CTIA also signaled a sense of urgency. “It is vital that the Administration now move quickly to start these studies as we need decisive action on reallocating spectrum to secure our global economic competitiveness and innovation leadership,” Baker added. Some of the harshest words about the Spectrum Implementation Plan came from Republican FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr. He said the Biden Administration’s plan amounts to “kicking the can down the road” when the U.S. sorely needs more licensed mid-band spectrum for commercial use to keep pace with consumer demand and geopolitical rivals.

With studies on the 3.1-3.45 GHz and 7.125-8.4 GHz bands due for completion in October 2026, that means neither band is likely to see the light of day until 2028 at the earliest. He pointed to his “actual spectrum plan” that he released in March of 2021 and applauded the legislative efforts by Senators Ted Cruz, John Thune and Masha Blackburn introduced earlier this week.

Wi-Fi and 7-8 GHz

WifiForward, which represents the likes of Charter Communications, Comcast, Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Public Knowledge and others, urged NTIA to move as quickly as possible to allow coexistence for Wi-Fi and existing federal users in the 7.125-8.4 GHz band.

The types of incumbents that are in the 7-8 GHz band are in many cases identical to the types of incumbents that already are coexisting with Wi-Fi in the 6 GHz band, said Mary Brown, an advisor to WifiForward and former Cisco executive.

“We see a tremendous opportunity for federal agencies to take a look, not at just the FCC rules but the track record over the last four years and consider Wi-Fi as an option for coexistence in the 7-8 GHz band,” she told Fierce.

The ITU currently is studying whether the 7-8 GHz band could be used for mobile services and since incumbents in the band, particularly in the U.S. and Europe, skew to military/defense users, it might be difficult for them to coexist with 5G and/or it may be extremely expensive to move them. Therefore, “it makes sense to consider Wi-Fi” as well as 5G, she said.

No easy way

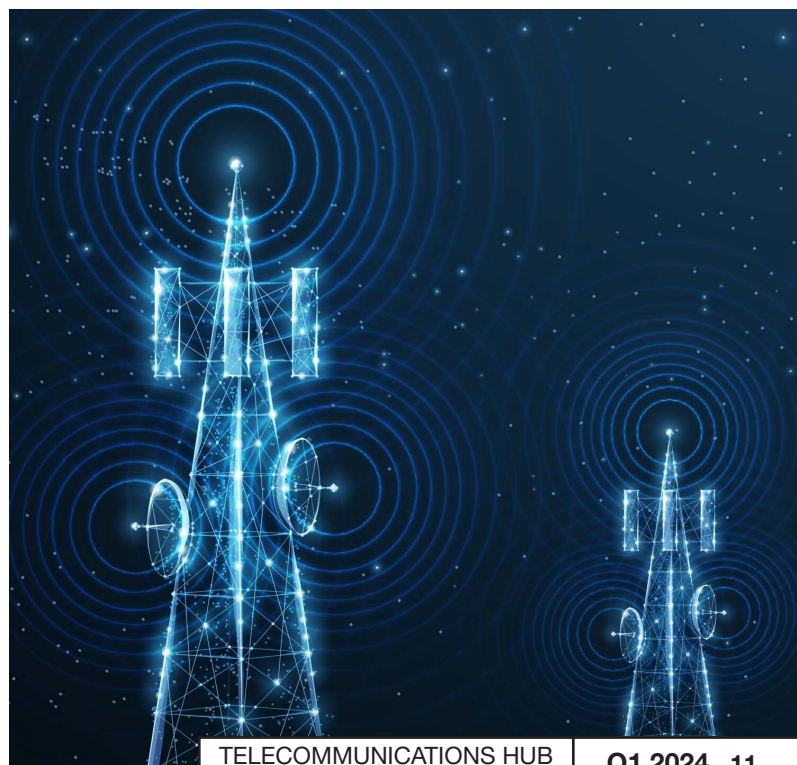
Time is of the essence so it’s good news there is a plan in place, “but nothing is easy here,” said Lynnette Luna, senior research analyst at S&P Global.

For the lower 3 GHz band, the military is not keen on moving and really favors spectrum sharing, while the mobile industry is opposed to spectrum sharing and prefers to have unfettered access.

“The industry likes to point to CBRS as an example that does not benefit mobile operators because of power limits in place to avoid interference. Congress wants to see some auctions as carriers are willing to pay exorbitantly for exclusive use,” she said, noting that the CBRS auction generated about \$4.5 billion while the C-band auction, which sold exclusive licenses, brought in a whopping \$81 billion.

Interestingly, she has seen the DoD acquiesce a bit and say that it would consider moving some of its radar operations off the lower 3 GHz band to accommodate 5G operations. However, “it’s unclear how much spectrum that is. It really is about weighing commercial progress and leadership against national security,” she said.

Article Credit: <https://www.fiercewireless.com/5g/ntias-spectrum-implementation-plan-elicits-mostly-praise>



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