Price of laying mobile optical cables without construction

Overview

Costs associated with these four types of networks are outlined in the tables below and are color-coded to match the graphic.

Key Takeaways

Installing mobile or aerial fiber optic cables without construction typically costs between $3 and $7 per linear foot, depending on cable type and installation complexity.Material Costs

The cost of fiber optic cable materials alone varies widely based on type and strand count. For standard single-mode fiber, prices range from $0.10 to $0.50 per foot, while multimode fiber costs $0.30 to $1.00 per foot. Higher strand counts, armored cables, or specialized outdoor-rated cables can increase material costs up to $6 per foot for large backbone cables or pre-terminated assemblies . Bulk purchases often reduce per-foot costs by 20–40% compared to retail quantities .

Installation Costs Without Construction

When avoiding trenching or underground construction, aerial deployment is the most common method. Costs for self-supporting aerial cables typically range from $3 to $7 per linear foot, which includes labor for attaching cables to poles, tensioning, and basic hardware installation . Additional costs may include pole attachment hardware, which can add $50–$150 per span, depending on requirements . This method eliminates the need for excavation, conduit installation, or surface restoration, significantly reducing overall project costs.

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Labor and Termination

Even without construction, professional installation is recommended. Labor for aerial or mobile fiber installation generally ranges from $1 to $6 per linear foot, depending on complexity, cable type, and local labor rates . Pre-terminated assemblies can reduce field splicing time and improve reliability, which may slightly increase material costs but lower labor expenses . Proper termination enclosures and quality hardware are essential to protect connections from moisture and contamination.

Factors Affecting Costs
• Cable type and strand count: More fibers or armored cables increase both material and installation costs .

• Route complexity: Longer spans, multiple pole attachments, or difficult access areas can raise labor costs .

• Pre-terminated vs field-terminated: Pre-terminated cables reduce labor but cost more upfront .

• Local labor rates: Costs vary by region and contractor expertise . In summary, for mobile or aerial fiber optic deployment without construction, expect $3–$7 per foot for installation, plus $0.10–$6 per foot for cable materials, depending on specifications and project requirements. Proper planning, pre-terminated assemblies, and experienced installers can optimize costs and reliability.

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