# Central Asia Mobile Optical Cable Protection Rules



## Overview

Brendon J. Cannon and Pooja Bhatt les in the Indo-Pacific and offers a timely roadmap as to how best to protect them.

## Key Takeaways

Protection of mobile optical cables in Central Asia relies on a combination of international best practices, national regulations, and operational safeguards to ensure security, resilience, and continuity of critical communications infrastructure.

### Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Central Asian countries generally follow international maritime and terrestrial cable protection principles, as outlined by the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC) and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) for subsea cables, and by national telecommunications authorities for terrestrial networks. Key elements include: Cable Protection Zones: Designated areas around cable routes where anchoring, dredging, or other disruptive activities are restricted to prevent accidental or intentional damage. Licensing and Permitting: Operators must obtain permits for cable installation, maintenance, and repair, often requiring coordination with multiple government agencies to ensure compliance with safety and environmental standards.

International Cooperation: Cross-border coordination is encouraged to protect cables that traverse multiple jurisdictions, including sharing information on threats and incidents.

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## Operational and Technical Safeguards

Mobile optical cables, whether terrestrial or subsea, are protected through a combination of physical, electronic, and procedural measures: Physical Protection: Burial of cables in shallow waters or along terrestrial routes, use of armored sheathing, and placement away from high-risk areas such as shipping lanes or construction zones. Monitoring and Surveillance: Continuous monitoring using sensors, anomaly detection systems, and periodic inspections to detect potential threats or damage early. Redundancy and Resilience: Designing networks with multiple routes and backup systems to maintain connectivity in case of cable failure or sabotage.

Rapid Repair Protocols: Streamlined procedures for emergency repairs, including pre-approved permits and coordination with local authorities, to minimize downtime.

## Risk Management and Security Considerations

Central Asia faces risks similar to other regions, including accidental damage from construction or natural events and malicious threats from state or non-state actors. Best practices include: Conducting risk assessments for cable routes and landing stations. Implementing cybersecurity measures to protect network management systems.

Engaging in public-private partnerships to enhance situational awareness and response capabilities.

## Following ICP

C Best Practice Guidelines, which provide standardized recommendations for cable protection, route planning, and incident reporting.

## Regional Cooperation

Although Central Asia does not yet have a unified regional framework like ASEAN, countries can adopt cooperative measures inspired by international models: Sharing information on cable threats and incidents. Coordinating on cross-border cable projects to ensure consistent protection standards. Participating in international forums such as ICPC workshops to stay updated on emerging threats and technological solutions.

## Conclusion

While Central Asia lacks a fully codified regional regulation for mobile optical cable protection, adopting international best practices, national permitting rules, and operational safeguards ensures the security and resilience of critical optical networks. Emphasis on physical protection, monitoring, redundancy, and regional cooperation is essential to mitigate both accidental and deliberate threats to these vital communication infrastructures.

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## Article Content

FCC Targets Chinese Tech in Undersea Cables With New Securit

The new rules are designed to limit the use of equipment and services from companies viewed as subject to Beijing''s influence, while giving regulators more authority to review, restrict, or

Enhancing International Legal Protections for Undersea Cables and ...

legal framework governing the protection of undersea cables and transoceanic pipelines. Given the paramount importance of these assets to global communications, energy security, and international

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ITU-T Rec. L.163 (11/2018) Criteria for optical fibre cable ...

This Recommendation also describes how to mitigate the considerable risks and/or issues to which the optical fibre cable may be exposed when infrastructures are minimal during installation, maintenance

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January 29, 2025 China, Russia and Undersea Cable Vulnerability ...

Greater international cooperation includes joint monitoring operations, shared response protocols, and coordinated legal frameworks for attribution and response, as well as setting up multinational cable

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THE CHANGING SUBMARINE CABLES LANDSCAPE

Despite their critical importance, these cables remain inadequately protected, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Globally, approximately 100-200 cases of damage to undersea cables are reported

Undersea cables, geoeconomics, and security in the Indo-Pacific:

Ensuring undersea cable network resilience requires a whole life cycle approach that considers not only investment and construction of new cables but also licensing, regulation,

China Optical Fiber Cable Naming Rules: Fiber Cable

China Optical Cable Naming Rules: Fiber Cable Code System (GYTS, GYTA, GYXTW), Zion Communication is a professional manufacturer of cables

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Maintenance of Submarine Optical Cable

This chapter introduces the organization of international submarine cable protection, relevant laws, and international submarine cable maintenance mode of operation. It also expounds the procedures and

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FOA Standard For Installing Fiber Optic Cable Plants

Fiber optic cables may contain multimode optical fibers, singlemode fibers or a combination of the two, in which case it is generally referred to as a “hybrid” cable.

PROTECTION OF CABLES AND PIPELINES REGULATIONS

PROTECTION OF CABLES AND PIPELINES REGULATIONS (Regulations for the Protection of Submarine Cables and Pipelines in the Territorial Sea, the Continental Shelf and the High Seas)

SAFETY RULES AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REGULATIONS ON CABLE ...

1 Area of application 1.1 These Safety Rules and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Regulations on cable lines (CCL) of Kazakhtelecom JSC (hereinafter - Rules) contain the safety and health

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Subsea Communication Cables in Southeast Asia: A Comprehensive Approach Is Needed By treating undersea cables as critical infrastructure, Southeast Asian stakeholders can

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