



How to Seal Coax Connectors

Water inside coax is pretty insidious stuff. Even a tiny bit will wick its way up the braid, causing corrosion and eventual signal loss. Correcting the problem requires replacement of at least a section of the coax, and often the entire run.

Water usually gets inside via a connector, because even the connectors rated as "waterproof" are actually not good enough to keep water out over the long term.

So, it's necessary to do something to seal the connector if there's any possibility of water getting on it. There are a number of methods people use to do this, each with its own level of effectiveness.

Some folks wrap the connection with black electrical tape. This is only slightly better than not waterproofing it at all.

Others use the grey or black putty-like tape (sometimes called "Coax-Seal"). This provides a good waterproof seal, but if you ever need to take the connection apart, you might as well just cut the cables and start over, because you will never get the putty off the connectors.

Another method is to use the stretchy silicone tape (sometimes called "Rescue Tape"). This is a good method, but requires some skill to get it right. And, if it's not right, you won't know about it until your signals fade away.

The best method to seal coax connectors is a three-step process -

- 1) Tightly wrap the entire connection, including an inch or so of the coax on each end, with the stretchy silicone tape. Start the wrap with a full turn of overlapped tape, and overlap the rest of the tape wraps for about 1/2 of each wrap.
- 2) Wrap the soft, putty-like sealant on the outside of the silicone tape. Again, make sure it's a bit longer than the stretchy tape, so it seals onto the coax at each end. Don't overlap it - just use a side-by-side wrap. Push it together where the seams are, and at the ends on the coax, to make a continuous covering with no holes.
- 3) Wrap a second layer of the silicone tape over the soft sealant just like you did the first wrap. Again, make it longer than the putty on each end, so it seals on the coax, and overlap it as before. Wrap this layer just slightly looser, so it doesn't squeeze the putty out. And, even though the stretchy tape is supposed to seal to itself, put a tie-wrap on the end, to make sure it doesn't un-wrap.

This process will provide a completely waterproof seal, and also allow removal of the seal if necessary.

Here is a picture showing a correctly-wrapped coax junction, with the wrapping cut to show the layers.

Note the tie-wrap on the right end, to keep the end of the top layer of silicone tape from peeling up.



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