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LocalTalk: Soldering connectors of the Custom Cable Kit

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Intermittent network problems can result from bad electrical contact caused by residual solder flux on Custom Cable Kit connectors. After the connectors are dis- and reconnected a few times, the network problems no longer appear, but the users of the network are wary and unconfident.

Assemblers of Custom Cable Kit networks can avoid this situation by 'flushing out' any residual flux from the male connector end after assembly. Caution must be exercised in doing this as most commonly used flux removal solvents destroy the plastic connector assembly. A remedy is a silicon-based spray 'contact enhancer' called "TWEEK", from UKO Inc., Berkeley, CA. Any other type of contact cleaner or enhancer can be used, as long as it does not have any solvent in it.

Not machined into its pin shape, the connector is instead stamped and rolled, leaving a small channel along the length of the pin. Solder flux flows in this channel and a small portion enters the contact area of the male connector when the AppleTalk wire is soldered to the open side of the pin. Once the flux is on the contact area of the pin, the flux inhibits contact with the female connector, and this partial connection gives intermittent network problems.

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