Tuner's Topics

Drip Loops

by WO1 Wanda Wig Wag

You are a platoon sergeant. Your platoon is setting up a Signal Center at Division Main in the middle of a driving rain. As you slog through the mud checking each team's progress, you pay particular attention to field wire and cable construction. The first area you check looks good. That multichannel team knows their stuff. Their cable is overheaded, it's properly secured to the vehicle and they've placed a drip loop in it (See illustration 1).

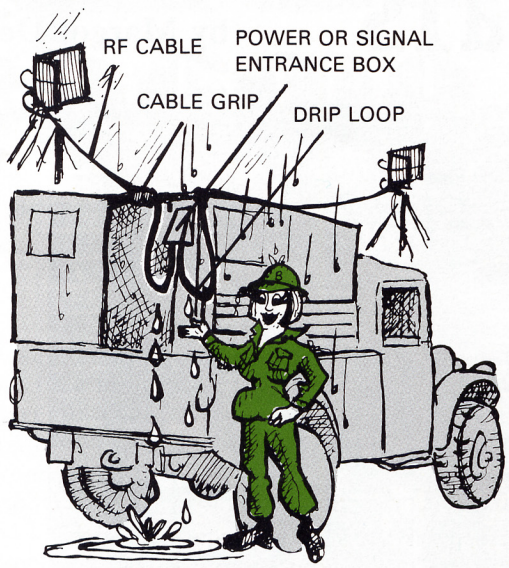

ILLUSTRATION 1

So, muttering darkly about rain and mud, you push on. Uh-oh. The next team has a problem, and they don't even know it yet. Water is rushing down their cable, over and into their cable connectors, soaking the connectors and flooding the power and signal entrance box of their commo van. What have they forgotten? That's right — drip loops! You call the team chief and the PFC who installed the cable. After you remind the team chief that he needs drip loops in his wire and cable, the PFC asks why it's so important. You take a minute to explain that anytime any RF or power cable, or any type of C-E cable or lead-in wire is tied-off above its point of connection, a drip loop is needed. This is true whether it is connected to the binding posts of a telephone, a terminal strip, or some type of junction box. And its time for connectors — both screw-on and the push and turn type — in power or signal/vidio entrance boxes.

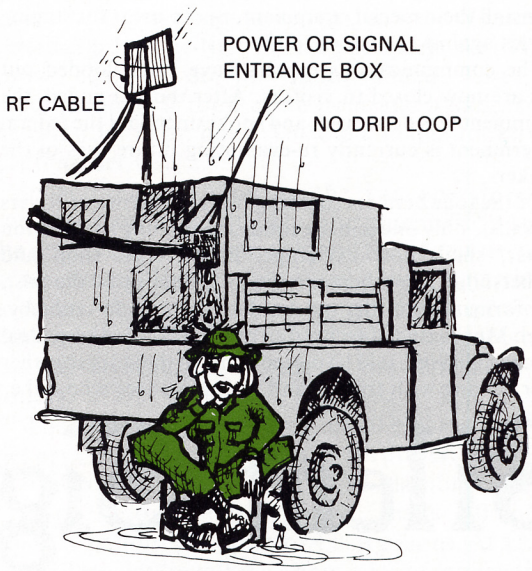

ILLUSTRATION 2

When it rains or in any other situation where water comes in contact with the wire or cable, the moisture will drain down to the bottom of the loop. The quite simple but extremely important drip loop will prevent water from entering the equipment. Remember, you tell the drenched PFC, if water gets into binding posts or signal or power connections, it can cause shorts, poor communications or complete loss of communications. Worse, it could cause electrical shock especially if you're dealing with power cables and line cable. Water + wire or cable = TROUBLE! Use drip loops to keep your connections dry, and you'll keep your commo in and you and your buddies safe.

Nodding vigorously, the young soldier begins making the necessary adjustments. You move through the rain to the next area.