

Category 6 (Cat-6)

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Category 6 (Cat-6) network cabling is used as the cabling infrastructure for 10BASE-T (Ethernet), 100BASE-TX (Fast Ethernet), 1000BASE-T (Gigabit Ethernet, or GbE) and 10GBASE-T (10-Gigabit Ethernet, or 10 GbE) networks. The Cat 6 standard provides performance of up to 250 MHz (500 MHz for the newer Cat 6a standard) and can be used up to a maximum length of 100 meters (55 meters for 10GBASE-T networks).

The Cat 6 standard was first released in 2002 as part of the Telecommunications Industry Association's TIA/EIA-568-B.2-1 document specification. Cat 6 is backward compatible with the Cat 3, Cat 5 and Cat 5e cable standards, and as with Cat 5 and Cat 5e cabling, Cat 6 cables consist of four unshielded twisted pairs (UTP) of copper wire terminated by RJ45 connectors.

In addition to its support for higher performance than the Cat 5 specification, the Cat 6 standard also includes more stringent specifications for crosstalk and system noise. While Cat 6 is expected to supersede both Cat 5 and Cat 5e cabling in the future, all three types of cables continue to be popular for use in network installations.

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