

FlowTracker Probe Cable – FAQ

Basic description of offering

Since its introduction, the FlowTracker has been configured with a 2-meter probe cable as the standard offering. As an option, customers could elect to order a FlowTracker with a 3-meter probe cable. After the FlowTracker is built, the cable length is fixed and cannot easily be changed unless the entire unit is returned to the factory.

Starting in March 2008, SonTek began replacing the 3-meter cable option with a 5-meter (16.4-foot) option. The 2-meter cable will remain as the standard length. At the time of order, customers will have the option of selecting the 5-meter cable length instead of the standard 2-meter cable length.

What are the applications?

Many times, customers want to use FlowTrackers from low bridges or small boats where the water is either too deep or the bridge too high for the standard 2-meter cable to be practical. As such, there has been an increasing demand to use this product in applications that span up to 5 meters.

Does the longer cable affect the return echoes?

Yes. In theory, the longer the cable, the more signal attenuation will occur. What this means is that FlowTrackers with longer cables may not work as well in water conditions that have fewer acoustic scatterers. Characterizing the environmental conditions where this will happen is almost impossible to quantify; however, if you plan on using the FlowTracker (with 5-m cable) in applications where the water is exceptionally “clean” of scatterers, you might want to discuss the application with a SonTek Applications Specialist first.

Can I use the FlowTracker with sounding weights from a bridge?

Use of the FlowTracker as part of a sounding weight rig is not recommended. From what we have observed, there is no practical way to mount the FlowTracker’s ADV probe onto the rig such that the velocity measurement volume will not experience flow disturbance from the hardware. Furthermore, the ADV probe cable is not designed to support any kind of load. SonTek recommends that any customer wanting to make a measurement in this fashion should consider using a RiverSurveyor or RiverCAT instead.

Does SonTek provide a wading rod to use with the FlowTracker that can extend to 5 m?

Yes. SonTek offers a two-section, Metric, top-setting wading rod that is 2.4 m in length. Unlike the 1.2-m and 4-ft rods, this rod ships in a separate case. If you are interested in obtaining a longer wading rod, please contact SonTek and we will discuss options with you.

Are the FlowTracker probe cables removable or interchangeable?

No. The FlowTracker cable is not removable or interchangeable. After the FlowTracker has been fitted with a probe cable, the only way to change the cable is to return the unit to SonTek for replacement of the probe cable with a new probe cable.

I have a FlowTracker in my possession and want to get it modified to a 5-m configuration, what should I do?

Please call SonTek Customer Service to get a quote and a service request number. Note that the upgrade procedure requires replacing the ADV probe so it involves some significant costs.

Are there any software/firmware revisions that I need to use the 5-m cable?

No. All versions are supported.