When measuring installed cabling we often see failures on short cabling or in the low frequency range where attenuation is insignificant. To avoid such failures, the field tester should apply the 3-dB Rule, which is currently being incorporated into the TIA and ISO drafts. The 3-dB rule states that in the frequency range where attenuation is below 3 dB, crosstalk and return loss failures should not be reported.

The reason failures are common when the attenuation is low is that the far end connector contributes to the near end measurements. This contribution can cause the cabling under test to exceed the test limit for crosstalk and return loss since only the near end connections are budgeted into the limit.