Switchcraft Audio Connectors / Adapters – A Quick Overview

Audio Technicians need to familiarize themselves with common audio connectors (and then some). One of the most popular brands is Switchcraft. Switchcraft has been around for many years and have hundreds of different audio connectors to choose from. One of the main things you will need to understand right from the start is the difference between a "Plug" and the "Jack." A jack is what the plug (connector) will plug into to "complete" a connection. It's also easy to figure out the differences in a "Male" and "Female" connector – the differences are easy to distinguish. Getting familiar with the most common audio connectors is the first step, but the main priority is learning how to Solder and Terminate the majority of these connectors (basically, make and / or repair your own audio cables). AVCSS Tech World has many "How To" videos on how to Solder / Terminate audio connectors so be sure to look those up when you're ready. Here are the most popular Switchcraft audio connectors and Adapters for beginners to start getting familiar with.

Switchcraft #280

Switchcraft #226

Switchcraft #290
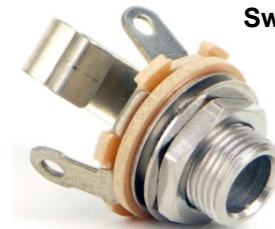
Switchcraft #12B

1/4" Mono (aka Phone Jack)
Used mainly for guitar and bass cables (instrument cables), patch cables, speaker cables, and for "Unbalanced" connections.

1/4" Stereo (TRS)
Referred to as a TRS (Tip, Ring, Sleeve). Used mainly for patch cables, headphones, and for "Balanced" connections.

1/4" Stereo (TRS) Jack
This is a typical TRS "jack" used on "Balanced" audio equipment that a 1/4" TRS connector will plug into.

Switchcraft #A3F

Switchcraft #A3M

Switchcraft #TA4F

Switchcraft #TA4FLX

XLR's Female 3-Pin
Used for microphone cables, patch cables (Balanced connections). Female XLRs are mainly used for "Output" connections. Also referred to as "Cannon Plugs."

XLR's Male 3-Pin
Used for microphone cables, patch cables (Balanced connections). Male XLRs are mainly used for "Input" connections. Also referred to as "Cannon Plugs."

TA4F (Mini XLR - Female)
The Switchcraft 4-Pin Mini XLR is used mainly with wireless microphone systems, and in video and television production.

Switchcraft #35HDBAU

Switchcraft #780

Switchcraft #3502AAU

1/8" Stereo Plug – 3.5mm
Used for patch cables, headphones, mini recording devices, media players, iPads, Laptops, PC's, and video recorders, etc.

1/8" Mono Plug – 3.5mm
Mono version – Also used for patch cables, mini recording devices, older audio / media players, and test equipment, etc.

RCA's (Phono)
Used for patch cables, CD / DVD and cassette players, and older audio and video connections (VCRs). Still used on some newer commercial AV equipment.
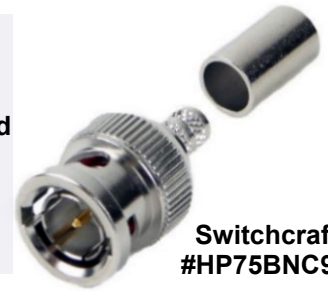
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Switchcraft #60GBFX Panel Mount

Switchcraft #09GM4MX

BNC Connectors
Not used by consumers as much but are still in use for Video (SDI) and in studio related video equipment. In audio – mainly used for wireless microphone Antenna cables (various types).
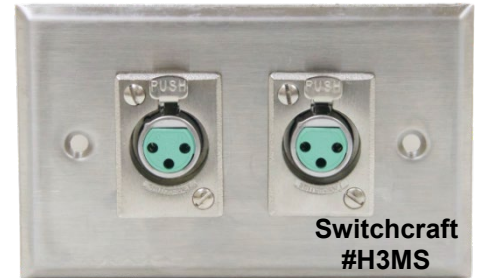
Switchcraft #HP75BNC9X

Din Connector
DIN connectors are still being used for power, audio, computer, video, and Midi connections. They come in a wide variety of pin configurations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and more.
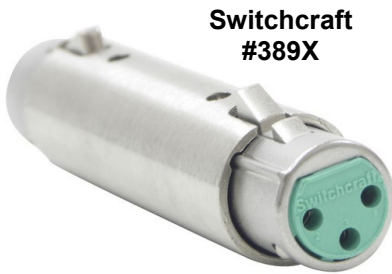
Switchcraft #PXC

Switchcraft #D3F

Switchcraft #H3MS

The Switchcraft #PXC jack is a combination 3-pole XLR female receptacle and 1/4" stereo jack. The jack allows you to utilize either a Male XLR or a 1/4" stereo (TRS) phone plug.

"Female" XLR Jacks
These are widely used in commercial and any permanently installed Audio Systems such as in Malls, Grocery Stores, and Theaters. Male XLRs are mainly used for "Inputs" so the Female XLR Jacks are very common. You will not see many "Male" XLR Jacks in the field (unless it is a special application).

Switchcraft Audio Adapters

Switchcraft #389X

Switchcraft #390X

Switchcraft #0330F1X

Switchcraft #330P

Gender Changers
Also called barrel adapters / connectors. Not very common but have their uses.

"Y-Cables"
There are many versions of Y-Cables on the market, but the RCA types have probably been used the most. There is a "Proper" way to use a Y-Cable, and an "Improper" way to use a Y-Cable.

Switchcraft #361A

Switchcraft #386AX

Switchcraft #386AX

1/4 TS to 1/4 TS Barrell
Used to extend a 1/4" TS cable when the cable is not long enough. I have used these Adapters many times to extend both "speaker" and "patch" type Cables.

Female XLR to TRS Male
This adapter can be useful in certain situations when all you have left is a mic cable (XLR) and you need to plug into a TRS jack.

Male TS to Male TS
Not sure what this adapter would be used for but there must be a need for it or a major company like Switchcraft would not have manufactured it.

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Courtesy of Switchcraft

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