

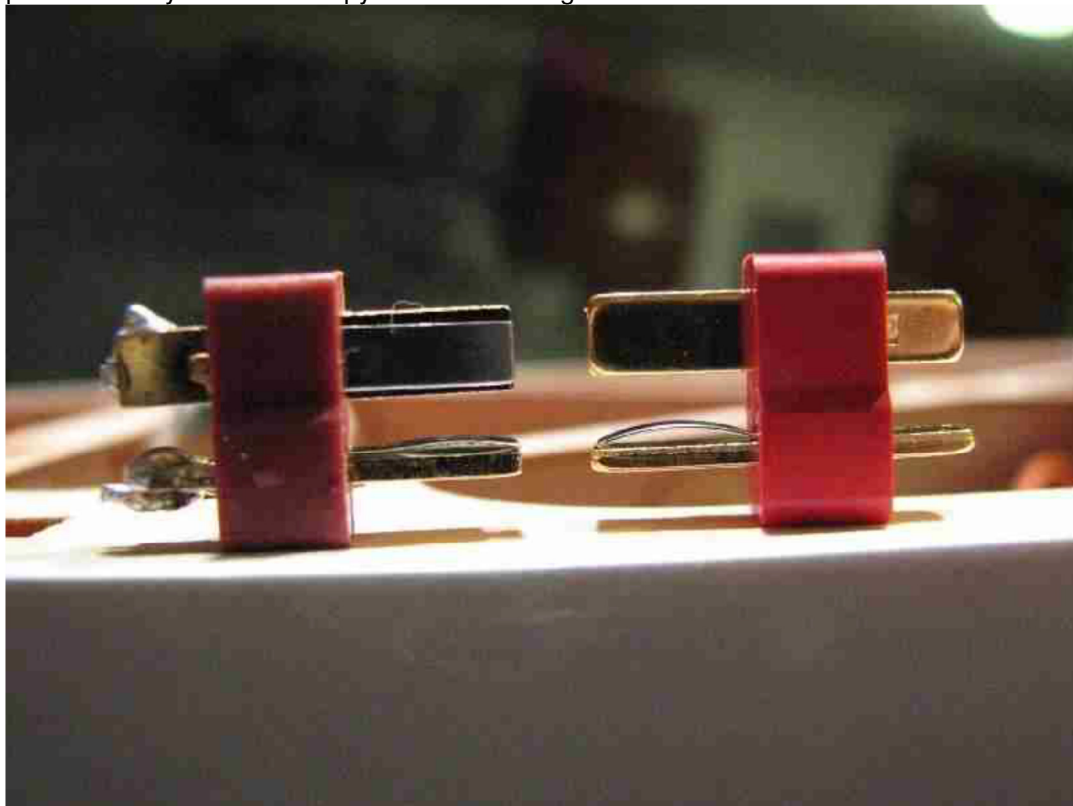
Saving Money on Connectors??

By Jack Sallade (jack@flyrc.info)

Like all of us, I'm always interested in saving a few bucks on my modeling tools and supplies. So at a recently swap meet when I saw Deans Ultra connectors on sale for 5 pairs for \$10 I scooped some up. I wasn't particularly concerned whether they were actually Deans brand, since these connectors are very simple and reliable and I was only using them on a little electric foamie anyway!

Fast forward a couple months and I'm working on my 28% Edge. I have decided on using LiPo batteries for both flight packs and for the ignition battery (a total of three packs). Of course these packs don't come with connectors and I had decided to use the Deans since they are very reliable and handle current better than standard servo connectors. They are also pretty much what I use on ALL my LiPo packs. After soldering on all 5 female connectors to the batteries (2 spare packs) and 3 males on the respective power switches (redundant plus the ignition) I began assembling and testing the power system on the airplane. Imagine my surprise when I got no power out of one of the new LiPo packs. It had charged fine but no joy... Puzzled I replaced the pack and noticed as I plugged it in that my system would power up briefly then go back off... even stranger! Eventually what I found was that when the connector was fully seated it no longer connected! After plugging and unplugging the other battery to switch connection a couple times I found it did the same. I almost fainted while considering what could have happened had I tried to fly it this way!!! After careful testing I found that every male connector end I had left seemed to exhibit similar issues... then I remembered the good deal I got on these cheap copies!

Needless to say I am now in the process of cutting off and disposing of every single "knockoff" Deans connector I have and installing new Deans Ultra connectors purchased at my favorite local hobby store. As I make the swap I find they work every time! I have not actually seen any failures on the female connector "copies" but I'm taking no chances. On physically examining the removed connectors I took this picture side by side of the copy vs. the real thing:



As you can see the Deans on the right has a brighter red color and the “friction tab” as I think of it is much more pronounced than on the copy. Because I’ve got them facing each other you can’t see the tab on the top blade of the Deans but look carefully at the bottom blades to see the difference. The real connector also goes together much smoother than the copy. I suspect that friction tab is the real difference. Either it’s not as conductive as it should be on the copy or the shape of it doesn’t fit the way it should in the female socket. Whatever the case may be no more copies for me. I’ll pay the price for actual Deans.