

OPTICAL TAPE CARTRIDGE**ABSTRACT**

An optical tape cartridge is disclosed that is suitable for playing by an optical tape player. The tape player provides the cartridge with a voltage supply capable of supplying the optical tape with a relatively high voltage. The tape cartridge includes a sealed cartridge housing and first and second tape reels that are disposed within and freely rotatable in either direction within the housing. The reels act as tape supply and tape take up reels. Also included in the cartridge is an optical tape that has a first surface on an optically recordable side. The tape is wound on and couples the two reels with a tape segment. The tape segment is positioned with the optically recordable side facing outwardly from each of the reels. The tape includes a conductive layer that extends substantially the length of the optical tape. The conductive layer is grounded at least one end. The housing includes a sealed window positioned on a housing surface that is located across a portion of the tape segment. The window allows optical reading from the segment of optical tape. A conductive guide guides the tape segment past the window. To guide the tape segment in this manner, the guide has a portion disposed adjacent the window. The conductive guide is connected to the relatively high voltage supplied by the tape player power supply. The conductive guide maintains the first surface of the tape segment a relatively fixed distance from the window by electrostatically attracting the grounded conductive layer of the tape segment towards the conductive guide.