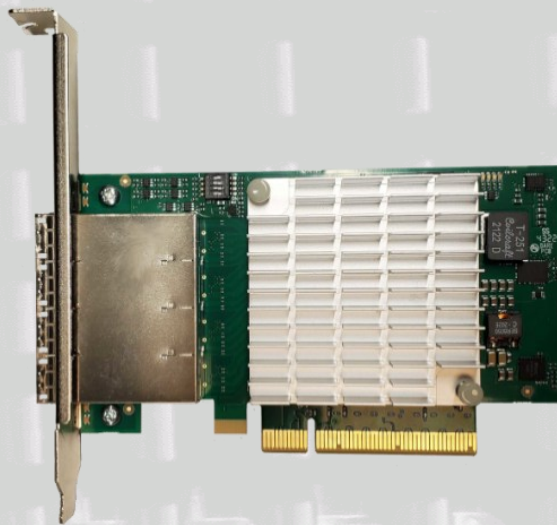




# Dolphin PCI Express MXH916 Adapter



MXH916 NTB Adapter Users Guide

Version 2.0

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025

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DO NOT USE THE INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE TO DESIGN YOUR PCI-SIG-COMPLIANT PRODUCT; ALWAYS REFERENCE THE ORIGINAL PCI-SIG SPECIFICATION FOR DETAILS.

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### **ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Dolphin is minimizing the amount of printed documentation and software CDs in its shipments; please download additional documentation and software from [www.dolphinics.com](http://www.dolphinics.com).

## 2. Terms and acronyms

The following are Essential terms and acronyms used in this manual.

<b>CMI</b>	Cable Management Interface. A PCIe cable connects the 2-wire management interface for communication between subsystems. The PCI-SIG External Cabling Specification, version 3.0 or newer, provides more details.
<b>eXpressWare</b>	Dolphin’s software stack for PCIe clustering and IO. Please visit <a href="http://www.dolphinics.com/software">www.dolphinics.com/software</a> for more information.
<b>Host mode</b>	The card is installed in a root complex/host PC.
<b>Lane</b>	One PCI Express Lane contains a differential pair for transmission and a differential pair for reception.
<b>Link</b>	A collection of one or more PCI Express Lanes provides the communication path between an Upstream and Downstream Port.
<b>PCIe 4.0 cable</b>	Cable compliant with the PCI-SIG External Cabling Specification 4.0. Support for CMI.
<b>Port</b>	PCIe Cable port. The MXH916 x8™ or standard PCI Express cable. A four x4 cable connects to another PC with an MXH916 or Dolphin Switch MXS924.

## 3. Technical Information

### 3.1 Board revision history

The following table gives a general overview of the history of hardware revisions. For details, please consult the MXH916 PCN available from Dolphin.

Adapter card revision	Capabilities
MXH916-AA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial product version</li> </ul>

**Table 1: Revision History**

## 3.2 High-Level Specification

The table presented below provides an overview of the high-level specifications.

PCI Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Base Specification 4.0</li> <li>➤ External Cabling Specification 4.0</li> <li>➤ Card Electromechanical Specification 4.0</li> </ul>			
Application Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ~500ns latency (application to application)</li> <li>➤ About 14 GBytes/s throughput (system dependent)</li> </ul>			
Active Components	Microchip Switchtec® 4.0 PFX Switch			
Max Link Speeds	128 GT/s (16.0 GT/s per lane signaling)			
Configuration	DIP-switch			
Topologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Two-node direct cable</li> <li>➤ Three-node direct cable</li> <li>➤ Five-node direct cable</li> <li>➤ Multi-Node Switch (MXS924)</li> </ul>			
Cable Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ SFF-8644 connector for copper/fiber cables</li> <li>➤ Quad x4 Connector.</li> <li>➤ PCIe 4.0 copper, up to 4m</li> <li>➤ PCIe 4.0 fiber, up to 100m</li> </ul>			
Power	Power Rail	Typical Current	Maximum Current	
	+3.3V	1.05 A	0A	
	+12V	1.0 A	1.66 A	
Cable Clocking Mode	SRNS. SRIS optional.			
Flash	for boot-up configuration data			
EEPROM	Card-specific information (serial number, etc.)			
Host Clock	Host clock isolation supports the Constant Frequency Clock (CFC) or Spread Spectrum Clock (SSC) for the EDGE reference clock.			
Operating Environment	Operating Temperature: 0°C to 55°C (32°F - 131°F) Operating Humidity:5% - 95% non-condensing			
Altitude vs Temperature	<b>250 LFM</b>		<b>350 LFM</b>	
	45 (°C)	3000m	55 (°C)	3000m
	35 (°C)	4500m	45 (°C)	4500m
	25 (°C)	6000m	35 (°C)	6000m
Storage Environment	Storage Temperature: -40°C to 70°C (-40°F to 158°F) Relative Humidity 95% (non-condensing) at 35°C			
Form Factor Dimension	PCIe Half-Length, Half-Height 116.23mm (4.57 inches) x 68.90 mm (2.731 inches).			
eXpressWare support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Super Sockets, Berkeley Sockets API</li> <li>➤ Microsoft WinSock2/LSP support</li> <li>➤ IP Network driver</li> <li>➤ SISI API</li> <li>➤ Smart IO</li> </ul>			
Usage Mode	Non-transparent bridging (NTB) Host			
Operating Systems	Linux, Windows, and RTX			
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CE Mark</li> <li>➤ FCC Class B</li> <li>➤ UL94V-0 compliant</li> <li>➤ RoHS Compliant</li> </ul>			
Mounting Brackets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Full height bracket installed.</li> <li>➤ The half-height bracket is included with a board shipping box.</li> </ul>			

**Table 2: MXH916 Product High-Level Specifications**

### 3.3 Simplified schematics

The figure below shows the MXH916 simplified schematics with main functions.

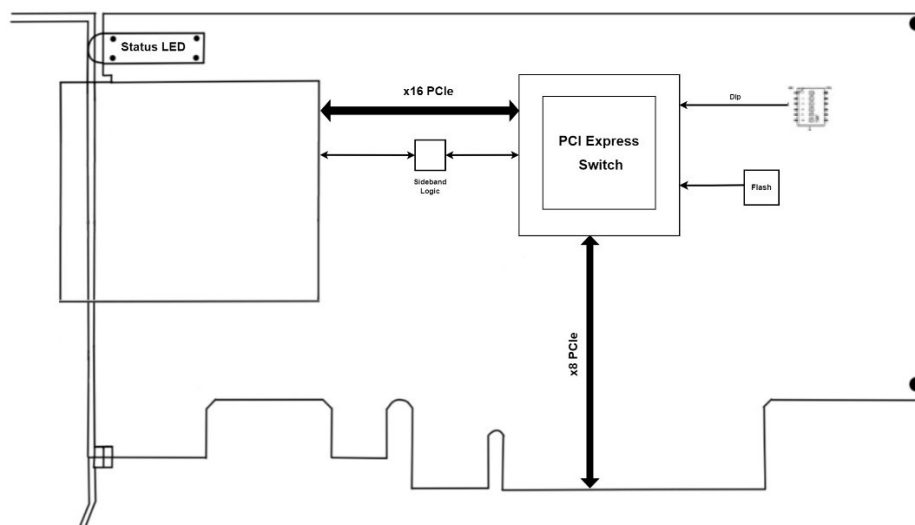


Figure 1: MXH916 Simplified Schematics

### 3.4 PCIe Slot Determination

The MXH916 supports PCIe 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0 speeds, as well as x1, x2, x4, and x8 slot edge link widths. The slot width and speed affect the card's performance. The card can be installed in an x8 or x16 connector. The card will auto-configure the slot speed and width.

- Install the board in a slot connecting directly to the CPU for optimal shared memory performance.

### 3.5 Airflow - Operating Environment

To maximize the product's lifetime and maintain the warranty, specify the operating temperature and ensure the specified airflow is present. Consider Special care when using MXH916 in office-type cabinets with poor cooling in combination with other high energy-consuming PCIe devices, e.g., not actively cooled GPUs:

- Operating Temperature: 0°C - 55°C (32°F - 131°F),
- Airflow: 350 LFM

**TIP:** Please use the `dis_diag` tool immediately after software installation to verify the temperature. If the chip temperature reported by `dis_diag` exceeds 95°C, it is recommended to improve the airflow.

## 4 Installation

For installation, follow these steps from 4.1 to 4.7 sequentially.

### 4.1 Board Unpacking

MXH916 includes the following components.

- MXH916 Adapter Board with high-profile PCIe bracket mounted.
- Low-profile PCIe bracket.
- Anti-static bag.
- Getting started guide with serial number for quick download of Dolphins eXpressWare PCIe software.

The MXH916 card is delivered in an anti-static bag to avoid any potential damage from static electricity. It is crucial to exercise anti-static precautions before removing the card from the packaging. Clothing or the surrounding work environment can generate static electricity, which may harm the PCI Express adapter card or the PC. Wearing a grounded anti-static wrist strap is recommended when opening the PC and handling the MXH916 after removing it from the anti-static bag.



### 4.2 Pre-Installation Questions

Before installing the MXH916, it is essential to identify the necessary configuration requirements through specific steps.

- Which system and PCIe slot are suitable for installing the card?
- What is the speed and link width of the selected slot?
- What are the environmental conditions where the card will be installed?
- What type and length of cables will be used?
- How to ensure adequate operational conditions, including temperature and airflow

### 4.3 Change PCIe Bracket

The MXH916 package comes with both High and low-profile PCI Express brackets. The board is packaged with a full-height bracket mounted. To switch to the low-profile bracket, carefully unscrew the two mounting screws to remove the full-height bracket. Remember to save the screws and replace the bracket with the low-profile one.

Before proceeding with the installation process, ensure you are correctly grounded to prevent static discharges that can damage the adapter card. Use the two mounting screws to install the low-profile bracket, and be cautious not to overtighten them. Tighten the screws carefully, ensuring they are properly secured.

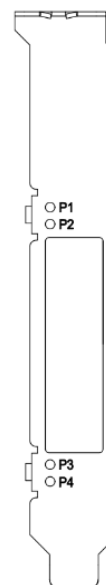


Figure 2: Full length PCIe bracket

## 4.4 Configure the Board

Set the DIP switch settings to ensure proper operation, depending on the firmware. Please refer to the section. Configuration and DIP Switch on page 11 for details.

## 4.5 Install the Adapter Card



Before installing the adapter card, ensure you are properly grounded to avoid static discharges that may destroy your computer or the adapter card. Also, ensure you are grounded before opening your computer or the anti-static bag containing the MXH916. Please follow the instructions on your computer or expansion chassis when installing a PCI Express card.

The MXH916 Adapter card can be installed into any PCI Express x8 or x16 slot and supports PCIe 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0 signaling.

**NOTE: The MXH916 only requires complete electrical x8 signaling from the slot to achieve maximum performance since the edge port is limited to x8.**

## 4.6 Installing and Removing the Cable

Installing and removing cables should be done with the host and expansion system powered off. Please contact the Dolphin representative if you intend to connect and disconnect the PCI Express cables continuously.

### 4.6.1 Connecting the Cable

Please carefully install the cable connector into the connector housing on the MXH916 adapter card. To install the four x4 SFF-8644 cables, match the cable housing with the connector on the MXH916 adapter card. Use even pressure to insert the connector until it is securely in place. Adhere to ESD guidelines when installing the cables to ensure you don't damage the board.

### 4.6.2 Cable strain relief

It is crucial to provide strain relief for the PCIe cables to prevent fatigue loading and damage to the card. The cables should be mechanically secured to the rack or cabinet, particularly for long and heavy cables, as well as those connecting cabinets and racks.

### 4.6.3 Disconnecting the Cable

Please carefully pull the release tab to release the cable from the locking latches and gently pull the cable out of the connector guides.

## 4.7 Installing the Dolphin eXpressWare Software

The MXH916 adapter card is supported by Dolphin's eXpressWare Software package for the MX product line. Please visit

[www.dolphinics.com/mx](http://www.dolphinics.com/mx)

To register and download the latest documentation and software, it is recommended that you follow the quick installation instructions found on the website above to install the software for your operating system.

**TIP:** Dolphin provides software and documentation for several product families; **please remember to select the MX product family before downloading.** The MXH916 requires Dolphin software version DIS 5.21.0 or higher to operate. The software download requires a password to log in. **If you follow the instructions on the getting started document bundled with the adapter card, the password will automatically be emailed to you.** If you fail to provide the correct software serial number on the getting-started document, your request will be managed manually.

**Note:** Please consult the eXpressWare release note for detailed information on available software functionality. Please get in touch with Dolphin for more information.

## 4.8 Verify Installation & LEDs

The MXH916 has one bi-color LED that is visible through the PCI Express bracket.

The LEDs are visible through cut-outs in the PCIe bracket on one side of the cable connector block.

	Dark	Yellow	Green
Link	Power off, No Cable installed	Power on, No Link	Power on, cable installed; Link operational

**Table 3: LED behaviors**

Each physical x4 connector has a Link LED associated with it.

However, if the configured link width is more than x4, only the single top LED will reflect the link status of the combined ports.

## 5 Operation

### 5.1 Configuration and DIP Switch

The MXH916 has one bank of 4 DIP switches. Its default factory setting is an x16 NTB Host link connection suitable for a two-node configuration.

The MXH916 has DIP switches for setting unique modes or operations; the meaning of each DIP switch depends on the loaded firmware. Please carefully read the documentation shipping with the card before modifying any DIP switch settings. Please pay close attention to the ON and OFF positions on the DIP switch.

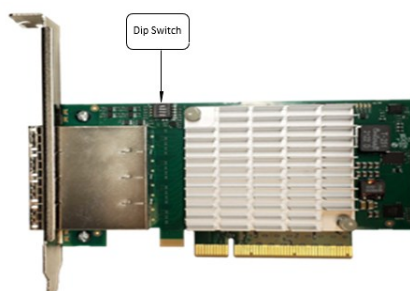


Figure 3: DIP Switch (Shipping Default)

Figure 3 displays the DIP switch utilized by the MXH916 adapter card for configuration purposes. All unlisted DIP switches must be kept in their default positions. For a comprehensive overview of the DIP switch configurations for the MXH916, please refer to Table 4: DIP Switch Settings, which outlines the different transparent settings available.

### 5.2 DIP switch NTB Settings

These are configurations available for MXH916. Please consult the Firmware Release Note for details.

MXH916 DIP Setting	256MB BAR NTB	32GB BAR NTB	64GB BAR NTB	2G BAR NTB
Single x16 port	1 OFF 2 OFF 3 OFF 4 ON <b>DIP 4 Set (Shipping Default)</b>	1 ON 2 OFF 3 OFF 4 ON <b>DIP 1 and 4 set</b>	1 OFF 2 ON 3 ON 4 ON <b>DIP 2, 3 and 4 set</b>	1 ON 2 ON 3 ON 4 ON <b>DIP 1, 2, 3, 4 set</b>
Dual x8 ports	1 OFF 2 ON 3 OFF 4 ON <b>DIP 2 and 4 set</b>	1 ON 2 ON 3 OFF 4 ON <b>DIP 1,2, and 4 set</b>		
Quad x4 ports	1 OFF 2 OFF 3 ON 4 ON <b>DIP 3 and 4 set</b>	1 ON 2 OFF 3 ON 4 ON <b>DIP 1,3, and 4 set</b>		

Table 4: DIP Switch NTB settings for MXH916.

## 5.3 Use Cases

MXH916 enables the establishment of various PCIe network configurations in the following use cases:

### 5.3.1 Host Transparent Hot-Add

Dolphin eXpressWare SmartIO adds PCIe hot-add support with Linux systems. Cabled PCIe expansion systems and I/O devices can be dynamically added, hot-swapped, or removed from the system without requiring a host reboot.

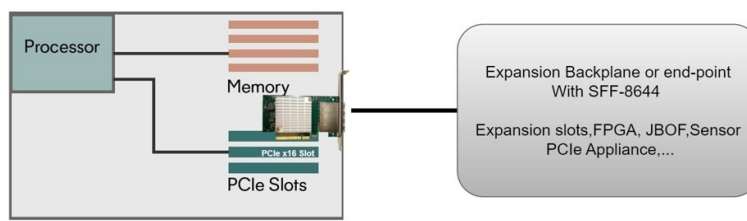


Figure 4: Host Transparent Hot Add

### 5.3.2 Two-Node NTB Network

Since the MXH916 edge connector's maximum speed is PCIe 4.0 x8, you typically only need two x4 cables to connect to an MXH916 card. To establish an x8 link, ports 1 and 2 should be connected to the same port number on the other card.

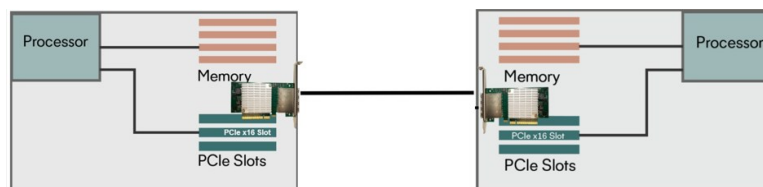


Figure 5: Two-Node Network

### 5.3.2 Three-Node Direct NTB Network

Utilizing x4 cables, you can establish a robust 3-node network, providing full PCIe 4.0 x8 performance between the connected systems.

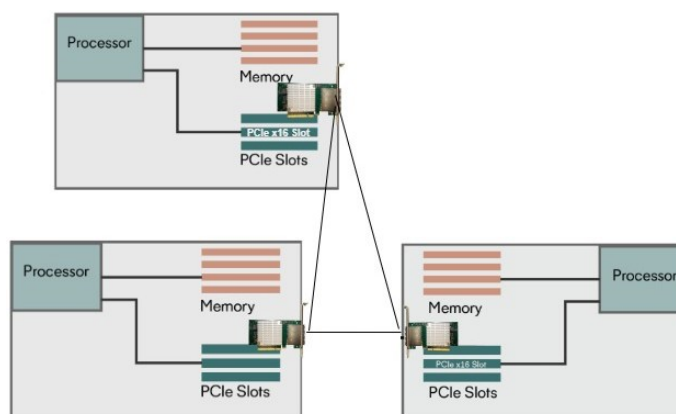
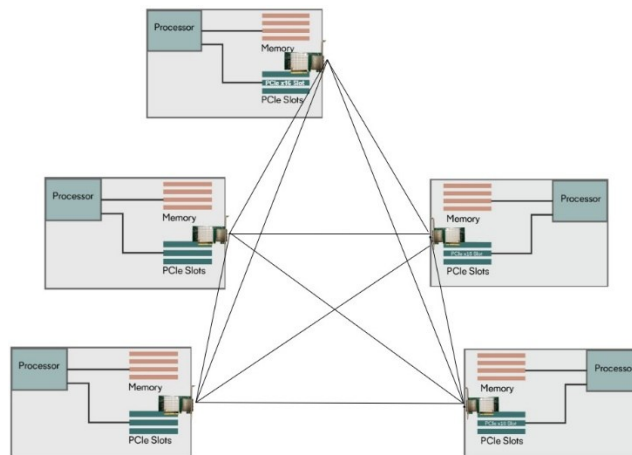


Figure 6: Three-Node Direct Network

### 5.3.3 Five-Node NTB Direct Network

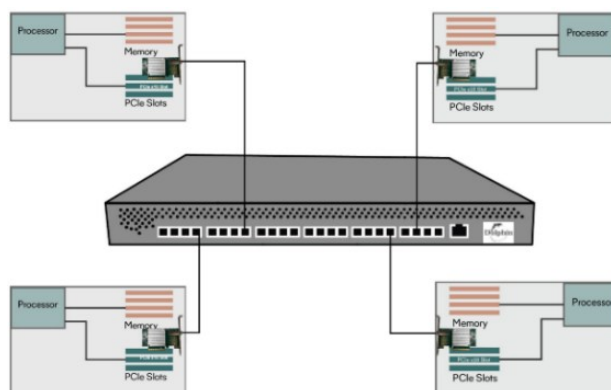
Each node has an MXH916 adapter; all systems use a direct x4 cable connection. Dolphin software fully supports this configuration. All MXH916 adapter cards operate in NTB mode.



**Figure 7: Five-Node Direct Network**

### 5.3.4 Multiple-Node NTB Network

One or more Dolphin's MXS924, 24-port PCIe 4.0 Switches can realize a more extensive configuration.



**Figure 8: Multiple Node NTB Network**

## 5.4 Firmware Upgrade

Periodically, Dolphin might release upgraded firmware accessed through the web or incorporated into the Dolphin software distribution at [www.dolphinics.com/mx](http://www.dolphinics.com/mx).

Please consult the MXH916 Firmware Release Note for information on firmware upgrades.

## 5.5 Identifying the Card

The card has a label sticker with the serial number in the format 'MXH916-YY-ZZZZZZ', where YY denotes the card revision (e.g., AA) and ZZZZZZ denotes the serialized production number (e.g., 012345). This entire string constitutes the card's serial number (*i.e.*, MXH916-AA-012345).

You can also get this information using `lspci` in Linux:

First, identify the devices for the Dolphin Host card. Then, run the `lspci` and identify the card.

```
#lspci | grep "Device 4028"
09:00.0 PCI bridge: PMC-Sierra Inc. Device 4028
09:00.1 Memory controller: PMC-Sierra Inc. Device 4028
0a:00.0 PCI bridge: PMC-Sierra Inc. Device 4028
```

Then, run the `lspci` and identify the card. It will show up as something like

```
#lspci -s 09:00.0 -v
09:00.0 PCI bridge: PMC-Sierra Inc. Device 4028 (prog-if 00 [Normal decode])
  Flags: bus master, fast devsel, latency 0, IRQ 40
  Bus: primary=09, secondary=0a, subordinate=0f, sec-latency=0
  I/O behind bridge: 00001000-00002fff [size=8K]
  Memory behind bridge: e8000000-ecffffff [size=80M]
  Prefetchable memory behind bridge: 00000000c0000000-00000000cfffffff [size=256M]
  Capabilities: [40] Express Upstream Port, MSI 00
  Capabilities: [7c] MSI: Enable+ Count=1/8 Maskable- 64bit+
  Capabilities: [8c] Power Management version 3
  Capabilities: [94] Subsystem: Dolphin Interconnect Solutions AS Device 0916
  Capabilities: [100] Advanced Error Reporting
  Capabilities: [148] Power Budgeting <?>
  Capabilities: [158] Multicast
  Capabilities: [188] Secondary PCI Express
  Capabilities: [1b4] Device Serial Number 00-00-42-42-00-00-00-19
  Capabilities: [1c0] Latency Tolerance Reporting
  Capabilities: [1c8] Access Control Services
  Capabilities: [1f0] Data Link Feature <?>
  Capabilities: [1fc] Physical Layer 16.0 GT/s <?>
  Capabilities: [23c] Lane Margining at the Receiver <?>
  Capabilities: [7f8] Vendor Specific Information: ID=ffff Rev=1 Len=808 <?>
  Kernel driver in use: dis-mx-p2p
#lspci -s 09:00.0 -v | grep -E "Subsystem|Serial"
  Capabilities: [94] Subsystem: Dolphin Interconnect Solutions AS Device 0916
  Capabilities: [1b4] Device Serial Number 00-00-41-41-00-00-00-19
```

This shows the card as revision 0x4141 (hexadecimal values of the 'AA' letters in the ASCII table), with the production number 0x00000019 (0000025 in decimal)

## 6 PCIe Cable Port

### 6.1 PCIe Cable Signals

The external PCI Express cable connector supports the following signals:

Signal Type	Description
PETpN/PETnN	PCI Express Transmitter pairs, labelled where N is the Lane number (starting with 0);
PERpN/PERnN	PCI Express Receiver pairs, labelled where N is the Lane number (starting with 0);
CPRSNT#	Cable presents a signal, active low. Only used in the connector, not routed through the cable.
CADDR	Cable Address signal, active low.
CINT#	Management interface interrupt signal. Only used in the connector, not routed through the cable
CMISDA	The management interface data line is used to communicate with components in the cable assembly. MXH916 does not support CMI.
CMISCL	The management interface clock line is used to communicate with components in the cable assembly. MXH916 does not support CMI.
PWR	+3.3 V Power: Power provisioning to the connector back shell allows active signal conditioning components in the cable assembly. Only used in the connector, not routed through the cable.
MGTPWR	+3.3V management power. Free side power input for management interface circuitry. Only used in the connector, not routed through the cable.
GND	Ground Reference for PCI Express signals, sidebands, and power.

**Table 5: PCIe Cable Port Signals**

## 6.2 PCIe Cable Connector x16 Pin-Out

	Pin	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
CONNECTOR 1	D	GND	PETn2	PETp2	GND	PETn1	PETp1	GND	MGTPWR	PWR
	C	GND	PETn3	PETp3	GND	PETn0	PETp0	GND	CMISDA_1	CMISCL_1
	B	GND	PERn2	PERp2	GND	PERn1	PERp1	GND	CBLPRSNT#_1	PWR
	A	GND	PERn3	PERp3	GND	PERn0	PERp0	GND	CINT#_1	CADDR_1
CONNECTOR 2	D	GND	PETn6	PETp6	GND	PETn5	PETp5	GND	MGTPWR	PWR
	C	GND	PETn7	PETp7	GND	PETn4	PETp4	GND	CMISDA_2	CMISCL_2
	B	GND	PERn6	PERp6	GND	PERn5	PERp5	GND	CBLPRSNT#_2	PWR
	A	GND	PERn7	PERp7	GND	PERn4	PERp4	GND	CINT#_2	CADDR_2
CONNECTOR 3	D	GND	PETn10	PETp10	GND	PETn9	PETp9	GND	MGTPWR	PWR
	C	GND	PETn11	PETp11	GND	PETn8	PETp8	GND	CMISDA_3	CMISCL_3
	B	GND	PERn10	PERp10	GND	PERn9	PERp9	GND	CBLPRSNT#_3	PWR
	A	GND	PERn11	PERp11	GND	PERn8	PERp8	GND	CINT#_3	CADDR_3
CONNECTOR 4	D	GND	PETn14	PETp14	GND	PETn13	PETp13	GND	MGTPWR	PWR
	C	GND	PETn15	PETp15	GND	PETn12	PETp12	GND	CMISDA_4	CMISCL_4
	B	GND	PERn14	PERp14	GND	PERn13	PERp13	GND	CBLPRSNT#_4	PWR
	A	GND	PERn15	PERp15	GND	PERn12	PERp12	GND	CINT#_4	CADDR_4

Table 6: External PCIe x16 cable pin-out

## 7 Compliance and Regulatory Testing

### 7.1 EMC Compliance

The Dolphin PCI Express MXH916 adapter is tested to PASS the following relevant test standards for PCI Express cards, telecommunication and industry equipment installed in a standard PC:

- EN 55032:2015 + A11:2020
- EN 55035:2017,
- EN 61000-3-2:2014,
- EN 61000-3-3:2013
- 47 CFR Part 15, Subpart B (Clause 15.107 and 15.109) in conjunction with ANSI C63.4:2014
- CISPR 35:2017 ,KS C 9835:2019
- CISPR 32:2015 ,KS C 9832:2019
- EN 55032:2015+A11:2020(Class B)
- CNS 15598-1:2020
- ICES-003, issue 07 in conjunction with ANSI C63.4:2014 amended as per ANSI C63.4a-2017

This does not ensure that it will comply with these standards on any random PC. The integrator is responsible for ensuring that their products comply with all relevant regulations regarding their intended use.

## 7.2 FCC Class A

After conducting tests, this device has been determined to conform to the Class A digital device regulations specified in part 15 of the FCC Rules.

## 7.3 RoHS Compliance

Dolphin MXH916 is RoHS compliant. A Compliance certificate issued by the manufacturer is available upon request.

## 7.4 WEEE Notice

The adapter card bears a label in accordance with European Directive 2002/96/EC, which pertains to waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). This directive outlines the guidelines for the proper disposal and recycling of used appliances within the European Union. The presence of this label on the product signifies that it should not be discarded but returned to an approved local WEEE waste collector.



# 8 Limited Warranty

Dolphin Interconnect Solutions warrants this product to be free from manufacturing defects under the following terms:

## 8.1 Warranty Period

Dolphins warrants the product for one (1) year from the date of purchase. Extended warranties are available.

## 8.2 Coverage

To the extent permitted by applicable law, this warranty does not apply to:

- Damages caused by operator error or non-compliance with instructions available for the product.
- Use or attempt to use or program firmware not approved by Dolphin.
- Damage results from accident, abuse, misuse, neglect, improper handling, improper installation, moisture, corrosive environments, missing cable strain relief, high-voltage surges, shipping, or abnormal working conditions.
- Damages result from violating the specified operating or storage temperatures and airflow.
- Damage is caused by acts of nature, e.g., floods, storms, fires, or earthquakes.
- Damage caused by any power source out of range or not provided with the product.
- Normal wear and tear.
- Attempts to repair, modify, open, or upgrade the product by personnel or agents not authorised by Dolphin.
- Products that have had their product serial numbers tampered with or removed.
- Damage to the product caused by products not supplied by Dolphin.

## 8.3 Service Procedure

Suppose the product proves defective during the Warranty Period. In that case, please get in touch with the seller who supplied the product to you. If you purchased it directly from Dolphin, please check [www.dolphinics.com/support](http://www.dolphinics.com/support) for a valid RMA number and instructions. Products returned to Dolphin without a valid RMA number will not be serviced under this warranty.

# 9 Support

If you need support using the product or have any technical questions, please create a support ticket at [www.dolphinics.com/csp](http://www.dolphinics.com/csp) - We are not able to answer technical questions via email.