

Federal Communications Commission

The Digital Television Transition

Montana State Legislature
Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee
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In February of 2009, television will undergo the biggest change since color was introduced in the 1950s.



The DTV Transition Deadline

Today, most full-power TV stations are broadcasting in two formats:
Digital and Analog

February 2009

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After February 17, 2009, all full-power stations will broadcast only in digital format.



Why Are Full-Power TV Broadcast Stations Switching to All-Digital?

- Analog spectrum re-allocated for Public Safety
- Digital is more efficient, so broadcast stations can offer:
 - Better TV picture/sound
 - More programming options (multicasting)
- Analog spectrum auctioned for advanced wireless services



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What Should I Do To Be Ready?

You have three choices:

1. **Connect your analog TV to a digital-to-analog converter box.** If you receive good quality reception on VHF channels (2-13) and UHF channels (14-51), your existing antenna should work for digital broadcasts.

OR

2. **Buy a digital television (a TV with a built-in digital tuner).** You do not need an HDTV. Plus, if you receive good quality reception on VHF and UHF channels, your existing antenna should work for digital broadcasts.

OR

3. **Subscribe to a paid TV service (such as cable or satellite TV).** If you receive your local broadcast stations through a paid TV provider, you are already prepared for the DTV transition.
 - Cable companies are not required to switch to digital. For voluntary business reasons, cable companies may switch some or all of their channels from analog to digital.
 - If you have an analog TV that does not receive local broadcast stations through your paid provider, you will need a digital-to-analog converter box to watch digital broadcasts.



Will My Analog TV Still Receive Free Over-The-Air Broadcasts?

Yes – Analog TVs will work with a digital-to-analog converter box.



- \$40 – \$70 retail cost
- NTIA administering coupon program
- U.S. households can request up to two \$40 coupons
- Coupons good for eligible boxes
- Apply online, by phone, fax, or mail
- For more information – Visit <http://www.dtv2009.gov>

Or Call:

- 1-888-388-2009
- 1-877-530-2634 (TTY)
- 1-866-495-1161 (Spanish TTY)

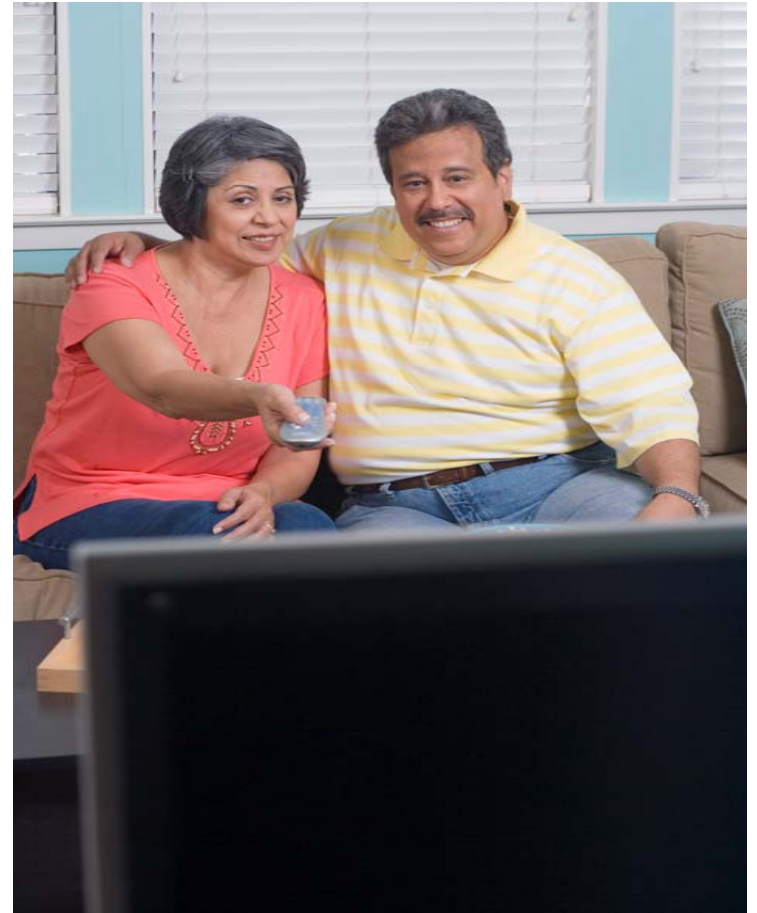


DTV or HDTV

- **Transition is from analog to digital, not from analog to high definition**
 - High definition TV (HDTV) is a form of DTV that provides higher resolution pictures and multichannel audio
- **DTV and HDTV sets are not the same**
 - DTV includes standard definition (SDTV) and high definition (HDTV) formats
 - Not necessary to purchase HDTVs in order to view DTV
 - SDTVs are comparably priced to analog TVs
- **Can view HDTV broadcasts on SDTVs and analog TVs connected to digital-to-analog converter boxes, just not in full HDTV quality**

Low Power Television (LPTV)

While the majority of consumers in the U.S. can receive the programming of full-power over-the-air stations, there are three other categories of broadcast TV stations - "low-power," "Class A," and "translator" stations. There is currently no statutory deadline for these stations to convert to digital broadcasting.



Digital-to-Analog Converter Boxes and Analog Broadcasts

- Full-power broadcast stations can continue to broadcast in analog until February 17, 2009. Also, low-power, Class A, and translator TV stations can continue to broadcast in analog after February 17, 2009.
- Consumers who want to view programming from these stations should look for digital-to-analog converter boxes that have “analog pass-through” capability. Consumers must turn off the power to these boxes and tune their TV sets to the analog channels they want to watch.
- Consumers who do not have analog pass-through boxes can use an “A/B switch” and/or a “signal splitter” and some extra cable to route the analog signals around the converter box in order to watch analog channels.



If You Subscribe To a Paid Service Like Cable Or Satellite TV:

Cable Subscribers – Cable companies are not required to switch their systems to digital. If your cable company makes the voluntary business decision to switch some or all of its channels to digital, it may notify you that you need to get “digital cable” equipment. This is not the same as a digital-to-analog converter box. Talk to your provider about equipment options that may be available to you.

Satellite TV Subscribers – If you do not get local broadcast stations through your satellite provider, you will need a digital-to-analog converter box to watch digital broadcasts on any analog TV in your home.



DTV Closed Captioning

- Closed captioning displays the audio portion of television programming as text on the TV screen
- FCC rules require that:
 - DTV receivers include closed captioning display capability
 - Digital-to-analog converter boxes pass through closed captions
- Converter box captioning capabilities
 - All converter boxes receive closed caption signals and can pass them through to your TV automatically
 - Some converter boxes will generate captions through the converter box itself, enabling viewers to change the way captions appear on the TV, such as caption size, font (style), caption color, background color, and opacity
- More information available at www.dtv.gov

For More Information

- Visit: www.dtv.gov
 - FAQs
 - Publications
 - DTV Outreach Toolkit
 - Glossary
 - Other reference materials and resources
- Call Toll Free
 - 1-888-CALL-FCC (Voice)
 - 1-888-TELL-FCC (TTY)
- E-mail: DTVinfo@fcc.gov

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THE DIGITAL TV TRANSITION

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On February 17, 2009 all full-power broadcast television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting on analog airwaves and begin broadcasting only in digital. Digital broadcasting will allow stations to offer improved picture and sound quality and additional channels. **Find out more about whether or not you will be impacted by the digital TV (DTV) transition.** [Go now.](#)

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• Converter Box Coupon Program
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Countdown to DTV Transition **309.14.09.03** February 17, 2009
DAYS HOURS MINUTES SECONDS DTV Transition Deadline

