

What You Need to Know About the Digital Television (DTV) Transition

What is the DTV Transition? Currently, free over-the-air television is broadcast in an analog format. However, at midnight on February 17, 2009, all full-power stations are required by law to cut off their analog signals and broadcast exclusively in digital format. If you are not prepared for the transition by that date, you will lose your signal.

Why is this happening? There are a few reasons why the decision was made to make all broadcasts digital.

1. It will open up airwaves for public safety, so that fire, police, and other emergency personnel can have more advanced communications.
2. It will also free up airwaves for more commercial wireless services.
3. Digital television is clearer than analog television, and should make for better viewing for those who receive signals over the air.

Do I need to take action to prepare for the DTV Transition? You will not need to take any action for televisions with a digital tuner or for those connected to any cable, telephone company, or satellite video service. If you have an analog television (one that needs "rabbit ears" or an antenna) you must take action before February 17, 2009, or your TV will not work. You can check your owner's manual to see if your television has an analog tuner. If it is labeled "analog" or "NTSC", but does not say that it contains a digital tuner, you will need a set top converter box in order for that television to work. Keep in mind: you do not need to purchase an HDTV set to receive DTV signals.

What can I do to prepare? If you do rely on an analog television, you have a few options:

1. You can subscribe to cable, satellite, or telephone company television services.
2. You can purchase a television with a digital tuner.
3. You can purchase a converter box for your analog television. Each household can receive up to two \$40 coupons from the government to cover the cost of a converter box.

How do I get a coupon for a converter box? You can apply for a coupon by filling out a form at the NTIA Coupon Program

website. Once the coupon is mailed to you, it is valid for 90 days and is non-replaceable. When you receive the coupon, you may redeem it for an approved set-top converter box at a number of participating retailers.

I still have some questions about the DTV Transition. Where can I find answers? Below are links to additional resources you may find helpful in preparing for the DTV Transition:

[The Federal Communications Commission DTV Information Site](#)

[The DTV Converter Box Program Website](#)

[The National Association of Broadcasters DTV Information Site](#)

[The DTV Transition Coalition Website](#)

[Information on How to Become a Resource on DTV Issues in Your Community](#)

[Philadelphia DTV Channel Assignments](#)

[Information on Discarding an Analog Television](#)