

Fast Facts about the Digital Transition and TV Converter Box Coupon Program



Why is the Digital Transition Happening?

On February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100% digital broadcasting, due to a Congressional mandate. This historic change from analog to digital broadcasting will free up portions of the nation's airwaves, known as spectrum, for use by emergency responders. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options for consumers. Some television channels will be turned over to police and fire departments for emergency communication and others will be auctioned to companies to provide new wireless services.

How Do Consumers Identify What They Need to Do to Be Ready for the Digital Switch on February 17, 2009?

- Consumers who use "rabbit ears" or a rooftop antenna connected to an analog television must take action before February 17, 2009, to continue receiving television broadcasts. Their options include:
 - 1) Buy a converter box that will plug into their current analog TV, or
 - 2) Buy a TV with a digital tuner, or
 - 3) Connect their analog TV to cable, satellite, or other pay service
- Cable and satellite subscribers should check with their providers before February 17, 2009, to see how they are handling the transition.
- Consumers not sure what to do should take a short quiz to help figure out their options at www.DTVTransition.org.

Basics about NTIA TV Converter Box Coupon Program

- The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), part of the Department of Commerce, is offering all U.S. households up to two, \$40 coupons to help pay for the cost of certified TV converter boxes.
- A TV converter box is a one-time purchase, with no monthly service charges, that will allow over-the-air analog TVs to work after February 17, 2009.
- Certified converter boxes are expected to cost between \$40 and \$70.
- Coupons are free, but supply is limited.
- Coupons expire 90 days after they are mailed and cannot be replaced or reissued.
- Coupons will be mailed to consumers by the Federal Government.
- Along with the coupon(s), consumers will also receive instructions for using a coupon, a list of coupon-eligible certified TV converter boxes, a list of retailers where they can use the coupon to buy a certified converter box and FAQs about using the coupon.

How to Request the Coupon

- Applications will be accepted through March 31, 2009.
- Consumers may apply for the converter box coupons by:
 - 1) **Phone:** 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009) - Operators available in English, Spanish, French, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Tagalog and Vietnamese
 - 2) **TTY:** 1-877-530-2634 (English), 1-866-495-1161 (Spanish)
 - 3) **Online:** www.DTV2009.gov
 - 4) **Mail:** PO Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208
 - 5) **Fax:** 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632)

Additional Resources

For more information, please check out these Web sites:

www.DTV2009.gov – NTIA's website for consumers

www.ntiadtv.gov – NTIA's website for retailers interested and participating in the TV Converter Box Coupon Program



www.DTVAnswers.com – The National Association of Broadcasters' Web site on the DTV transition that offers information about television's switch to digital, including resources to help choose an antenna, converter box details, videos, and more.

www.ceretailers.org - Consumer Electronics Retailers Coalition's Web site where you can download a special "Consumer Guide" on the DTV Transition.

www.dtv.gov – The Federal Communications Commission's Web site featuring DTV related consumer resources, outreach tools, publications, news, and more can be found here.

www.DTVTransition.org – The DTV Transition Coalition Web site where you can take an online quiz to find out if you are ready for the DTV transition or access an extensive list of online DTV resources.

www.digitaltips.org - A valuable resource provided by the Consumer Electronics Association, has a handy "Quick Start Guide" to install a TV Converter Box and other useful tools.