

# CONSUMER INFORMATION: DIGITAL TELEVISION (DTV) TRANSITION FEBRUARY 17, 2009

## What Is The Digital Television (DTV) Transition?

- The DTV transition is the switchover that local television broadcasters must make from analog broadcasting (the traditional method of transmitting television signals) to digital broadcasting of free television programming.

## When Is The DTV Transition?

- **The last day for almost all analog TV broadcasting in the United States will be February 17, 2009.** The federal government has mandated that major television stations broadcast their programming exclusively in a digital format beginning February 18, 2009.

## Why Is There A DTV Transition? There are several benefits to digital television over traditional analog television technology:

- **Better Public Safety:** Transmitting television signals in a digital format will free up parts of the airwaves to provide wireless spectrum for public safety communications, such as police, fire, and emergency rescue. This portion of the broadcast spectrum is particularly useful for public safety as the signals can easily penetrate walls.
- **Better Quality TV Pictures and Sound:** Using digital technology to broadcast television signals enables TV stations to provide dramatically clearer pictures and better sound quality.

## What Must TV Viewers Do to Prepare for the DTV Transition? (See chart of options on back)

- Nothing, unless an analog television is being used to receive television signals over-the-air using “rabbit ears” or an antenna in an attic or on a roof. If over-the-air television signals are being received on an analog television, purchase of a digital-to-analog converter box, or cable or satellite television service, will be necessary. Consumers may apply for up to two \$40 coupons (see below) from the federal government, which may be redeemed towards the purchase of a digital-to-analog converter box. Boxes labeled “Energy Star” meet strict energy efficiency guidelines.



## How Does The Coupon Program Work?

- **Up to Two Converter Box Coupons Per Household:** The federal government (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) will issue up to two converter box coupons valued at \$40 each to households to help defray the cost of the converter box. It is a “use it or lose it” program. The coupon will be mailed to each applicant and **must be used within 90 days**. The expiration date will appear on the coupon and there is no federal plan to reissue coupons if they are not used by the expiration date.
- **Program Phases:** There are two phases of the program. Phase I lasts until the total value of all coupons redeemed equals the initial \$990 million dollars that Congress has authorized for the program. In Phase II, an additional \$500 million will be available to provide coupons only to households that receive television signals exclusively through an over-the-air antenna.
- **Eligibility:** In Phase I, every household is eligible to receive two coupons. At present, assisted living facilities and group houses are not eligible households. Coupons may be redeemed to purchase converters for residents in these facilities, but these residents are not eligible to request coupons themselves. In Phase II, only households that receive television signals exclusively over-the-air will be eligible to receive coupons.
- **How To Apply For A Converter Coupon:**

Online: <https://www.dtv2009.gov/ApplyCoupon.aspx>

Telephone: 1-888-DTV-2009 (24hr hotline)

TTY: 1-877-530-2634 (English)  
1-866-495-1162 (Spanish)



Mail applications to: TV Converter Box Coupon Program  
PO Box 2000  
Portland, OR 97208

## Where Can Old Analog Televisions Be Recycled If New Televisions Are Purchased?

- View the County web site for recycling information: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/recycling/mat-comp.htm>



Fairfax County Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection  
Communications Policy and Regulation Division  
703-324-5902, TTY 711

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable> or e-mail [wwwcprd@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:wwwcprd@fairfaxcounty.gov)

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION FEBRUARY 17, 2009

How Are TV Signals Being Received?	What Type of TV Set Will Be Viewed on February 17, 2009?	Must Anything Be Done?	What Must Be Done to Keep TV Signals Viewable?
<p><b>Over-The-Air</b> (Using a "rabbit ears" antenna or an antenna on the roof or in the attic)</p>  	<p>Analog Traditional Television with a built-in analog tuner.</p>  <p>To learn whether a television set has an analog or digital tuner, visit: <a href="http://www.dtv.gov/consumercorner.html#faq8">http://www.dtv.gov/consumercorner.html#faq8</a></p>	Yes	<p>Buy a digital-to-analog converter box. Every household may request up to two \$40 coupons from the federal government to redeem towards the purchase of a converter box (see front). Coupons must be redeemed within 90 days after they are issued.</p>  
	<p>Digital High Definition Television (HDTV) or Digital Standard Definition Television (SDTV) with a built-in digital tuner.</p> 	No	Nothing. The television is ready for the DTV transition.
<p><b>Cable Service</b></p> 	<p>Analog Traditional Television and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No set top box is used (cable plugs directly into television); or</li> <li>2. Analog or digital set top box or digital adapter is used; or</li> <li>3. CableCARD or tru2way device is used.</li> </ol> 	No	<p>Nothing. The television is ready for the DTV transition. (Note: If the cable provider operates a mixed analog/digital cable system, subscribers may continue to view broadcast channels without using a set top box. If a cable provider operates an all-digital system, a set top box, digital adapter, CableCARD, or tru2way device will be required to view digital signals on an analog television.)</p>
	<p>Digital High Definition Television (HDTV) or Digital Standard Definition Television (SDTV) or digital "monitor" without a built-in tuner and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No set top box is used (cable plugs directly into television); or</li> <li>2. Digital set top box is used; or</li> <li>3. CableCARD or tru2way device is used.</li> </ol> 	No	Nothing. The television or monitor is ready for the DTV transition.
<p><b>Satellite Service</b></p> 	<p>Analog Traditional Television.</p> 	Maybe	<p>If local broadcast channels are purchased as part of the satellite subscription service, no action is needed. If, however, local broadcast channels are received over-the-air using an antenna, then a digital-to-analog converter box must be purchased.</p>
	<p>Digital High Definition Television (HDTV) or Digital Standard Definition Television (SDTV) or digital "monitor" without a built-in tuner.</p> 	No	Nothing. The television or monitor is ready for the DTV transition.



Fairfax County Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection  
Communications Policy and Regulation Division

703-324-5902 TTY 711

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cable>

To request information in an alternate format please call 703-324-5902 or e-mail [wwwcprd@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:wwwcprd@fairfaxcounty.gov)

