

What is the Digital Transition?

At midnight on February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100% digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders.

Why is this happening?

Broadcasters are transitioning to digital to provide important benefits to consumers. Because digital broadcasting is more efficient, broadcasters require less of the airwaves to provide a better television viewing experience. Once the DTV transition is completed, some television channels will be turned over to fire and police departments for emergency communication and others will be auctioned to companies to provide new wireless services.

Will my analog TV work after this date?

Analog television sets receiving free TV using an antenna will not work after February 17, 2009. Television viewers with these sets that are not connected to a pay TV service will need to take action before February 17, 2009, to ensure their TV sets continue to work.

Will I have to buy a new TV?

No. You will not need to get rid of your analog TV after February 17, 2009. If you receive your TV programs for free using an antenna—that is, your TV set is not connected to cable, satellite, or other pay TV service—you can purchase a TV converter box and plug it into your existing TV set to continue to receive TV programs after February 17, 2009.

If you currently use an antenna to receive your over-the-air programming, you will still need it after you install a converter box.

What is a TV converter box?

A TV converter box is a new product available in early 2008 that plugs into your analog TV and, along with your antenna, will keep your analog set working after February 17, 2009. A TV converter box is a one-time purchase and is expected to cost between \$50 and \$70. A TV connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV service does not require a TV converter box from this program.

Converter boxes plug into TV sets, either in the back or front, depending on your TV. You will still need your antenna, which works with the TV converter box. Each TV converter box will come with installation instructions from the manufacturer. You should be able to install the converter box using the instructions provided by the manufacturer.

How do I know if I need a TV converter box?

What you need to know is whether your TV set has something called a “digital tuner” already built in. If it does, your TV set will work after February 17, 2009. The best way to determine whether your TV set has a digital tuner built in is to consult your owner’s manual. If that’s not possible, you may be able to look up information about your TV set on the manufacturer’s website. Or, you can take an up-close look at your TV set. In any case, you’re trying to find out if your set has an input connection labeled “digital input” or “ATSC” (for Advanced Television Systems Committee, which is the DTV format). TVs connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV service will not require a TV converter box from this program.

Can I still use my DVD, VHS and other devices?

The analog equipment you currently use will continue to work with (output to) your analog TV set just as before, but they will not be able to receive over-the-air programming without the TV converter box.

How much will a TV converter box cost?

When TV converter boxes are available, retail stores will set the price. TV converter boxes are expected to cost between \$50 and \$70. The Federal Government permits each U.S. household up to two \$40 coupons to help pay for the cost of the converter box. After applying the coupon, participating retailers will charge consumers the remaining balance of between \$10 and \$30.

Is there financial help if I want to buy a TV converter box?

Consumers can apply for up to two \$40 coupons per household and the coupons will be mailed to requesters.

Between January 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009, you can request a coupon while supplies last in one of four ways:

- Apply online <https://www.dtv2009.gov>
- Call the Coupon Program 24-hour hotline 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009), TTY 1-877-530-2634
- Mail a coupon application to: PO BOX 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000. Download a Coupon Application here <https://www.dtv2009.gov>.
- Fax a coupon application to 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632)

Where can I use the coupon?

When the coupon is mailed to you, it will include an insert with a list of nearby participating retailers. You can expect to buy TV converter boxes and use your coupons at retail stores where you would normally buy consumer electronics products.

When will I receive the coupons?

Consumers who apply at the beginning of 2008 will receive their coupons when TV converter boxes are expected to be available in retail stores, probably in late February or early March.

When can I use the coupon?

TV converter boxes are expected to be available in early 2008.

What if I lose my coupons?

Coupons cannot be reissued. If you have requested one coupon, you may be eligible to receive another. If both coupons have been lost or stolen, or you have requested both coupons, used one, and the other coupon is lost or stolen, by law we are unable to reissue coupon replacements. Only one coupon can be used per coupon-eligible converter box.

What if my coupon expires?

If a consumer requests only one coupon and it expires before it is used, then they can apply for a second coupon. Once two coupons have been issued to that household, the consumer will no longer be eligible to request any more coupons. Coupons expire 90 days after they are mailed.

How many TV converter boxes may I buy?

Consumers may purchase as many converter boxes as they choose. However, a single coupon can only be used to purchase one coupon-eligible converter box. If the consumer decides to purchase additional converter boxes, they must pay the full cost.

If I don't want to buy a TV converter box, what are my other choices?

- Connect to cable, satellite or other pay service, or
- Purchase a television with a digital tuner.

TVs connected to cable, satellite, or other pay services do not require a TV converter box from this program to receive programs after February 17, 2009. Check with your cable or satellite provider to determine how they will support your analog set after February 17, 2009.

When will Digital Television programming be available?

Consumers can begin enjoying the benefits of digital television today. Because most full-power stations are currently broadcasting both in digital and analog, viewers can plug in their converter boxes and generally receive a clearer picture and "multicast" channels, where they are available.