

Television: The June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009) transition to digital signal and what it means for television owners

What is the digital TV (DTV) transition and why are we switching?

The switch from analog to digital broadcast television is referred to as the digital TV (DTV) transition. The U.S. congress mandated, after June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009), that full-power television stations will broadcast in digital only. Digital broadcasting allows stations to offer improved picture and sound quality and digital is much more efficient than analog. All-digital broadcasting will free up parts of the broadcast spectrum for public safety communications (such as police, fire departments, and rescue squads) and for more advanced wireless services (such as wireless broadband). For more information, see www.dtv.gov.

What do I need to do to be ready for the end of analog TV broadcasting?

If you are currently subscribing to cable TV or using a satellite dish, your television will work fine after the DTV conversion so you do not need to do anything. If you have one or more televisions that receive free over-the-air television programming using a roof-top antenna or “rabbit ears” on the TV, the type of TV you own is very important. A digital television (a TV with an internal digital tuner) will allow you to continue to watch free over-the-air programming after June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009). However, if you have an analog television, you will need a digital-to-analog converter box to continue to watch broadcast television on that set. This converter box will also enable you to see any additional programming that your local stations are offering. For more information on how to tell if your existing TV is digital-ready or analog, see www.dtv.gov/consumercorner.html#faq1.

To help consumers with the DTV transition, the federal government established the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), a part of the Department of Commerce, administers this program. Every U.S. household is eligible to receive up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, toward the purchase of eligible digital-to-analog converter boxes which are estimated by manufacturers to cost about \$50 by 2009. For more information, visit the NTIA's website at www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon, or call 1-888-388-2009 (voice) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY).

If your TV tuner is:	And you get your television programming from:	Action required by June 12, 2009:
Analog	Over-the-air (antenna)	Purchase a converter box*
Analog	Cable or satellite	None, provider will address for you
Digital	Over-the-air (antenna)	None, your TV will work fine
Digital	Cable or satellite	None, provider will address for you

* Purchase a Digital-to-Analog converter box, see www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon/index.html for more info

Remember:

Starting **January 1, 2008**, all U.S. households will be eligible to request up to two \$40 coupons to be used toward the purchase of one or two digital-to-analog converter boxes. Visit: www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon/index.html

Older television sets relying on antenna's rather than cable or satellite signals will no longer function after **June 12, 2008** (previously February 17, 2009). Be sure to manage your used televisions properly – [click here](#) for information on recycling .

If I have an older television, will I have to recycle it after June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009)?

If you watched television on a set connected to cable or satellite TV before the conversion on June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009), it will continue to work after the conversion. So, you will not have to recycle that TV. If you watched television on a set connected to a roof-top antenna or set-top “rabbit ears” on the TV before the conversion on June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009), it will not work after the conversion unless you get a digital-to-analog converter box (or unless it is digital-ready). So, you will have to recycle that TV unless you get the converter box or the TV is digital-ready. If your TV worked with gaming consoles, VCRs, DVD players and similar products before the conversion on June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009), it will work with these devices after the conversion. You will not have to recycle that TV.

How many televisions will become unusable as a result of the digital conversion?

With the digital conversion, there may be a wave of unwanted televisions coming as people purchase new televisions and recycle analog sets that are no longer usable (without a converter box). Some electronics recyclers estimate that 1 in 4 households will discard at least one television as a result of the digital conversion. With an officially estimated population of 18,680,000 and 7,425,000 households, Florida could see 1,850,000 televisions (approximately 1 television for every 10 Floridians) recycled in the next year or so. The timing of this wave is uncertain. Will it come gradually or all at once? Will more sets be recycled as the June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009) signal conversion date gets closer? The quantities of unusable televisions may vary depending on how many people choose to purchase converters instead of new televisions, how many people choose to store unusable sets instead of recycling, and how available convenient and low/no cost recycling programs are.

Where can I recycle my television?

Florida has many places where you can recycle your television. To find the location nearest you, click on your county on the map [link to DEP interactive map on the web]. Earth 911 also has information on television recycling. Go to www.earth911.org. At the top of the page under “Find a Recycling Center,” select “Television” for the first box “What?” [click “more” under the box to get to “Television”] and type your zipcode or city and state in the second box “Where?” You can also call Earth 911 at 1-800-CLEANUP and find locations nearest your zipcode. Several television manufacturers and retailers also provide recycling programs. Some of these are free and others charge you fees that cover some of the costs. See <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/recycle/ecycling/donate.htm#mftr> [links to some manufacturer/retail electronics recycling programs, not just for televisions].

How can I ask my television manufacturer to provide me with a recycling program or reduce the costs of their existing recycling program?

If your television manufacturer does not have a recycling program that you can use or if you would like to ask your television manufacturer to start a recycling program or reduce the costs of their existing recycling program, see www.takebackmytv.com, a website provided by an environmental advocacy group.

Why should I recycle my television instead of throwing it away?

By recycling your television instead of throwing it away you can save resources and prevent environmental problems. Televisions contain valuable materials like gold, palladium, platinum, lead, copper, steel, plastic and glass that can be recovered and reused. Besides saving valuable resources, this reduces pollution and climate change impacts that can be caused by mining or manufacturing new materials. Some of these materials, like lead (in circuit boards and glass) and flame retardants (in or on plastic housings) are toxic if they enter our environment because of improper disposal.

Where can I get more information?

www.dtvfacts.com/digital-tv-converter-box/ - A guide to what converter boxes are, what are the different kinds, etc.

www.aoa.gov/PRESS/news/2007/NTIA_Consumer_Factsheet.pdf - US Health Department Administration on Aging fact sheet focusing on NTIA Converter Box Coupon program and how to access it. General information about the digital conversion at the end, with pointers to information sites like www.dtv.gov, NTIA and some others with useful practical information like what different converter boxes are available and from whom.

<http://www.dtv.gov/consumercorner.html> - How you can tell if your television is digital-ready or analog and whether or not it will work after the digital conversion on June 12, 2009 (previously February 17, 2009).

www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon - National Telecommunications and Information Administration's site where a television owner can get up to 2 \$40 coupons towards the purchase of a digital-to-analog converter box.

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