



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**  
**NEWS** WASHINGTON, DC 20230

National  
Telecommunications &  
Information  
Administration

## ***Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)***

### **Digital Television Transition**

#### ***What is Digital Television (DTV) and why are television broadcasters transitioning to DTV?***

Digital television (DTV) is revolutionizing the television marketplace, offering improved service quality, greater service innovation, and new capabilities not currently available from the analog broadcast television service. DTV will allow broadcasters to offer viewers better image and sound quality and also more programming choices.

There are other benefits to the nation as well. The DTV service is designed to use radio spectrum more efficiently than the analog service. Therefore, upon completion of the DTV transition, the Federal Government will reclaim and reassign analog broadcast television spectrum to other important uses, including public safety and advanced wireless services.

#### ***When will the DTV transition be completed?***

Broadcasters are already using digital channels to offer DTV programming in their local markets all over the United States. On February 17, 2009, full power television stations will stop analog broadcasting and return their analog channels so those channels can be put to other uses.

#### ***Will consumers need new equipment to watch broadcast television when the transition is complete?***

When the DTV transition is complete, broadcast television viewers, those who do not subscribe to cable or satellite, will need either a television set capable of receiving DTV programming, or a digital-to-analog converter box. Cable and satellite subscribers may also need additional equipment to view digital programming. For more information, see [www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/digitaltv.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/digitaltv.html)

### **Converter Box Program**

#### ***What is a digital-to-analog converter box and how do I get one?***

Digital-to-analog converter boxes will make DTV signals viewable on analog TV sets. These converter boxes will be available in retail stores during the transition. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce has been directed by Congress to set up a program that will allow households to obtain coupons that can be applied toward the purchase of digital-to-analog converter boxes.

***How do I obtain and redeem converter box coupons?***

Between January 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009, eligible households can request up to two coupons, each valued at \$40. All coupons will be sent to requesting households via the United States Postal Service. Recipients must redeem the coupons within 3 months of issuance, but may not combine their two coupons toward the purchase of a single converter box and may not use them for other products.

***Can you provide more details about the converter box coupon program?***

The specific rules addressing the coupon program will be made public in early 2007. As you can imagine, there are many program implementation details to consider.

In 2006, NTIA issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that sought the public's suggestions on various details of the program's operations, including issues related to these questions. NTIA will provide more detailed program information for the digital-to-analog converter box assistance program on our website, [www.ntia.doc.gov](http://www.ntia.doc.gov).

**See also:**

- **Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Digital Television** information for consumers.  
<http://www.dtv.gov/>
- The **Consumer Electronics Association** press release about the digital television transition.  
[http://www.ce.org/Press/CurrentNews/press\\_release\\_detail.asp?id=11192](http://www.ce.org/Press/CurrentNews/press_release_detail.asp?id=11192)
- The **National Association of Broadcaster's** webpage offers information about the broadcaster's efforts to provide digital broadcasting.  
[http://www.nab.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Digital\\_Broadcasting](http://www.nab.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Digital_Broadcasting)