



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

**National  
Telecommunications &  
Information  
Administration**

## **Commerce's NTIA Announces More Than 150 Converters Certified**

**More than 6.3 Million Converters Sold Using TV Converter Box Coupons;  
September Deadlines for Manufacturers Established**

*For Immediate Release: July 24, 2008*

*Contact: Bart Forbes, (202) 482-7002 or [press@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:press@ntia.doc.gov)*

WASHINGTON— The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced today that the TV Converter Box Coupon Program has certified more than 150 converter boxes, including 63 that enable viewers to watch both analog broadcasts from low-power television stations and digital programs from full-power television stations. To date, more than 6.3 million converters have been purchased using a \$40 coupon from the Program.

"Congratulations and thank you to the NTIA and FCC team for its hard work in helping to lead America into the digital age and in ensuring the next generation of American competitiveness," said Acting Assistant Secretary and Acting NTIA Administrator Meredith Baker. "The fact that more than 150 converters have been certified within 16 months indicates a truly remarkable partnership with so many electronics manufacturers, who have voluntarily met the standards of the converter box program. On behalf of the American people, I thank the manufacturers for stepping up to the challenge to design boxes in a short time, and I thank the retailers who so quickly made these products available to help the nation switch to digital television."

Before the Coupon Program, inexpensive, simple digital-to-analog converters were not available. In March 2007, NTIA issued technical requirements for converter manufacturers to ensure that the core television functions would work well, and announced that the FCC Laboratory would test samples before these converters would be eligible for the TV Converter Box Coupon Program.

Only 16 months later, the FCC completed tests on the 100th converter submitted for review. The FCC has run more than 32,000 individual tests on the converters submitted by manufacturers. The testing program has resulted in more than 80 design improvements to software or hardware in more than 50 converter boxes.

Manufacturers may resubmit converters once improvements or corrections have been made. NTIA permits manufacturers to list a certified converter under more than one brand and model if no material changes are made, so the lists of coupon-eligible converter boxes contain more models than those tested by the FCC. Of the converters tested by the FCC, 81 models passed the FCC tests.

Of the certified coupon-eligible converter boxes, 46 are currently available in stores, as listed on the NTIA Web site at [https://www.ntiadtv.gov/cecb\\_list.cfm](https://www.ntiadtv.gov/cecb_list.cfm). NTIA urges consumers to shop around and to call ahead to make sure converters are in stock when they plan to purchase a converter. A list of all

participating retailers, searchable by state and five-digit ZIP code, can found on the [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov) Web site under "Locate a Retailer Near You."

In addition, a Notice in the Federal Register will be published today to inform manufacturers that:

- First-time manufacturers have until September 1, 2008, to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) for any digital-to-analog converter boxes they wish to submit for review and certification. Notices are to be submitted at least three months prior to submission of the manufacturer's test report and samples. NTIA is establishing a cutoff date for Notices to ensure that there is enough time to complete the certification process for converters before the conclusion of the Coupon Program.
- Repeat manufacturers will have until September 30, 2008, to submit Notices for any additional digital-to-analog converters for review and certification. All manufacturers with pending Notices as of July 18, 2008, are requested to submit complete test results for each model no later than September 30, 2008.
- There are currently pending with NTIA almost 100 Notices that indicate a manufacturer's intention to submit test results. Some of these notices were submitted many months ago.
- In early October, NTIA will close the file associated with any Notice, which has not been followed by submission of test results by September 30, 2008. More information for manufacturers is available on NTIA's web page, <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon>, under the link for Manufacturers.

To read the Notice, go to [www.ntia.doc.gov](http://www.ntia.doc.gov).

NTIA is responsible for the development of the domestic and international telecommunications policy of the Executive Branch.

### **Background:**

The Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 requires full-power television stations to cease analog broadcasts and switch to digital broadcasts after February 17, 2009. The Act also directed Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to establish and administer the \$1.5 billion TV Converter Box Coupon Program, which is funded by the \$19 billion airwaves auction and not tax dollars.

The digital TV transition will offer consumers a clearer picture, more programming choices and free up the airwaves for better communications among emergency first responders and new telecommunications services.

By February 17, 2009, consumers need to look at each analog television set in their home that is not connected to cable, satellite, or other pay television service and make a decision:

- They may connect it to cable, satellite, or pay television service;
- They may replace it with a TV with a digital tuner, or
- They may keep it working with a TV converter box.

Some viewers watch programs by translators or other low-power stations which may continue broadcasting analog signals after February 17, 2009. Those viewers may wish to select a converter box that will pass through analog signals.

Households may request one or two coupons, which are worth \$40 each and can be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes. Between now and March 31, 2009, households may request two coupons while funding is available in one of four ways:

- Apply online at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov)
- Call the Coupon Program 24-hour hotline 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009). Deaf or hard of hearing callers may dial 1-877-530-2634 (English/TTY) or 1-866-495-1161 (Spanish/TTY). TTY Service is available from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Eastern Time Monday through Friday.
- Mail a coupon application to: P.O. Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000
- Fax a coupon application to 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632)

To learn more about the TV Converter Box Coupon Program, eligible converters and participating retailers, go to [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov).

NTIA is responsible for the development of the domestic and international telecommunications policy of the Executive Branch.

###