

DIGITAL TV NOW

A publication of the Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters and its member television stations

Got questions about DTV? Call 1-888-CALL-FCC toll-free!

To request a \$40 government coupon for a digital-to-analog converter box:

Call 1-888-DTV-2009

Or visit
www.DTV2009.gov

Or apply by mail:
PO Box 2000
Portland, OR 97208

The federal government is offering up to two coupons per household to help pay the cost of certified converter boxes. Each coupon may be applied to the purchase of one converter box. The coupons are good for 90 days. It may take two to four weeks for your coupon request to be processed. Don't delay, order yours today!

Helpful websites

www.DTV.gov
www.DTVanswers.com
www.antennaweb.org
www.tvfool.com
www.LPTVanswers.com
Don't have internet access?
Your local public library does!

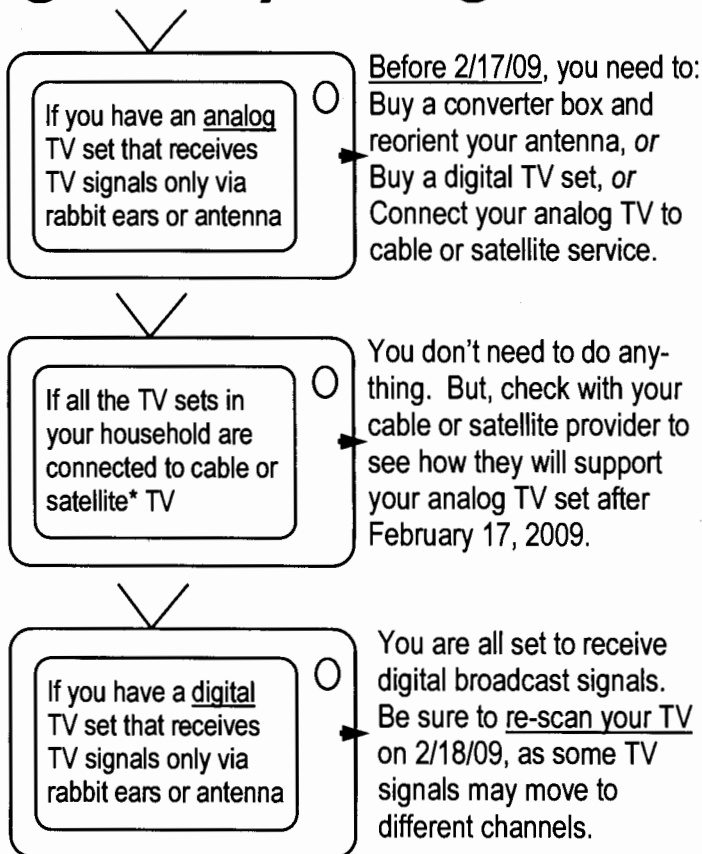
How do you get ready for digital TV?

On February 17, 2009, full-power TV stations in Pennsylvania and across the U.S. will turn off their analog transmitters and will transmit digital signals exclusively from that point on.

Most of the TV stations in Pennsylvania are already broadcasting digital signals. So you don't need to wait until February to enjoy the benefits of free over-the-air digital TV.

If you have an older analog TV set, and you get your TV signals over-the-air via a rooftop antenna or rabbit ears, you will need to take a few simple steps in order to receive digital TV signals. This publication will help you.

Don't wait until next February. You can start watching digital TV now in most areas of PA.



DON'T WAIT! BE PREPARED FOR THE DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION ON FEBRUARY 17, 2009!

How do you tell if you have an analog TV set?

If your TV set is more than a couple of years old, chances are it's an analog TV. Federal rules specify that as of March 1, 2007, all TVs sold in the U.S. must include digital tuners. Retailers may continue to

sell analog-only TVs from existing inventory. (The federal government requires retailers to put "Consumer Alert" stickers on all analog-only TV sets.) Check the owner's manual for your TV set. If it's digital, the manual

should mention "digital tuner" or "digital receiver." Words like "digital monitor" or "digital ready" are no guarantee that your TV set can receive digital signals without a digital-to-analog converter box.

How do you hook up your converter box?

Fast DTV Fact: Digital TV allows TV stations to send more than one program signal at a time. These "multiplex" signals are indicated by a decimal point and an additional number. For instance, if the "main" channel is 42, the multiplex channels will be designated as 42.1, 42.2, etc.

With the converter box, you will find an instruction manual, some cables, and a remote control. Begin by placing the converter box near or on top of your TV set.

- 1) Disconnect the antenna.
- 2) Connect the antenna to the "antenna in" jack on the back of the converter box.
- 3) Use the supplied coaxial cable to connect the "To TV" jack on the converter to the antenna post on the back of the TV.
- 4) Plug in the converter box



power cable. Install batteries in the remote control.

- 5) Scan for channels: Turn on your TV and tune it to channel 3. Aim the remote at the converter and press the "power" button. The box will either prompt you to scan for local channels, or it will begin scanning automatically. This could take several minutes but will only happen once*. When the scan process is completed, your converter box now becomes your "channel changer."

Leave your TV set on channel 3, and use the remote control to change channels on the box. If your antenna connects to your TV through a thin, flat wire hooked to a pair of screw terminals, you may need an inexpensive antenna adapter, available at a local electronics store. You may want to replace the flat wire with coaxial cable, which does a better job of carrying TV signals from your antenna to your converter box.



***IMPORTANT:** You will need to **re-scan your digital TV or converter box** on February 18, 2009, as some PA TV stations will be changing channel positions after they turn off their analog transmitters on 2/17/09.

Where do you aim your antenna?

Pointing your antenna in the right direction becomes very important in the digital world. An improperly aimed antenna might give you "ghosty" or snowy analog signals, but may result in no digital signal at all. A digital TV signal generally is either crystal-clear or nonexistent.

There are a couple of websites that can help you select the right antenna for your location and make sure it's aimed properly. They are www.antennaweb.org and www.tvfool.com. (If you don't have internet access, the folks at your local public library can help you get this information.)

Small adjustments to your antenna can make a big difference in the number of digital channels you can receive. If you have an indoor antenna, try elevating it and moving it closer to an exterior wall of your home. After adjusting your antenna, perform another channel scan to

see if your reception is improved.

TV stations broadcasting in digital use both the VHF band (channels 2-13) and UHF band (channels 14-51). Many indoor antennas use "rabbit ears" for the VHF band and a "loop" or "bow-tie" for the UHF band. Make sure you are using an antenna that covers both the VHF and UHF bands and that you have connected it properly.

If you have a rooftop antenna, make sure it is mounted outside, if possible. If it is in the attic or under the rafters of your garage, it can be subject to interference from nails, aluminum siding, metal trusses, and the like. The most unobstructed path from the TV transmitter to your antenna will result in the best signal quality. Likewise, the shortest run of wire from the antenna to your TV set

will give the best results.

"Splitters" that connect an antenna to more than one TV may reduce the amount of signal available to each set. Try hooking your antenna directly to one TV set. An "active" splitter may resolve this problem.

Depending on your location, you may find that you need an antenna rotor. This will make it easier to turn your antenna in the correct direction to receive signals from various TV stations' transmitter locations. It may make sense to manually add the channel numbers of your local TV stations into your converter box, since turning an antenna and then auto-scanning for channels may cause your converter box to "lose" the channels it found when your antenna was pointed in the previous direction.

In the world of digital TV, aiming your antenna correctly becomes very important.

What else do you need to know?

- The strength of a digital signal depends on terrain, distance from the transmitters, and the reception strength of your antenna. TV signals generally travel only about 50 miles or so. If you are on the fringe of the reception area, or on the "wrong side of the hill," and you're having trouble receiving digital signals, you may need a stronger antenna or an antenna amplifier.

- Conversely, if you are near a station's broadcast tower, reception of that station, as well as other stations, can be blocked by signal "overload." Consider using an "attenuator" or removing amplifiers to improve your reception.

- Simple indoor antennas provide minimal performance that may not be suitable for your location. If you can't get good reception with your current indoor antenna, you may want to try an indoor antenna that includes features for better reception of UHF signals and/or an amplifier to boost the received signal (often referred to as an active indoor antenna).

- Generally, an outdoor antenna will get better reception than an indoor antenna. However, the performance of outdoor antennas can degrade over time due to exposure

to the weather. If you are having problems, check for loose or corroded wiring or broken antenna elements, and make sure the antenna is pointed in the right direction. You may want to install an antenna rotor to pick up TV signals coming from various directions.

- Until February 17, 2009, some TV stations will be operating their

digital transmitters at reduced power levels. If you are not receiving certain digital TV stations, this does not necessarily mean there is a problem with your antenna, digital-to-analog converter box, or digital TV set.

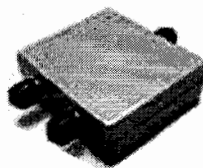
Be sure to re-scan your digital TV or your digital-to-analog converter box on February 18, 2009, as some TV stations will be moving their digital signals from their transitional channels back to their "old" analog channel positions on 2/17/09.

Recycle your old TV!

Pennsylvania prohibits the landfilling of TV sets, computer monitors and the like. If you buy a new digital TV, you can still use your old analog TV set with videotape and DVD players, video game consoles, or other devices. Check with your township office or local recycling center about recycling options.

What about low-power TV stations and translators?

Low-power TV stations, and translators (which repeat a signal from a "main" transmitter), are not required to "go digital" as of Feb. 17, 2009. Thus, they may continue to broadcast analog signals after the 2/17/09 transition date.



Antenna splitter

If you have an analog TV set and watch a low-power station or translator, be sure to buy a digital-to-analog converter box that offers "pass-through" capability. These will pass both the analog and digital signals. If you order a converter-box coupon (see

page 1), it should come with a list of "pass-through" boxes.

Some digital TV sets have two antenna terminals, analog and digital. A "splitter" can connect your antenna to both terminals to deliver both kinds of signals to your TV set.