

Frequently Asked Questions

What is DTV?

For the past 50 years, US television stations (ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX & CW) have broadcast their signal in an analog format. Analog signals vary continuously, creating fluctuations in color and brightness. Digital Television (DTV) is an advanced broadcasting technology that enables broadcasters to offer television with better picture and sound quality. Currently, all US television stations broadcast both ANALOG and DIGITAL signals. After February 17, 2009 TV stations will broadcast in digital only.

How will the digital TV (DTV) transition affect me?

If you are a Directv or Dishnetwork customer you will not be affected by the DTV transition. Only analog TV sets receiving signal from an off-air antenna or rabbit ears, without a converter box, will be affected.

Do I have to wait until after February 17, 2009 to watch DTV?

No, digital television is available now. Virtually all of the Dallas/Ft Worth broadcast stations are now transmitting both analog and digital signals.

If I have an older analog television, will I have to throw it away after February 17, 2009?

No. Directv and Dishnetwork customers will be able to use their current analog television to receive programming.

How can I be sure that I am buying a digital TV (DTV)?

By law, beginning March 1, 2007, all television reception devices (including TVs, VCRs, DVRs, etc.) imported into the U.S. or shipped in interstate commerce must contain a digital tuner. Retailers may continue to sell analog-only devices from existing inventory, but must prominently display on or near the analog-only device a Consumer Alert label advising them that a converter box will be required after February 17, 2009.

What about my VCR, DVD player, camcorder, and gaming console? Will I be able to use them with a digital television set?

Yes. Digital television sets are “backward compatible,” meaning existing analog equipment (VCRs, DVD players, camcorders, video games, etc.) will work on digital TV sets. However, their video will only be displayed in the maximum resolution that is available with each analog product. Manufacturers are producing a number of different connectors to hook equipment together and improve picture and sound quality when DTVs are used with existing analog equipment.

Is DTV the same as HDTV?

No. "Digital" and high definition programming on satellite are not the same. HDTV is the highest quality of DTV, but is only one of several formats. If you want to watch HDTV programming from satellite, you need a HD satellite receiver, a HD television or monitor, and subscribe to a HDTV package. Video City offers HD Upgrade programs, call for details.

What is the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box and do I need one?

Congress mandated the last day for network television stations (ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX & CW) to broadcast in analog to be February 17, 2009. At that time, over-the-air TV broadcasts will only be in digital form. If you have one or more televisions that receive free over-the-air television programming (with 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 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. Satellite customer do not need this convertor box.

What is this Converter Box Coupon Program I've heard about?

To help consumers with the DTV transition, the 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. You will be able to request the coupons beginning in January of 2008. The coupons may only be used for eligible converter boxes sold at participating consumer electronic retailers, and the coupons must be used at the time of purchase. Manufacturers estimate that digital-to-analog converter boxes will sell from \$50 to \$70 each. This is a one-time cost. For more information on the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program, visit the NTIA's web site at www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon, or call 1-888-388-2009 (voice) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY).

Will the February 17, 2009 date for the end of full-power analog television broadcasting be pushed back?

Federal law mandates that February 17, 2009 is the last day for full-power analog television broadcasting. Government agencies, industry, public interest groups, and other interested organizations are working hard to make sure that the deadline is met and that everyone is prepared for the end of full-power analog television broadcasting.