

# Get ready for the switch to digital television (DTV)



**D**TVAnswers.com

An initiative of the National Association of Broadcasters



## Broadcast TV is going all digital soon. Are you ready?

By law, television stations nationwide must begin broadcasting exclusively in a digital format after **June 12, 2009**.\* Digital television, or DTV, is an innovative technology that delivers crystal-clear pictures and sound, more channels and even free high definition television (HDTV) to consumers with HD television sets.

While the benefits of DTV are remarkable, millions of households that watch broadcast TV using antennas risk losing reception unless they upgrade their sets to receive a digital signal. Read on for more information about how you can prepare for the switch to DTV.

\*Some stations will switch prior to this date. Low-power and Class A TV stations are exempt.









## What is Digital Television (DTV)?

**Digital television (DTV) is an innovative type of over-the-air broadcasting technology** that enables TV stations to provide dramatically clearer pictures, better sound quality and more programming choices than ever before. DTV technology allows stations to provide multiple channels of programming, called multicasting, and makes high definition broadcasting possible for viewers with HD sets. It can also be used to deliver future interactive video and data services such as significantly enhanced closed captioning.



## When is the switch to DTV?

**Congress extended the deadline for the DTV transition to June 12, 2009.** After that date, all full-power television stations must broadcast only in digital.

## Why is America switching to DTV?

**DTV is a more efficient way to broadcast**, and it will free up the airwaves for a variety of new services. DTV also provides crystal-clear pictures and sound, more channels and even free, over-the-air high definition television (HDTV) for consumers with HD television sets. DTV will also allow more services than ever before with free, broadcast television.





## Who will be affected?

**Consumers who watch free broadcast television using antennas** on TV sets with built-in analog (NTSC) tuners – and don't subscribe to cable, satellite or other pay TV service – will be affected by the transition. Viewers who pay for TV services, such as cable or satellite, should not be affected or need to upgrade.

About 70 million analog TV sets and at least 19.6 million households that receive free broadcast television are at risk of losing their signals after June 12, 2009, if consumers do not take the steps to upgrade their sets.





## How do I upgrade to DTV?

**You can upgrade to DTV by following one of three steps by June 12, 2009:**

**1. DTV converter box:** Purchase a DTV converter box that plugs into your existing analog TV set to continue receiving free television reception. Each box costs between \$40-70 and can be purchased at retailers nationwide. The federal government is providing \$40 coupons that you may use toward the purchase of these boxes. (See next page for details.)

**2. Digital TV set:** Purchase a new television set with a built-in digital (ATSC) tuner. All TV sets with a digital tuner can receive digital signals broadcast by television stations, so you can continue to receive free programming with no monthly fees.

**3. Pay TV service:** Subscribe to cable, satellite or other pay TV service to continue using your analog TV set, but make sure that provider carries all the local stations you want.

When installing a converter box or digital TV set, you'll need to scan for channels to receive the digital stations broadcasting in your area. You'll also need to rescan from time to time as new DTV channels become available, as well as after June 12, when stations complete their transition to DTV.



## What is a DTV converter box?

**A DTV converter box is an electronic device that hooks up to your analog television set and antenna.** The box converts the digital television signal into analog, making it viewable on your analog TV. Converter boxes cost between \$40-70.

## When can I apply for a coupon for a DTV converter box?

**The federal government is providing coupons for DTV converter boxes** to help offset the cost of upgrading to digital. Each household may apply for up to two \$40 coupons, which must be redeemed within 90 days. To apply for a coupon, call **1 (888) DTV-2009** or **1 (877) 530-2634 (TTY)**, visit **[www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov)** or mail completed coupon applications to P.O. Box 2000, Portland, Ore. 97208.





## Can I keep my analog TV set?

**Yes, you may continue using your analog set after the DTV transition** by choosing one of these options to make the switch:

- 1. Purchase a DTV converter box**, which converts digital signals into the analog format for older analog TV sets.  
(See previous page for more on converter boxes.)
- 2. Subscribe to cable, satellite or other pay TV service** to receive digital signals.

## Can I recycle my TV?

**Yes.** If you want to get rid of an old TV set, visit [www.mygreenelectronics.com](http://www.mygreenelectronics.com) to learn about your recycling options.





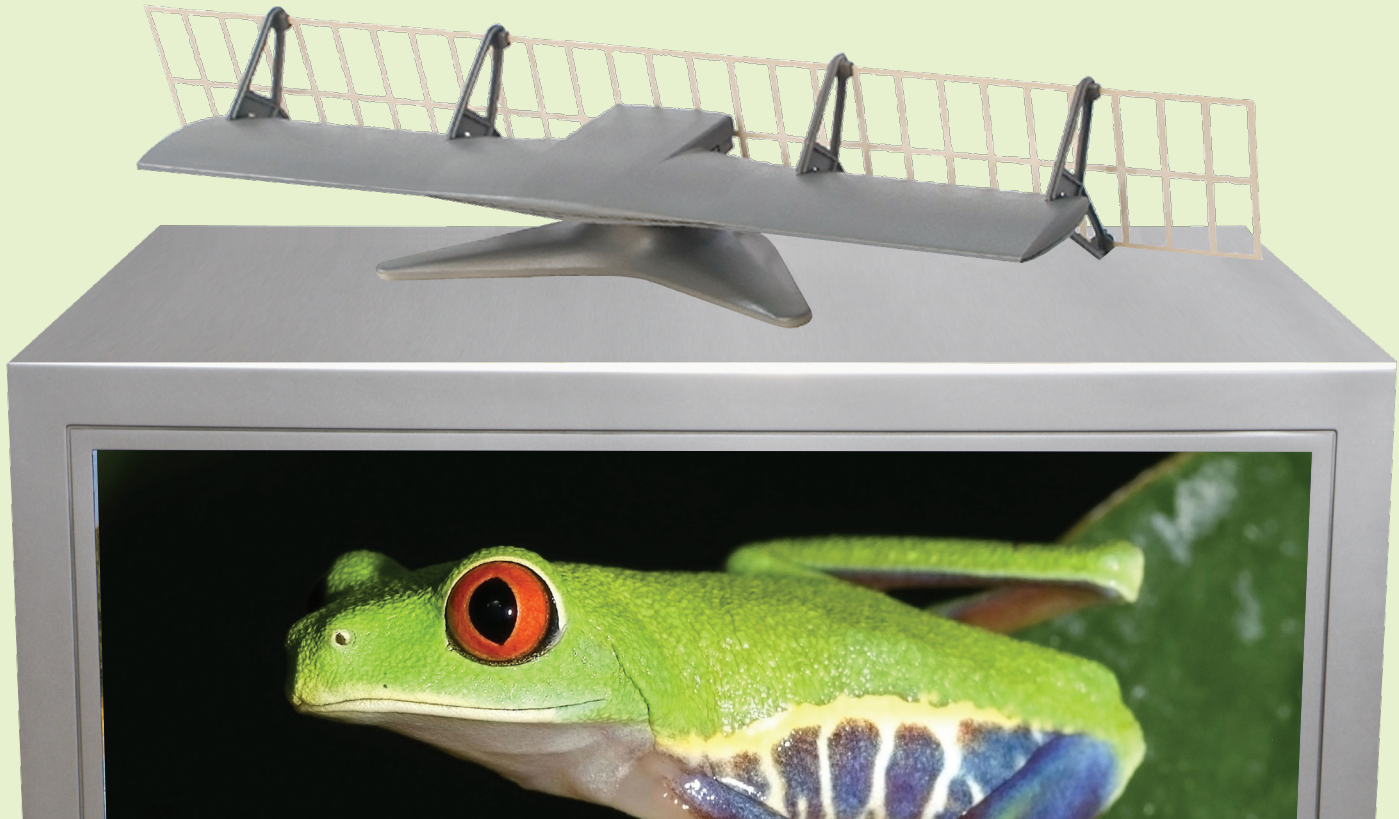
## How do I know if I have an analog or digital TV set?

**All television sets shipped to and sold in the U.S. after March 1, 2007,** are required to have built-in digital tuners.

You can find out if your existing set has a digital tuner by searching the database on [www.dtvtransition.org](http://www.dtvtransition.org) using your TV set brand name and model number. You can also review the owner's manual, check with the manufacturer of your set or look on the set for an indication that it has a built-in digital (ATSC) tuner.

## Is HDTV the same thing as DTV?

**No.** DTV is digital television. HDTV is high definition television. HDTV is the highest quality format of DTV, but it is only one of several formats. Consumers who have high definition TV sets can receive HD television programming for free using an antenna.



## Do I need a special antenna to receive DTV over the air?

**You will still need an antenna to receive free broadcast television after the transition.** If you currently get good reception with your indoor or rooftop antenna, the same antenna should give you good DTV reception. However, after the transition, some television stations will move to a different frequency band, which may require another type of antenna than the one you use now.

For example, some stations in the “VHF band” (Channels 2-13) may move to the “UHF band” (Channels 14-51) and vice versa. Receiving VHF and UHF signals require different types of antennas, although many antennas are designed to receive both VHF and UHF signals.

To determine which outdoor antenna you need, visit [www.antennaweb.org](http://www.antennaweb.org).



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## Where can I get more information about the DTV transition?

For more information about the DTV transition, visit [www.dtvanswers.com](http://www.dtvanswers.com), the official Web site of the National Association of Broadcasters' digital television (DTV) transition campaign. Launched in January 2007, the DTV transition campaign's mission is to ensure that no consumer is left unprepared, due to lack of information, for the federally mandated transition from analog to digital broadcasting.



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