

Digital and HDTV - What Are The Facts?

The Transition: With the digital (DTV) television transition nearly a year away, it is important to understand what is actually going to take place on February 17, 2009. Congress mandated this would be the last day for full-power television stations to broadcast in analog signal and they would need to broadcast in digital signal only.

What does this mean to you? That depends. **Active cable and satellite customers with analog TVs should not be affected by the February 17th cut-off date.** If you do not subscribe to cable or satellite and receive only free over-the-air television programming, you will either need to upgrade your TV to a digital one or you will need a digital tuner set-top box for your TV.

Read the labels: If your television is labeled “Digital Ready”, “HDTV Ready”, “Digital Monitor” or “HDTV Monitor”, this may not mean the TV actually contains a digital tuner. You still may need a set-top box to view programming in digital or HD transmissions.

High Def: It is also important to understand that High Definition (HD) broadcasting is not a requirement of the DTV transition. You do not need to buy a High Def TV to watch digital TV. Digital and High Def cable packages are viewed differently. You can upgrade to digital cable to receive more programming options with improved picture and sound quality. However, to upgrade to a High Def package, you need a High Def television first. You can view High Def programming on a standard digital TV, it just won't be at full High Definition quality.

DTV / HDTV FAQ

Q. Why the switch?

A. To free up parts of the broadcast spectrum for public safety communications (police, fire, rescue squads).

Q. Do I have to replace my analog TV by 2/17/09?

A. If you subscribe to a cable or satellite provider, you will not be affected. If you do not, you will need to upgrade to a digital tuner.

Q. Do I have to get a High Def TV by 2/17/09?

A. No. High Def is just an enhancement service that is available, not a requirement.

Q. What about my other electronics?

A. All VCR, DVD & gaming consoles should continue to work.

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For more info, call the Federal Communications Commission at 1-888-225-5322 or visit the FCC's digital television website at www.dtv.gov