



IOWA DTV ANSWERS

The switch to digital television (DTV) is coming.

Get ready for dramatically better television.

Iowa Public Television is here to help.

Be more  informed

By law, all American television stations must **switch** their broadcasting from analog to digital by February 17, 2009. Television sets connected to cable or satellite will not be affected, and will continue to receive programming after that date. But those television sets not connected to cable or satellite, or without a DTV converter box, will not receive any television signal after the date of the switch.



lptv.org
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What is Digital Television (DTV)?

Digital Television (DTV) is an innovative new type of broadcasting technology that will transform your television viewing experience. DTV enables TV stations like IPTV to provide dramatically clearer pictures and better sound quality. DTV can also offer multiple programming choices, interactive capabilities, and data services such as significantly enhanced closed captioning.

Why the switch?

Under legislation passed by Congress – the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 – free local broadcast television stations are required to turn off their analog channels on February 17, 2009, and broadcast exclusively in the digital format.

What are the benefits of DTV?

Digital television allows stations to offer a number of new and better services. In addition to providing dramatically better pictures and sound quality, DTV also enables TV stations to provide several channels of programming at once. This is known as “multicasting.” DTV can also be used to provide data services (such as significantly enhanced closed captioning) that are not possible with analog technology.

Who will be affected?

Consumers who receive free television signals through antennas (rabbit ears) on television sets that are equipped with analog tuners – and who do not subscribe to cable, satellite, or a telephone company service provider – will be affected by the transition.

At least 19.6 million households receive only over-the-air signals in their homes, and approximately 70 million television sets are at risk of losing their signals after February 17, 2009, if owners of these sets do not make the easy transition to DTV. There are at least 224,000 Iowa households receiving only over-the-air television signals – 19% of all TV households in our state.

How can I switch to DTV?

You can make the switch to DTV by following one of three easy steps by February 17, 2009:

- 1. DTV converter box:** Purchase a DTV converter box that plugs into your existing analog set. A converter box will enable you to receive free television reception, and the boxes are available for purchase now. The federal government is providing \$40 coupons that you may use toward the purchase of these boxes at www.dtv2009.gov or by calling 1-888-DTV-2009.

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2. New television set: Purchase a new television set with a built-in digital tuner.

3. Paid service: Subscribe to cable, satellite or a telephone company service provider to continue using your analog TV set, if all desired local broadcast stations are carried by that service.

What is a DTV converter box?

A DTV converter box is an easy-to-install electronic device that hooks up to your analog television set and over-the-air antenna and converts the digital television signal into analog, making it viewable on your analog TV.

When can I get a coupon for a DTV converter box?

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is issuing coupons for DTV converter boxes. Households can apply for up to two coupons, valued at \$40 each, which must be redeemed within three

months of the issue date. Visit www.DTV2009.gov for more information or call 1-888-DTV-2009.

Can I keep my analog TV set?

Yes. Buying a new digital television set isn't the only option you have for navigating the DTV transition. If you wish to continue using your analog set, you must consider one of the following options to make the switch to digital television:

1. Purchase a DTV converter box, which will convert the new digital signal into the analog format for older televisions.
2. Switch to a cable, satellite or telephone company service provider to receive the new digital signal.

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

To check whether your TV set can receive over-the-air digital broadcast signals, take a look at your owner's manual or look on the set for an indication that it has a built-in Advanced Television Systems

Committee (ATSC) tuner. You can also go to the manufacturer's Web site and check the capabilities of the set by manufacturer model number.

Is HDTV the same thing as DTV?

No. HDTV is the highest quality of DTV, but it is only one of several formats. In addition to HDTV, the most common format is Standard Definition Television (SDTV). Consumers who have high definition TV sets may receive free high definition television programming over the air using an antenna.

Will I need a special antenna to receive DTV over-the-air?

In general, dependable reception of DTV will require the same type of signal reception equipment that currently works to provide good quality reception of analog TV signals. If you currently need a roof-top antenna to receive television, the same antenna generally will be needed to receive DTV.



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