



NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

DTV Converter Box Coupon Program Information Sheet for Consumers

NTIA has released its Final Rule making all households in the United States eligible for the Converter Box Coupon Program. This information sheet describes what consumers need to know and how they can find information to prepare for the television transition.

Household eligibility

NTIA has announced that all households in the United States and its territories—not just those relying on over-the-air television—are eligible for the coupon program while the initial funds of \$990 million are available.

If any of the \$510 million in additional funds are needed to meet program demand, then eligibility for these funds will be limited to over-the-air television households.

Preparing for the transition

- If you receive over-the-air television broadcasts and have an analog television, a converter box will be needed to continue to receive your favorite television shows **after February 17, 2009**.
- If you use cable or satellite service—or have a digital television—a converter box is not necessary to continue receiving your current programming choices.
- Digital-to-analog converter boxes will allow existing analog televisions to display digital television, generally with better picture quality and more programming, where available.
- Some households may have televisions connected to cable or satellite as well as televisions in other parts of the house receiving over-the-air television. Consumers may wish to purchase converters for these over-the-air sets.
- NTIA will establish a consumer friendly Web site and toll-free number. Through the Web site, NTIA will describe which converter boxes can be purchased with the coupon as well as which retail stores and/or online outlets will sell boxes.

Coupon requests

- Households must request coupons from NTIA between January 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009.
- Consumer coupon requests will be taken via a toll-free customer support center, a Web site, fax, and through the mail.
- Upon request, a maximum of up to two coupons will be sent to households via the United States Postal Service and will expire three months after they are mailed.
- Each coupon will be worth \$40 towards the purchase of an eligible converter box from a certified consumer electronics retailer. Coupons have no cash value and may not be resold.
- Coupons will be electronically trackable and uniquely numbered, similar to gift cards, so that transactions will be verified at the point of sale.

Coupon redemption

- Once consumers begin receiving their coupon(s) in 2008, they will be able to use them toward the purchase of eligible converter boxes through certified retailers.
- Only one coupon can be redeemed per converter box. It is unlawful for consumers to combine coupons toward the purchase of a single converter box.
- It is unlawful for consumers to redeem coupons to purchase consumer electronics items other than eligible converter boxes.

Consumer education

- NTIA is working closely with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as well as a coalition of broadcasters, consumer electronics retailers, manufacturers, and consumer groups to make consumers aware of the coupon program.
- Consumers can expect to hear about the coupon program from many sources: watching broadcast television, searching the Internet, listening to the radio, and reading print media, such as newspapers and magazines.
- NTIA will focus its outreach on households that continue to rely on analog over-the-air television during the transition. Recent research has shown that these households include older Americans, minorities and rural residents.

Why the digital transition ?

- Congress has set a firm date of February 17, 2009, when full-power TV stations must switch from analog to digital transmission on airwaves.
- The way broadcasters have traditionally transmitted programs, the analog standard, is now outdated.
- Digital transmission is a more efficient technology, allowing broadcasters to provide a better viewing experience and giving consumers more choices while using less of the airwaves.
- Part of the spectrum that broadcasters no longer need will be returned to the federal government and used by public safety agencies so they can communicate more effectively in times of emergency.

For additional information about the digital television transition, visit the following Web sites to become familiar with your options for making a smooth digital transition:

www.dtvtransition.org – a one-stop clearinghouse of consumer information and tools to manage the digital transition, hosted by the DTV Transition Coalition.

www.dtv.gov – this is a government site offering comprehensive resources, including a consumer guide on what to look out for as the digital transition approaches.

www.myceknowhow.com – the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) offers this consumer site to help consumers understand various available equipment options.

www.ntia.doc.gov - NTIA's Web site provides information about the administration of the Converter Box Coupon Program.

www.ceretailers.org – representing consumer electronics retailers, CERC (Consumer Electronics Retailers Coalition) offers a Q & A about the transition as well as a consumer advisory alerting consumers to the cutoff date.

For more information about the Converter Box Coupon Program contact:

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