

Television Is Going Digital: Get The Picture

(NAPS)—Big changes are coming to your TV. But they have nothing to do with the new fall season. These changes involve the transition to digital broadcasting on February 17, 2009.

For millions of Americans—those whose TVs are already hooked up to cable or satellite or those who have TVs with built-in digital tuners—the transition should be seamless. But if you get your programming on an analog TV through a rooftop antenna or “rabbit ears,” you will have to take action to keep your TV sets working after the transition. You can:

- Connect your analog TV to a converter box that will get digital reception;
- Connect your analog TV to a paid service such as cable or satellite; or
- Buy a TV with a built-in digital tuner.

Through a program run by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, every household can get two coupons—each worth \$40—to help defray the cost of the converter boxes. Most of the boxes cost between \$50 and \$70; you can order the coupons online at www.dtv2009.gov or by phone at (888)DTV-2009.

Government coupons for converter boxes are available on a “use it or lose it” basis for 90 days after they are mailed to you: If you don’t use your coupons within 90 days, you cannot get replacement coupons. You can apply one coupon toward the purchase of each converter box, so you’ll need two coupons only if you need two converter boxes. It’s illegal to sell the coupons, but you can give them to a family member or friend.

With many consumers in the market for converter boxes, subscription services or digital televisions, the Federal Trade Commission, the nation’s consumer



Listen up: If you get your programming on an analog television through “rabbit ears,” you will need a converter box before February 17, 2009.

protection agency, has some shopping tips to make sure you continue to get your favorite TV programs come February 2009:

1. Never pay for a coupon for a digital converter box. The coupons are free from the federal government.

2. Don’t give your Social Security number or other sensitive financial information when you order—or redeem—your coupon.

3. If you return a converter box you bought using a coupon, you can’t get the value of the coupon back in cash.

4. Installing a converter box is easy, but if you decide to hire someone to install it, get the price in writing before you agree to the job.

5. Ignore any offer for a “free” converter box, especially if it requires you to pay for shipping or a warranty. The companies that are making these offers are not certified by the government, and their converter boxes are not eligible for the coupon program.

If you decide to buy a new TV with a built-in digital tuner (also called a digital receiver), you won’t have to order a coupon or buy and install a converter box—unless you want to keep your old analog TV on hand.

For more information about coupons and converter boxes, visit www.dtv2009.gov.

Source: Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

Did You Know?

If you get your programming on an analog television through a rooftop antenna or “rabbit ears,” you will have to take action to keep your TV sets working after February 17, 2009. If you decide to connect your analog TV to a converter box that will get digital reception, you need to know about a special program from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. To learn more, visit www.dtv2009.gov.

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