

FCC Consumer Advisory

The DTV Transition and Over-the-Air Viewers Along U.S. Borders

The digital television (DTV) transition refers to the switch from analog to digital broadcast television. All full-power television stations have stopped broadcasting in analog, and now broadcast only in digital. Some consumers living along the U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada currently watch analog television programming broadcast over-the-air by Mexican and Canadian stations. Canadian TV stations will also transition from analog to digital broadcasting, but not until August of 2011. Mexico has begun its transition and will complete it in 2021.

U.S. consumers living along the Canadian and Mexican borders are able to watch television programming from Canadian or Mexican broadcast stations with an over-the-air antenna, such as "rabbit ears" on their set or an antenna on their roof.

If you purchase a digital-to-analog converter box to watch digital broadcasts on an analog TV and also wish to continue watching analog programming broadcast from stations in either Mexico or Canada, you should purchase a converter box with "analog pass-through" capability, which allows analog broadcast signals to pass through the converter box to be tuned by your analog TV. Converter boxes with analog pass-through capability will also enable you to watch U.S. low-power and translator television stations. (For more information on low-power and translator TV stations, see our Consumer Guide entitled "The DTV Transition and LPTV/Class A/Translator Stations," located at www.fcc.gov/guides/dtv-transition-and-lptv-class-translator-stations.)

Check with your retailer to determine whether the converter box you are purchasing has analog pass-through capability.

If you purchase a digital-to-analog converter box without analog pass-through capability, you may have to connect an "A/B switch" and/or a "signal splitter" to bypass the box if you wish to view analog TV broadcasts. Check with the manufacturer of the digital-to-analog converter box and your retailer if you need instructions on how to connect the box to view broadcasts from both analog and digital stations.

For more information about the DTV transition, go to www.dtv.gov or contact the FCC by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554.



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