

TV Converter Box Coupon Program



Frequently Asked Questions

What are my options to make the transition to DTV?

Consumers receiving free, over-the-air television on analog televisions need to act now to ensure their televisions continue to work when full-power television stations go all-digital on February 17, 2009. Viewers of over-the-air television need to look at each analog set in their home that is not connected to cable, satellite or other pay television service and make a timely decision. They can connect their television to cable, satellite or pay television service; they can replace it with a digital TV; or they may keep it working with a TV converter box.

What is a TV converter box?

A TV converter box plugs into your analog TV and, along with your antenna, enables you to view digital broadcast (not cable or satellite) television signals over your analog set, now and after full-power analog signals cease on February 17, 2009. A TV converter box is a one-time purchase and typically costs between \$45 and \$80. A TV connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV service does not require a TV converter box from this program. For a list of TV converter boxes that can be purchased with \$40 government coupons, please visit www.dtv2009.gov.

What is the TV Converter Box Coupon Program?

Congress created the TV Converter Box Coupon Program (under Title III of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2006) for households wishing to keep using their analog sets after February 17, 2009 to receive broadcast TV. The Coupon Program allows U.S. households to obtain up to two coupons, each worth \$40, which can be redeemed toward the cost of eligible converter boxes. A converter box can also be purchased without a coupon.

Do I need a converter box if I have cable or satellite?

No. TVs connected to cable, satellite, or other pay services *do not* require – and will not operate with – a TV converter box from this program. Check with your cable or satellite provider to determine how they will support your analog set after February 17, 2009. Also, most televisions purchased since 2007 already are equipped to receive DTV signals, and therefore will not need a converter box.

How do I get my coupons?

Consumers can apply for up to two \$40 coupons per household by going online at www.dtv2009.gov, calling 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009), or mailing an application to PO Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000. As required by law, coupons are mailed via US Postal Service and expire 90 days after they are mailed.

When will I receive my coupons?

Because of extremely high demand for coupons in December, the program reached its \$1.34 billion ceiling, which consists of ordered and redeemed coupons. *As a result, as of January 4, 2009, consumers requesting coupons are being placed on a waiting list and coupons will be mailed on a first-come-first-served basis as funds from expired coupons become available.* When consumers contact the Coupon Program to request coupons, they will receive a message they have been placed on a waiting list and will receive coupons on a first-come, first-served basis, as coupons become available and funds are returned to the U.S. Treasury from expired coupons. Consumers will receive a reference number that they should write down and use to check the status of their order at the Coupon Program's Web site, www.DTV2009.gov.

What should I do if I haven't order coupons yet or am on the waiting list?

Consumers ordering coupons after January 4th – including those placed on the waiting list – likely will not receive their coupons before February 17th. Therefore, consumers choosing to get a converter box should consider purchasing at least one box *immediately* without a coupon to ensure they do not lose all television service. Coupons received after February 17th will be valid toward the purchase of additional boxes.

Can I apply my coupon to a previously-purchased converter box?

No. Coupons can only be applied at the time the converter box is purchased.



When and why do coupons expire?

By law, coupons expire 90 days after they are issued. The expiration date of a coupon is imprinted directly on the coupon. Consumers should redeem their coupon toward the purchase a converter box as soon as possible after receiving their coupon in the mail. The coupon expiration requirement is necessary to permit funds otherwise obligated to unredeemed and expired coupons to be "recycled" for new coupons.

Where can I redeem my coupons?

There are more than 35,000 participating retailers, including seven of the largest national consumer electronics retail chains, and more than 45 online and phone retailers. To see a complete list, and to search local retailers by zip code, go online to www.dtv2009.gov. When the coupon is mailed, it includes an insert with a list of nearby participating retailers. Consumers should investigate their options and call ahead to confirm availability of coupon-eligible converter boxes on the day you plan to shop.

Can I replace a lost or stolen coupon?

No. Coupons cannot be reissued. However, individuals may obtain a coupon – so long as it is not bought or sold – from a family member, friend or neighbor.

Can I obtain a coupon from someone else or give my coupon away?

Yes. It is permissible for someone to give away their coupon for free to a family member, friend, or neighbor. Please note that it is against the law to buy or sell a coupon.

Can I receive coupons at a Post Office Box?

Yes. The Coupon Program regulations recently were modified to permit any eligible household that has not already been issued two coupons to have their coupon(s) mailed to a Post Office Box. Applicants who utilize a P.O. Box for residential mail delivery must provide their physical residential address as well as their P.O. Box address, and can request up to two coupons through any of the Program's application channels.

Are residents of nursing homes eligible to participate in the Coupon Program?

Yes. Individuals residing in state-licensed nursing homes, intermediate care facilities, and assisted living facilities are now eligible to receive one coupon. A nursing home resident (or a family member or administrator of the State-licensed facility) may apply by mail for one coupon for the resident, and the coupon will be mailed directly to the nursing home resident. The mail-in application for nursing home residents is available at:
https://www.dtv2009.gov/docs/NursingHomeCouponApplication_en.pdf

Will I need a new antenna?

As long as a DTV signal is available, a consumer's existing antenna should still work after the transition is complete. Consumers are urged to TRY their converter box as soon as possible to troubleshoot potential problems and to contact their local broadcasters and go to www.antennaweb.org and <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/troubleshootguide.html> for additional information regarding reception of local stations and antennas.

Where can I get technical assistance, if needed?

When installing a converter box, consumers should follow the instructions included in their owner's manual, including a channel search, and make any needed antenna adjustments. Doing so right away is important to troubleshooting potential problems well before the February 17, 2009, analog shut-off. Consumers needing additional assistance – with converter box installation or questions about DTV signal availability and reception – should consult their local consumer electronic retailer, call their local broadcaster(s), call the FCC's consumer hotline (1-888-225-5322) and/or go to <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/troubleshootguide.html>.

Questions and Technical Assistance

- 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322)

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/troubleshootguide.html>

- Call Your Local TV Station

(To find, go to: <http://msi.tvjobs.com/quick.html>)

- Consult a Consumer Electronics Retailer

To Order Coupons

www.dtv2009.gov

1-888-DTV-2009

(1-888-388-2009)