



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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COMMISSION REMINDS STATIONS OF THEIR OBLIGATION TO MAINTAIN A CONSUMER REFERRAL NUMBER

In this Public Notice, we remind broadcasters of their responsibility to provide consumer referral telephone numbers to the Commission, and to publicize these numbers so that their viewers will have a helpful local number to call for specific information about the station's transition to digital-only broadcasting. We take this opportunity also to remind broadcasters that they should be prepared to answer phone calls from their viewing public in the hours immediately after their transition and in the days that follow.

In the Third Report and Order implementing the digital television (DTV) Delay Act, the Commission established requirements for stations to notify the Commission concerning their plans for terminating their analog service.¹ Along with other information, stations were required to provide a telephone number that could serve to receive local consumer calls and consumer referrals from the FCC's National Call Center, and the Commission created the Analog Service Termination Notification form for this purpose.² The telephone number to be provided for consumer referral purposes may be operated and staffed by the station itself, by a group of stations in a market, or by a third party entity, such as a state broadcasters' association, so long as it is able to serve as a source of information and assistance for viewers having difficulty receiving that particular station's signal. Since April 1, stations have been required to publicize this number on at least a daily basis as part of their obligations under the DTV Consumer Education Initiative.³ In addition, these telephone numbers are publicly posted on the Commission's DTV.gov website, and the Commission's National Call Center representatives have them on hand in order to forward callers directly to stations when appropriate.⁴

The Third Report and Order explained that stations' consumer referral number should be staffed with personnel prepared to answer complex questions from viewers, particularly regarding necessary actions to take to get reception in specific locations, and other engineering issues.⁵ We also specifically noted that the telephone number provided must be staffed during business hours and that stations should be prepared for an increased volume of calls, both referred and locally originating, at the time the station

¹ *Implementation of the DTV Delay Act*, MB Docket No. 09-17, Third Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration, 24 FCC Red 3399, § III.A (2009) ("*Third Report and Order*").

² *Id.* at ¶¶ 13-15, 52-54.

³ *Id.* at ¶ 54. *See also* 47 CFR § 73.674(b)(8).

⁴ Stations' consumer referral numbers can be found at www.dtv.gov/stationlist.htm. Stations may revise their referral telephone number by updating their Analog Service Termination Notification form, as described in *Forms Available For TV Broadcasters To Update Analog Termination Information And To Revoke Termination Notice*. Public Notice, DA 09-820 (April 20, 2009) ("*April 20 PN*").

⁵ *Third Report and Order*, 24 FCC Red 3399 at ¶ 53.

terminates its analog signal. This is especially, although not exclusively, true of stations that are terminating analog service on the final day of the DTV transition, June 12, 2009. Despite the extensive efforts of the Commission and broadcasters, many viewers will need assistance in the immediate post-transition period, particularly regarding reception issues. Stations were given the option of terminating service at any time of day.⁶ In particular, those that have chosen to do so after the close of business on Friday evening should ensure that their consumer referral number is adequately staffed, not only in the hours surrounding the transition, but also over the following weekend (June 13-14), because their viewers may not have the opportunity to even test for problems until after business hours.⁷ We note that stations may change the time of day that they are transitioning by notifying the Commission and their viewers.⁸

The FCC's National Call Center will be active 24 hours a day for the days surrounding the June 12 transition,⁹ forwarding calls directly to stations where necessary, and we believe that the full staffing of these local consumer referral numbers in the hours and days following the transition is of the highest importance. All television broadcasters have an obligation to serve their local communities, and assisting viewers through the transition is an essential public service that local broadcasters are best positioned to perform. We acknowledge and thank broadcasters again for their impressive outreach efforts across the country and commend their commitment to assisting their viewers.

Additional Information

For more information, please contact Lyle Elder, Lyle.Elder@fcc.gov, of the Policy Division, Media Bureau, 202-418-2120.

⁶ *Id.* at ¶ 32.

⁷ This is particularly true for “flash cut” stations whose post-transition digital signal will be operating on the same frequency as their analog has operated, which will represent a channel change from their current digital channel.

⁸ *See April 20 PN*, note 4, *supra*, instructing stations to update their Analog Service Termination Notification forms electronically using the Commission's Consolidated Database System (“CDBS”) Electronic Filing System via the Internet from the Media Bureau's Web site at: <http://www.fcc.gov/mb/cdbs.html> or http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/prod/cdbs/forms/prod/cdbs_ef.htm. *See also* the Commission's June 2 DTV Delay Act Order, which permits stations to commence service on their post-transition digital channel at any time on June 12 provided they coordinate with any stations that might experience interference. *Implementation of the DTV Delay Act, et al*, MB Docket Nos. 09-17, 07-148, 07-91, and 05-312, Order, FCC 09-47 (June 2, 2009).

⁹ The National Call Center can be reached at 1-888-CALL-FCC.