



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, 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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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Mark Wigfield, 202-418-0253
Email: mark.wigfield@fcc.gov
Edie Herman, 202-418-2035
Email: edie.herman@fcc.gov

Initial Phase of DTV Transition Encouraging

Large Challenges Remain

Washington, D.C. – Early results of the digital television transition are encouraging, according to reports available to the Federal Communications Commission. But because most of the stations that made the switch are located in smaller markets, large challenges remain.

A total of 641 of television stations took advantage of the flexibility afforded them by law to transition to digital broadcasting as of Tuesday. Nearly two-thirds of the nation's 1800 full-power commercial stations chose to continue broadcasting analog signals so that consumers unprepared for the transition can take advantage of the additional time afforded by the new DTV Delay Act to prepare. The law extended the deadline from Feb. 17 to June 12.

Acting FCC Chairman Michael J. Copps said that disruption Tuesday was minimized largely because of the action that Congress and the President took in enacting the DTV Delay Act, which became law on Feb. 11.

“Thanks to the movement of the deadline, we did not have anything like the extent of disruption we would have experienced had every station in the country gone completely digital on Tuesday,” Copps said. “In fact, we tried to ensure that in every market in America, at least one station continues to broadcast an analog signal. That made a huge difference in smoothing the way. It meant that no market was deprived of local news and public safety information. That, plus the stepped-up consumer education put in place over the last few weeks and the limited number of markets in which most or all of the stations wanted to terminate analog service, helped cut down significantly on consumer disruption.”

Copps noted that the change in the deadline “gave the FCC, broadcasters and our other partners in industry and the communities a chance to test, on a broader scale, the mechanisms we have in place to help consumers. And we could test those resources without overwhelming them.”

“Everyone needs to remember that this is just the end of the beginning of the DTV transition,” Copps added. “Most stations and most consumers still have the transition ahead of them. The Commission is working full-time to learn the lessons of what just happened and to revise our outreach programs and rules-of-the-road to take us to June 12. So in addition to

thanking the broadcast, cable and other companies, the many consumer organizations, and an absolutely inspired group of civil servants who all stepped up to the plate, I am looking to them to redouble their efforts in the months ahead.”

According to data collected earlier this week from FCC call centers, over 32 percent of the calls to the FCC’s help line on Wednesday were from consumers who had questions about reception and technical issues.

The next most common problem was from consumers who had difficulty with their converter boxes, followed by consumers who complained they could not receive area broadcast signals. A full summary of digital transition questions to the line (1-888-CALLFCC) by date is attached. The summary does not include calls to local television stations or other call centers. A tally of call volume is below.

Numbers from Feb. 17 have been revised from Wednesday’s release, and those from Feb. 18 may be revised later.

Date	Call Volume
Friday, Feb. 13	11,819
Saturday, Feb. 14	8,178
Sunday, Feb. 15	7,324
Monday, Feb. 16	20,673
Tuesday, Feb. 17	27,764
Wednesday, Feb. 18	25,320

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