



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.  
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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## **NEW TRANSLATOR SERVICE CAN HELP TV STATIONS CORRECT SIGNAL LOSS CAUSED BY DIGITAL TRANSITION**

Washington, D.C. -- The Federal Communications Commission has voted to let television broadcasters use new digital translators to restore reception in areas where their viewers have lost service as a result of the stations' transition from analog to digital service. The Commission created a Replacement Digital Television Translator Service that will be available to full-service television stations. The stations can use the translators only within their service areas and only to replace service lost as a result of their transition to digital transmission.

Signal loss has resulted in part from unavoidable engineering changes that stations were required to make to avoid interference or other problems once they began broadcasting on their post-transition digital channels. In some cases, the analog service area of full-service stations could not be fully replicated because of technical difficulties. In other instances, broadcast facilities had to be relocated because of environmental or zoning issues.

In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued in December, the Commission proposed the new translator service and adopted interim procedures to begin accepting applications from stations for the replacement translators. Fourteen stations responded with applications for 20 replacement digital television translators.

Translators have long been used to bring television service to viewers who otherwise would be unserved or underserved. Full-service television stations often use translators to fill in parts of their service areas that are not receiving service due to terrain, engineering or other limitations. In addition, some stations, local governments, community groups and others use translators to provide service outside the primary station's service contours, often in very rural or isolated areas.

The new "fill-in" replacement translator service is specifically aimed at problems created by the digital television transition and is for use within full-service stations' service contours. It doesn't address reception outside of the stations' service areas but the Commission will soon take action on that as well. The FCC said it will soon initiate first-come, first-serve licensing for new TV translator facilities outside of stations contours.

The Commission voted to license the fill-in replacement service only on television channels 2 through 51. Unlike other television translator licenses, the replacement translator license will be associated with the full-service station's main license. That means the translator license may not be separately assigned or transferred and will be renewed or assigned along with the full-service station's main license.

The new replacement translator service gives broadcasters an additional tool for restoring signal loss. Stations have other options as well, such as increasing power or tower height or constructing a distributed transmission system.

Action by the Commission, May 8, 2009 by Report and Order. Acting Chairman Copps, and Commissioners Adelstein and McDowell.

MB Docket 08-253.

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