



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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TEN DAYS AND COUNTING TO DTV TRANSITION

FCC Mounts Final Push for DTV Preparedness Before June 12

Washington, D.C. – With 10 days remaining before the transition to digital television on June 12, the Federal Communications Commission is providing boots on the ground, messages over the airwaves, help over the phone, and answers in cyberspace for consumers who still need help preparing for the switch.

The level of preparedness has steadily increased since Congress delayed the digital television (DTV) transition in February. The gap of unready households across America has narrowed by over 50 percent in the past six months based on Nielsen data – in January, 5.7 percent of U.S. households were estimated to be unready for the DTV transition, and that number has now dropped to 2.7 percent. However, that 2.7 percent represents about 3.1 million homes nationwide that risk losing free over-the-air television unless they act before June 12.

“There is no doubt we’ve made significant progress in reducing the number of consumers unprepared for the transition, but our work is far from over,” said FCC Chairman Michael Copps. “For many people, free, over-the-air television is their primary source of news, information and emergency alerts – not to mention entertainment. We will continue to do all that we can to find and assist these consumers in the final days before June 12.”

Over the next 10 days, the FCC will be issuing a drumbeat of daily messages designed to highlight the most important issues concerning the impending nationwide transition. In addition to this media information campaign, approximately 250 FCC staffers will be working with the public at events and DTV clinics nationwide, while the Commissioners will be traveling the country for local DTV events and making television and radio appearances in target markets.

One of the more notable programs undertaken by the FCC is its provision of in-home assistance for over 200,000 homes through independent contractors, with additional in-home assistance being provided by AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps members and firefighters in cooperation with the International Association of Fire Chiefs. All of these in-home installation services are at no charge to the consumer.

Consumers can take advantage of these services by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC, or visiting www.dtv.gov. Among the many resources on the web are Consumer Union’s excellent

brochure, “DTV Made Easy,” and interactive tools that can help consumers solve DTV reception issues at their own home.

On June 12, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop analog broadcast service and transmit only digital signals. Consumers who do not subscribe to pay television services and have older, analog televisions will need to have digital-to-analog converter boxes attached to their televisions in order to continue receiving over-the-air television programming. They may also need to adjust or upgrade their television set-top antennas.

The switch to digital will reward most viewers with better sound, a better picture, more channels and more programs. The transition will also help save lives by clearing airwaves for better first-responder radio service and makes room for the future by clearing airwaves for advanced mobile Internet services.

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Resources for reporters covering the DTV transition are available in the DTV Media Toolkit at http://www.dtv.gov/media_toolkit.html