



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC CONTINUES DTV OUTREACH ACROSS THE NATION

Call Center Receives Over 900,000 Calls In Days Surrounding Transition

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission’s consumer help line for the digital television (DTV) transition has received over 900,000 calls since last Monday regarding the switch by full-power television stations to all-digital broadcasts on June 12. By Sunday, however, call volumes had declined.

Calls to 1-888-CALL-FCC seeking assistance peaked Friday with 317,450 calls, followed by 145,403 calls on Saturday and 62,949 calls on Sunday. About 28 percent of callers who talked with an FCC agent Sunday sought help setting up digital converter boxes for analog TVs, while nearly 26 percent reported difficulty receiving a specific station, and another 23 percent needed help resolving broader reception issues. The FCC’s call center also transferred over 235,000 calls requesting information about the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s converter box coupon program to that agency’s call center.

“The FCC is in the midst – not the end – of the DTV transition,” said FCC Acting Chairman Michael Copps. “Our call center remains open, our teams are in the field, and our web site, www.dtv.gov, is updated to reflect the kinds of problems viewers are having.

“This was never going to be an easy transition, as I have said many times,” Copps added. “It appears to have worked well for the majority of over-the-air viewers, but for those who are experiencing a less-satisfactory outcome, we are committed to staying on the job to help.”

Consumers in some markets appeared to have difficulty when digital converter boxes that had been programmed, or “scanned,” with channel locations before the June 12 transition did not properly update channel locations after the transition, despite being re-scanned. The FCC today is issuing a separate consumer advisory providing tips on rescanning and antenna placement.

While many markets reported few problems, the FCC is examining reports of signal loss by viewers of certain stations in several markets, including Chicago, Philadelphia and New York. Commission experts discussed issues with individual stations in the markets, and bolstered field staff in these and other markets where problems were reported. Staff continued to help consumers apply for the coupons program, hook up converter boxes, and help them understand scanning, rescanning and antenna issues.

Supplies of converter boxes and antennas continued to be adequate, according to reports to the FCC from retailers. While some stores may be out of or awaiting shipments, other stores in the same markets had boxes available; both antennas and converter boxes were available from on-line retailers.

Consumers continued to request free, in-home installation of converter boxes provided by FCC contractors. Other well-utilized resources include the FCC's DTV web site, www.dtv.gov, which received over 3.5 million page views from June 6-14.

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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