



CAMBRIDGE CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

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City of Cambridge

Serving Cambridge Since 1980

Important Changes to the Digital Television Transition

A Note from the Cambridge Consumers' Council

By: Corey Pilz, Complaint Manager

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Greetings Consumers!

As some of you may know, Congress has recently passed the "DTV Delay Act," which extends the deadline for TV stations to complete the DTV transition from February 17, 2009, to **June 12, 2009**. Although this new law allows consumers more time to prepare for the transition, it does **NOT** require full-power broadcast TV stations to continue broadcasting in analog after February 17th. Therefore, even though the transition has been pushed back, some local broadcast stations may choose to switch over before June 12th, causing you to lose these stations if you have not taken one of the following steps to prepare for the transition:

If you do not currently subscribe to any type of satellite or cable program, you are left with three options to continue your television service:

1. Purchase a digital converter box that will convert the digital signal into analog for an existing television set. These devices will be available in retail stores with an expected one-time cost of \$40-\$80.
2. Purchase a new television set with a built in digital tuner. All televisions with a digital tuner are able to receive digital signals. Any television sold after May 2007 must come equipped with a digital tuner, or be clearly marked with a disclosure notice if it is not. In addition, many televisions sold as early as 2004—especially 42-inch models or larger—have digital tuners built in.
3. Subscribe to cable or satellite television. All of these services will allow consumers to receive digital television signals on their analog television sets, but could prove to be costly.

Please keep in mind, **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BUY A NEW TELEVISION SET OR SUBSCRIBE TO SATELLITE OR CABLE TELEVISION SERVICE**. If you chose to purchase a converter box, I urge you to take advantage of the government coupon program. Call 888-DTV-2009 or go to www.DTV2009.gov to request a coupon. Each household is entitled to up to two (2) coupons, but please keep in mind that these coupons do expire within 90 days from the time the request is processed. *The TV Converter Box Coupon Program has reached its funding capacity, but is currently putting consumers on a waiting list. Coupons will be mailed on a first-come-first-served basis as funds become available.*

If you need any additional information or have any questions regarding the DTV transition, please feel free to contact our office during normal business hours. Above all, we urge you not to wait until the last minute to make the necessary preparations for this transition!

Are You Prepared for the Digital Television Transition?

Helpful Links

General Information Regarding the DTV Transition:

National Telecommunications and Information Agency

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/otiahome/dtv/index.html>

Federal Communications Commission

<http://www.dtv.gov/>

Request a Coupon Today!

Government Converter Box Coupon Program

<https://www.dtv2009.gov/>

Trouble Installing your Converter Box?

Information on Installing Digital Converter Boxes

http://www.dtvanswers.com/dtv_converterbox.html

Need to Recycle an Old Television Set in Cambridge?

Contact the Department of Public Works' Recycling Department!

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/departments/recycle/computers.html>

Still have questions? Feel free to email the Consumers' Council at consumer@cambridgema.gov or Contact us at 617-349-6150!