

# OPB IS YOUR SOURCE FOR FACTS ABOUT DIGITAL TV

## Digital TV means you'll have...

- More OPB channels, free as always
- More viewing choices and times
- Better picture and sound

## Need more help?

Call our Member Center  
1.800.241.8123

Email us  
membercenter@opb.org

Find out more  
opb.org/digital

## What is the switch to digital television?

The television broadcast system we've all grown up with uses "analog" technology to reach the TV sets in your home. A new technology called "digital" is replacing it. Most stations, including OPB, already broadcast a digital signal along with the traditional analog signal. Legislation now requires all *full-power* TV stations in the United States to end analog broadcasts and become digital-only on June 12. Many countries around the world, from Britain to Nigeria to China, are engaged in similar transitions.

## Why is the switch happening?

Digital TV provides a more efficient use of our public airwaves. More than one digital channel can be broadcast using the same space needed for just one analog channel. This allows stations like OPB to provide more programs for the benefit of the community. It also frees up extra bandwidth for public agencies, emergency first responders and new data and communication services. Digital TV offers improved pictures, sound and reception. Digital signals are less prone to interference, and pictures are free of snow and "ghost" images.

## Who is affected?

If you watch a traditional analog TV set, using an indoor or outdoor antenna, with no cable or satellite service, you need to act to continue watching free, over-the-air TV after June 12. At the end of that day, analog signals will no longer be broadcast by any *full-power* TV station. Your analog TV will no longer receive any channels unless you take action. OPB's full-power stations are: Channel 10 in Portland, 7 in Corvallis, 28 in Eugene, 13 in La Grande and 3 in Bend. If you live in a rural community and watch OPB via one of our rural translators – on any channel other than those above – your digital switch will happen on a later schedule. But you still must be prepared.

## Who is *not* affected?

If you have a new digital TV with an "ATSC" tuner, you are already prepared. If you subscribe to a cable or satellite service, you are also prepared. Any necessary changes will be

made by your service provider. Depending on your cable or satellite package, delivery of all OPB digital channels may not be available, or may involve additional fees. Over-the-air antenna reception will always remain free.

## How do I tell if my TV is analog or digital?

If your TV is more than a couple of years old, it's probably *not* digital. Even a TV marked "digital ready" or "HD ready" is ready *only* if it contains an ATSC digital tuner. Check your owner's manual or the manufacturer's web site to see if your TV has an ATSC tuner. If it does, it can receive digital broadcasts, and you are prepared for the switch.

## Do I need to buy a new digital TV?

There's no reason to buy a new TV unless you choose to. A small and inexpensive set-top digital converter box hooked to your analog TV will fully prepare you for the digital switch. When you hook up your converter box, your viewing will continue as before, except you'll have more OPB channels and programs to choose from. Not only will it all still be free, you'll probably experience improved reception, picture and sound.

## Do I need to subscribe to a cable or satellite service to get digital?

No. Digital TV broadcasts are available for free over the air using an antenna, as long as you live within range of the signal. In fact, because some cable and satellite services compress TV signals during transmission, the highest quality digital picture is often received via antenna. Satellite services do not offer all OPB digital channels, and currently do not plan to do so in the future. If you subscribe to a cable service, you may need to pay higher fees to receive all OPB digital channels. It's also possible to add antenna reception to supplement your paid service.

## What about high definition (HD) TV?

HDTV is simply the high end of digital TV. It produces the most detailed and beautiful

**Please continue. . .**



## BE A WISE CONSUMER

- ✓ Be prepared before you shop
- ✓ Ask about service and support before you buy
- ✓ Ask for a demonstration of any new equipment before you leave the store
- ✓ Test your converter box with your current antenna before you buy a new one
- ✓ Don't be afraid to visit another store if the information you receive is insufficient

## How to apply for \$40 discount converter box coupons from the government



**Request Online:**  
[www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov)

**Request by Phone:**  
1.888.DTV.2009

Your coupons will arrive several weeks after you make your request.

Coupons expire 90 days after issue and cannot be replaced.

TV picture. Imagine the difference between newspaper photos and those in a glossy magazine. To see HD broadcasts in full HD quality, you need an HDTV set. On any other TV set, you will still see the picture, but you will see it in "standard definition." A standard definition digital signal is still better than an analog signal. As with any other product, switching to the high end is entirely optional.

### To start, check the TV sets in your home

Use the TV Planner provided on the back of this flyer

#### You'll need one converter box for:

- Each analog TV in your home that receives over-the-air broadcasts via an antenna of any kind, including rabbit ears

#### You'll need two converter boxes for a single set if:

- Your VCR or DVD recorder is used to record one channel while you watch another at the same time — one box for the recorder, which is also analog, and one for the TV

#### You will *not* need a converter box for:

- Any TV that is hooked up to cable or satellite service
- Any TV that includes a digital ATSC tuner
- Any TV that is used *only* to view DVDs or tapes or to play video games
- Any new DVD/VCR recorder that includes a digital ATSC tuner

### How to get a digital converter box

Converter boxes are widely available in most stores selling TVs or electronics. They are also available from online vendors. The federal government is offering each household up to two \$40 discount coupons. Request your coupons online at [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) or by phone at 1.888.388.2009.

### How to use your coupon

Your coupons will arrive in the mail several weeks after you apply for them. A list of nearby stores that accept coupons will be included. Coupons can also be used online with certified vendors. Your coupons will look like a credit card or gift card. They expire 90 days after issue. Once expired, they cannot be replaced. When you use your coupon, your cost per converter box should be only \$10 - \$30. Coupons are only valid toward purchase of government certified boxes. Packaging on these boxes will be clearly marked. Coupons cannot be combined and do not cover sales tax or shipping charges.

### How to choose the right converter box

Every converter box will switch your TV from analog to digital. Coupon-eligible boxes all contain the same basic features: display options, on-screen program guides, parental controls, closed captioning and a remote control, among others. The most important feature to look for is ANALOG PASS-THROUGH, which allows reception of *both* analog and digital channels now and after the switch. Analog pass-through will allow you to continue to receive low-power signals or translator signals that remain analog after the digital switch.

**Analog pass-through boxes are now widely available and offer greater viewing flexibility. OPB recommends that everyone purchase a converter box with analog pass-through.**

*Consumer Reports* has reviewed some converter boxes. You can find information at [consumerreports.org](http://consumerreports.org) and [hearusnow.org](http://hearusnow.org), or check their magazines at your local library. OPB engineers and staff are also testing boxes. Contact the OPB Member Center for current recommendations.

### Will I need a new antenna?

Probably not. If your current set-top, roof-top or attic antenna provides good reception for all local stations, it should work with your converter box or new digital TV. However, analog and digital TV signals behave differently, so some households may need to upgrade to a better antenna. If you live in an area of fringe reception, have hills around your house, live at some distance from transmitters, or have large buildings, trees or other objects nearby, you may have problems getting a stable digital signal. Since digital reception is "all or nothing," a weak signal may translate to seeing nothing on the screen.

### Antenna tips

- For best reception, you should have a combination antenna, designed for reception of both VHF (2-13) and UHF (14-51) channels. Digital broadcasts in most areas use both ranges.
- If your home receives TV signals from different directions, you may need a multi-directional antenna.
- An amplified antenna may help boost a weak signal, but since it's possible to have bad reception due to *too much* signal, try an unamplified antenna first.

- While a good indoor antenna should be better than older rabbit ears, any outdoor antenna is likely to be better than an indoor one. Higher and closer to transmitters is usually best. Basic indoor antennas start at about \$10, outdoor models at about \$50.
- A neighbor's antenna solution may be a good guide to yours.
- Buy from a store with a good return policy, in case your first choice of antenna doesn't produce the signal you need. You can then upgrade in stages.
- **Antennaweb.org** is an excellent Web site for antenna information and advice. Enter your home address and you'll find the distance and precise direction to local TV broadcasts, as well as a customized report with antenna recommendations. If you don't have access to a computer or the Internet, your local library can help you visit the site and print out your report, or you can call our Member Center and we can run the report and mail it to you.

### Where you live matters!

The national switch to digital TV on June 12 is *not* universal. Many low-power broadcasters and rural translators will continue analog broadcasts beyond that day. Most of them will switch later, on a schedule that is still to be determined. If you live in an area served by translators or low-power stations, and if you need a converter box to make the switch, it is essential that you get a converter box with the ANALOG PASS-THROUGH feature. OPB recommends this feature for all people purchasing converter boxes. Analog pass-through will leave you prepared for *any* switch schedule in your area.

If you elect to purchase a new TV, all currently manufactured TVs are required to have both an analog and digital tuner, so you'll be all set.

### How you receive OPB

The OPB transmitters making the full digital switch at midnight on June 12 are: Channel 10 from Portland, 7 from Corvallis, 28 from Eugene, 3 from Bend and 13 from La Grande.

**If you watch OPB on any channel other than those listed above, you watch an analog translator and must get a converter box with analog pass-through.** Also note that while OPB is fully digital in La Grande and soon will be in Baker City (on channel 20), other stations in these cities are still analog, making analog pass-through necessary in these areas too.

### All OPB digital channels are available to everyone for free over-the-air

If you're within range of an OPB transmitter, you'll have immediate access to the full range of digital TV as soon as you hook up your converter box or purchase a new digital TV. You'll get new channels, see an improved picture and hear better sound. You'll have new viewing options that are possible only with digital TV.

OPB is already broadcasting three digital channels: OPB, OPB HD and OPB-Plus.

### If you choose to buy a new TV

There's nothing about the digital switch that requires you to purchase a new TV set. If you do choose to upgrade to the higher quality of a digital TV, here are some consumer tips.

- Digital sets come in both standard definition (SD) and high definition (HD).
- While HD will provide the most beautiful TV picture you've ever watched, HD sets are significantly more expensive than standard definition.
- An SD TV receives the same channels and programs as an HD set, though HD programs will display in standard definition only.
- Be certain that any set you buy contains an ATSC digital tuner. Stores are required by law to clearly label any set that is not digital.
- There are many features and options to consider, and prices vary widely. It's best to educate yourself first and to take time to shop around and compare. *Consumer Reports* has offered extensive coverage of digital TVs over the last year. You can find information online at [consumerreports.org](http://consumerreports.org), or in magazines at your local library.

### Will my VCR or DVD player/recorder work with a digital converter box?

It depends on how you use your VCR or DVD device. It will continue to work if you use it only to:

- play tapes or DVDs
- record the same channel you are currently watching, or
- record a single channel in your absence.

Unless you have a new DVD recorder with its own ATSC digital tuner, you will need a separate converter box for your VCR or DVD device if you record one channel while watching another.

## PASS IT ON

### Share these digital TV tips with family and friends

Check on your neighbors – especially seniors and people who might need some extra help.

Help make sure that everyone continues to have access to OPB for free for years to come.



### You'll love the new digital OPB!

**Call our Member Center**  
1.800.241.8123

**Email us**  
[membercenter@opb.org](mailto:membercenter@opb.org)

**Find out more**  
[opb.org/digital](http://opb.org/digital)



# ARE YOU DIGITAL READY?

It's time to take action.  
Choose from one of these options:

## OPTION

# A

- Purchase a digital converter box to add to each of your TVs
- One-time cost: \$10-\$30 with coupon provided by the federal government
- Ongoing cost: None

## OPTION

# B

- Purchase a new digital or high definition (HD) TV
- One-time cost: \$150-\$5000+
- Ongoing cost: None

## OPTION

# C

- Subscribe to a cable or satellite service
- Ongoing cost: \$20-150/month

# YOUR TV PLANNER

Make sure every TV in your home is ready

| TV Location | Solution                 |                          |                          |                          |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|             | Get converter box        | Replace TV               | Cable/Satellite          | Digital Already          |
| Living room | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family room | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Kitchen     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bedroom     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Garage      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DVD/VCR     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



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**OPB is your source for the facts about digital TV**

**Are you ready?**