



# 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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## **FCC Adopts Rules to Ensure all Cable Customers Receive Local TV Stations After the Digital Television Transition**

*Washington, D.C.* – The Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) today adopted rules to ensure all cable subscribers, including those with analog TV sets, can view broadcast television after the transition to digital television occurs on February 17, 2009. Approximately 35 percent of all television homes, or approximately 40 million households, are analog-only cable subscribers. The Commission is committed to ensuring that the 98 million TV viewers watching roughly 120 million sets retain the same access to their local stations after the transition as they do today.

By statute, cable operators must make local broadcasters’ primary video and program-related material viewable by *all* of their subscribers. The FCC’s ruling today allows cable operators to comply with the viewability requirement by choosing to either: (1) carry the digital signal in analog format, or (2) carry the signal only in digital format, provided that all subscribers have the necessary equipment to view the broadcast content. The viewability requirements extend to February 2012 with the Commission committing to review them during the last year of this period in light of the state of technology and the marketplace.

In addition, a cable system with activated channel capacity of 552 megahertz or less may request a waiver of the viewability requirements. The Commission is also seeking comment in a Further Notice on ways to minimize any economic impact on small cable operators while still complying with the statutory requirements for carriage of local TV stations.

While the item provides cable operators with flexibility, the FCC reaffirmed the requirement that cable systems must carry high definition (“HD”) broadcast signals in HD format and reaffirmed its current material degradation standard. Cable operators must carry broadcast signals so that the picture quality is at least as good as the quality of any other programming carried on the system.

Action by the Commission September 11, 2007 by Memorandum, Opinion and Order (FCC 07-170). Chairman Martin, Commissioners Copps, Tate and McDowell with Commissioner Adelstein approving in part and dissenting in part. Separate statements issued by Chairman Martin Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, Tate and McDowell

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