



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. Cir. 1974).

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THURSDAY “SOFT TEST” IS WAKE-UP CALL FOR DTV READINESS

Analog Programming to be Interrupted with Reminders to Prepare for DTV Transition
List of Local DTV Transition Help Resources Available at www.dtv.gov

Washington, D.C. – With only three weeks left until the nationwide digital television (DTV) transition on June 12, many local broadcasters will be participating in coordinated DTV “soft tests” Thursday. These tests are designed to alert analog viewers who are unprepared for the impending transition that they will lose service once the transition occurs unless they act promptly to get ready.

A “soft test” simulates to some extent what unprepared viewers will experience when the DTV transition occurs. Instead of completely cutting off the analog signal, during the soft test broadcasters will interrupt the regular programming of viewers receiving analog signals to warn them the interruption indicates they are not prepared for the transition. Such viewers – other than those connected to a subscription TV service such as cable or satellite (which in some cases still utilize a broadcaster’s analog signal) – must take immediate action to avoid a complete loss of service on June 12. Digital broadcasts are available now and will not be interrupted by the soft tests. The length of the interruptions will vary by station but generally will run between 2 and 5 minutes. To learn whether broadcasters in your area are participating, please visit the Federal Communication Commission’s soft test information page located at www.dtv.gov/media_toolkit.html.

“The soft test is a wake-up call to consumers telling them that the time to get ready for the DTV transition is now,” said Acting FCC Chairman Michael Copps. “We don’t want anyone to be left without the news, information and entertainment they need and enjoy. If you’re having trouble getting ready, you can get help right in your community and even in your own home by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC.”

Nationwide, Nielsen estimates that about 3.3 million households – 2.9 percent of U.S. households with TVs – remained unready for the transition as of May 10. In the few weeks remaining before the transition, the FCC is gearing up its ongoing consumer assistance efforts to ensure consumers are prepared for the end of analog broadcast service for full-power television stations.

Because the news media play a crucial role in reaching consumers who have yet to prepare for the transition, the FCC has provided a DTV Media Toolkit (http://www.dtv.gov/media_toolkit.html) containing information about the transition, including local statistics and reception information, answers to frequently asked questions, media contacts and other important resources. Information about DTV transition assistance in your local area will be updated regularly on www.dtv.gov and include details about walk-in centers, events where consumers can get technical help and free in-home installation.

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 attach digital-to-analog converter boxes to their televisions in order to continue receiving over-the-air television programming.

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 it makes room for the future by clearing airwaves for advanced mobile Internet services.

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More information about the DTV transition can be found
at www.dtv.gov