

TECHNOLOGY IN OUR LIVES

New Program Changes TV

(NAPSA)—Regardless of your favorite TV show, odds are you'll want to tune in to the details of a federal law that is soon to take effect.

At midnight on Feb. 17, 2009, all full-power television broadcast stations are required to stop broadcasting in analog format (a transmission that can be picked up for free by older-model analog TVs with antennae) and broadcast only in digital. Congress called for the switch to all-digital television (DTV) broadcasting in an effort to free up frequencies for police, fire and other public safety communications, among other things.


According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), people who have analog televisions will need to purchase a digital-to-analog set-top converter box to be able to view over-the-air broadcasts once the switch occurs. Consumers who have digital televisions but don't subscribe to a cable or satellite service will not need converter boxes to continue to view local broadcast stations.

Consumers who receive their local broadcast channels through a cable or satellite television service, such as DirecTV (which has been delivering 100 percent digital signals since its inception in 1994), will not be affected by the transition.

Consumers should know that the digital transition does not mean they will automatically get HD. They must have an HDTV set and an HD receiver and subscribe to an HD programming package.

DirecTV, for example, offers more than 130 HD channels and provides both HD and digital video-recording technology in one set-top box.

The digital transition will open the door for many consumers to the latest advances in TV technology, like digital video recording. DirecTV's DVR, for example, includes an easy-to-use search function that allows viewers to locate exactly what they want to

People who have analog televisions will need to purchase a digital-to-analog set-top converter box to be able to view over-the-air broadcasts once the switch occurs. 

watch and record, and record one show while watching another.

There's even a series link feature that enables the viewer to record every episode of a show and an interactive feature that provides access to personalized information such as horoscopes, local weather and lottery results.

As a final tip, keep in mind that any TV set sold after May 25, 2007 should have contained a digital tuner—meaning it would likely not need modification to accommodate the broadcasting switch—or should have been identified at the store as not having one. Be sure to look for this label if you're in the market for a new TV.

For more information, visit www.directv.com.