

Don't Toss That TV! What to Do With Your Old TV

Background

Oregon E-Cycles, Oregon's new statewide electronics recycling program, wants to remind Oregonians that the upcoming, federally mandated switch to digital-only broadcasting in June 2009 does not mean people will have to discard their existing TVs. This Q & A sheet answers some of the main questions you may have about the digital switch and how you can help keep old or discarded TVs out of the waste stream.

What is the switch to digital TV?

Congress passed legislation in 2005 requiring all U.S. TV stations to switch from analog to digital-only broadcasting by Feb. 17, 2009. This deadline was later extended to June 12, 2009. However, some TV stations may make the transition before that date, so be ready! The switch will free up airwaves for public safety communications (i.e., police, fire and emergency rescue) and wireless services.

Additionally, digital broadcasting will provide better picture quality and sound. Digital TV also allows stations to "multicast" – or broadcast multiple channels using the same bandwidth – resulting in more programming options.

Why is DEQ concerned about the switch?

Oregonians have questions about whether or not their TVs will work after the switch. Many may be contemplating discarding TVs when they really don't have to. As Oregon's solid waste management authority, DEQ wants residents to make environmentally sound decisions based on their needs, and to understand the options they have in dealing with the digital switch.

What's the best thing to do environmentally?

Keeping your existing TV is the best option, both environmentally and financially. **You do not need to purchase a new TV to receive programming after the switch.** You may, however, need to take some simple steps to ensure continued service. What you need to do depends on the source of your programming (cable or satellite service or free broadcasting) and the type of TV you have (digital or analog).

If you are a cable or satellite subscriber, your digital or analog TV will continue to work after the switch. If you use an antenna, your digital TV will continue to work after the switch; your analog TV will continue to work after the switch with a *converter box*.

What should I do with my old TV?

If you do choose to purchase a new digital TV and your old TV is in working condition, you have several options:

- Keep the old TV as a second set for games, videos and DVDs
- Give your old TV to a friend or donate it to a second-hand store
- Recycle it

If your old TV is no longer working, recycle it. TVs and other consumer electronics contain materials that can be reclaimed and used again. They also contain toxic components, which a responsible recycler can safely dispose of.

As of Jan. 1, 2009, Oregonians can recycle their old TVs (as well as computers and monitors) through Oregon E-Cycles. This program, which is administered by DEQ and financed by electronics manufacturers, provides free recycling to anyone bringing seven or fewer computers, monitors and TVs at a time to participating collection sites. After Jan. 1, 2010, the disposal of computers, monitors and TVs will be prohibited in Oregon.

For more information, including how to locate Oregon E-Cycles collection sites, see DEQ's Web site at:

www.oregonecycles.org.

I'm a cable or satellite subscriber. Do I need to do anything?

If you're a cable or satellite subscriber, regardless of whether you have an analog or digital TV, ask your service provider if any action is needed. Some services may require a new cable box in order to receive digital broadcasts.

Please note that a cable box is not the same as a converter box. A cable box, if necessary, will be supplied by your service provider. Many cable companies have already informed their



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customers of the need to make this change and are actively providing cable boxes. You do not need a converter box if you're a cable or satellite subscriber.

I use an antenna to receive free broadcasting. What should I do?

If you have a digital TV, your TV will continue to work with an antenna after the switch. If you have an analog TV, the easiest and most inexpensive option is to purchase a converter box. A converter box plugs into your TV and, when used with an antenna, allows your TV to receive digital broadcasting after the switch.

Until March 31, 2009, households can request up to two \$40 coupons from the federal government toward the purchase of eligible converter boxes, which cost between \$50 and \$70. Converter boxes are available at consumer electronics retailers nationwide.

To request coupons for digital converter boxes and view a list of participating retailers, visit the TV Converter Box Coupon Program's Web site at www.dtv2009.gov or call 1-888-DTV-2009.

Please note: The TV Converter Box Coupon Program has reached its funding limit. You may apply to be put on a waiting list. When funds from expiring coupons become available, coupons will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

How can I tell if my TV is digital or analog?

If your TV is more than a few years old, it's likely an analog set. Check the owner's manual, the manufacturer's Web site or the device itself for indication that it contains an Advanced Television Systems Committee (ASTC) tuner, also known as a "digital tuner." Please note that being "digital-ready" is not the same thing as having a digital tuner.

Will my VCR or DVD player work with a converter box?

Yes. Your existing VCR, DVD player, TiVo and other analog equipment you use with your TV will work with a converter box. However, if you want to watch one station and record another at the same time, you'll need an additional converter box for your recording device.

Where can I find more information?

Contact Oregon E-Cycles at 1.888.5.ECYCLE or ecycle.info@deq.state.or.us if you have questions about TV recycling and disposal, or check DEQ's Web site at: www.oregonecycles.org

For more information on the switch to digital television, visit the TV Converter Box Coupon Program's Web site at www.dtv2009.gov.

Alternative formats

Alternative formats (Braille, large type) of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ's Office of Communications and Outreach, Portland, at (503) 229-5696, or call toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696, for more information.