



The New DTV Transition Date Requires Your Immediate Action

If you plan to end your analog signal on February 17, you must file new forms with the FCC by today, Feb. 9. The digital television (DTV) transition hard date has been changed by Congress to June 12, 2009. However, many broadcast stations may still need to turn off their analog signal before June 12. For those that plan to end analog broadcasting before June 12, please read this carefully.

On February 5, 2009, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced updated procedures and filing requirements for stations that plan to turn off their analog signal prior to June 12. This includes stations that still plan to turn off their analog signal on February 17.

To read the FCC's latest Public Notice on new DTV transition procedures, please [click here](#). If you plan to end analog transmissions before June 12, we strongly encourage you to contact your station's counsel.

Below is an outline of the specific steps stations must take to ensure compliance with the latest FCC rules. Because the steps vary based on when a station will be turning off its analog signal, it is crucial that broadcast stations read the steps that apply to their station's analog shutoff date.

Note that any broadcaster choosing to terminate analog service before June 12 must adhere to all FCC interference and notification rules. In the event that a station decides to terminate early, it may not be able to maximize its digital signal or move to its final post-transition channel until June 12.

If you are already scheduled to turn off your analog signal on February 16 or earlier:

- You must re-notify the FCC by Monday, February 9, 2009 (11:59 p.m. EST) of your intention to terminate your analog signal early.
- You must use the Consolidated Database System (CDBS) informal application filing form to confirm the early shutoff, even though you have previously notified the FCC. For instructions on how to file this new notification with the FCC, see footnote 11 of the Public Notice. To access CDBS, [click here](#).

If you plan to turn off your analog signal on February 17, 2009:

- You must notify the FCC by Monday, February 9, 2009 (11:59 p.m. EST) of your intention to terminate your analog signal on this date. The FCC now considers this an early shutoff.
- Even if you have already filed with the FCC your intention to turn off your analog signal on Feb. 17, you must still submit another notification with the FCC. For instructions on how to file this new notification with the FCC, see footnote 11 of the Public Notice.
- If you have not previously done so, you must also update your Transition Status Report (Form 387) to reflect an "early shutoff" on Feb. 17.
- If you notify the FCC of your intention to end analog transmissions on Feb. 17, you must adhere to that schedule. In other words, except in cases of equipment failure or emergency, the FCC will not allow stations to change the date once they have filed.
- You must air the equivalent of 30 days worth of "viewer notifications" before February 17 (see below).

Viewer Notification Requirements for Feb. 17 Shutoff:

- Stations must air 120 total viewer notifications, such as a combination of public service announcements (PSA) and/or crawls, prior to a Feb. 17 shutoff.

- Thirty of these notifications must be aired in primetime. For example, if you begin to air notifications on Feb. 7, you would have to air 12 total viewer notifications per day, three of which must be in primetime.
- Notifications must be aired daily.
- Notifications should be distributed evenly over the remaining days until the shutoff.

New Crawl Requirements to be Aired February 10-17:

- In addition, stations will be required to broadcast a crawl during every hour of the station's analog broadcast day on the dates between Feb. 10 and Feb. 17.
- Between Feb. 10 and Feb. 15, stations will be required to scroll the crawl for five minutes every hour.
- On the final two days, Feb. 16 and 17, broadcasters will be required to scroll the crawl for 10 minutes every hour.
- All PSAs and crawls should "adequately and clearly communicate the required information" about the station's planned early termination and should "make particular note that the date the station is terminating is prior to the new nationwide date of June 12, 2009."
- For information on what should be included in these viewer notifications, [click here](#).

Note that all viewer notifications and final week crawls are to be aired in addition to DTV consumer education requirements, including DTV spots, daily countdowns and crawls, snipes and/or tickers. [Click here](#).

If you plan to turn off your analog signal between February 18 and March 13, 2009:

- According to the FCC, stations will not be allowed to terminate analog operations between Feb. 18 and March 13, 2009 except in cases of equipment failure.

If you plan to turn off your analog signal between March 14 and June 12, 2009:

- You must notify the FCC at least 30 days prior to your planned termination date.
- You must provide viewer notifications for at least 30 days prior to your planned termination date.
- Such viewer notifications must be aired on your analog channel at least four times a day, including at least once in primetime, for at least 30 days prior to the planned early termination.
- You must utilize a combination of PSAs and crawls, if technically feasible, to clearly communicate your station's intent to terminate analog service prior to June 12, 2009.
- For information on what should be included in these viewer notifications, [click here](#).

If you plan to turn off your analog signal on June 12, 2009:

- As this is the new hard date, the FCC is not requiring any unique procedures or special notifications.

Stations are encouraged to coordinate with fellow local broadcasters and local multichannel video programming distribution (MVPD) providers, especially if they are planning early analog termination.

The FCC is encouraging stations that terminate their analog signal on February 17, 2009, to continue to broadcast on their analog signal information regarding their transition and, if necessary, emergency information. The FCC recently implemented "analog nightlight" service in anticipation of the planned February 17, 2009 DTV transition deadline in compliance with the Analog Nightlight Act. The FCC says this DTV transition information is particularly important to limit viewer confusion in light of the change in DTV transition deadline and the station's termination of normal analog programming. The FCC urges stations to air this analogous nightlight programming for a minimum of two weeks following their termination of normal analog programming. Stations that intend to provide this limited programming should so indicate in their analog termination notification to the FCC.

Also note that the FCC "reserves the right to limit or reconsider this partial waiver in the event that it determines that analog termination on February 17 by a station or group of stations is contrary to the public interest. In such event, the FCC will promptly notify the affected station or stations."

If you have questions about these new procedures, please contact the NAB Legal Department at (202) 429-5430.

NAB/MSTV Digital Converter Box Report Released

In the summer and fall of 2008, MSTV and NAB undertook a testing and evaluation program on a selected number of commercially available digital-to-analog converter boxes. A total of eighteen different manufacturer/brand models were acquired at physical or online retail outlets and tested to evaluate their RF performance, ease of use, and the packaging and instructional literature included as well as their external features and functionality. All of the converter boxes evaluated were certified for coupon eligibility under the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) converter box coupon program.

The digital-to-analog converter boxes were evaluated in three separate categories. The first category, RF performance, was intended to assess the over-the-air reception capability of these boxes relative to the performance of the original MSTV/NAB prototype hardware developed in 2006 (the range of measured performance results for the prototype converter boxes developed for NAB/MSTV by Thomson and LG, compared with ATSC A/74 recommended levels, are available [here](#)) and the specifications established by NTIA for certifying these boxes as coupon eligible. The second category, user interface and ease of use, assessed various features associated with the installation and operation of these boxes, including the initial powering/setting-up of the converter box, functionality of the remote control, availability of an advanced program guide and closed captioning, channel scanning and the ability to manually add channels after scanning. The last category, external features, accessories and packaging, assessed the size, weight, shape and construction of the converter boxes, as well as front and back panel features, accessories and instructional literature included in the packaging.

After initial evaluation of all eighteen digital-to-analog converter boxes to determine their relative RF performance ranking, eight boxes were selected for further in-depth evaluation by a professional testing laboratory. The evaluations were conducted by the firms of Meintel, Sgrignoli & Wallace, and Wavetech Services and their findings are included in the report.

The complete report, along with operations manuals for the 18 converter boxes can be accessed in the Reports section at www.NABFASTROAD.org. NAB's funding for this project was provided by NAB's technology advocacy program, NAB FASTROAD (Flexible Advanced Services for Television & Radio On All Devices).

