

NTIA'S FINAL RULES ON COUPON PROGRAM REQUIRE MINIMUM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND FEATURES FOR DTV TO ANALOG CONVERTER BOXES

On March 12, 2007, NTIA announced that it had completed its Rulemaking for the coupon program for digital converter boxes to enable continued reception of TV by NTSC sets directly connected to an antenna after February 17, 2009. The Coupon-Eligible Converter Box (CECB) was the name chosen for this unit. The Final Rules were published on March 13, and will become effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. The rules, which will become 47CFR Part 301, describe and define who is eligible to obtain up to two coupons (and how they get them); the considerations in defining the coupons themselves; the approval process for manufacturers; and how retailers must participate.

Importantly, the required technical performance parameters are identical to those recommended jointly by NAB, MSTV and CEA.

Technical Appendix 1 establishes what is required and Technical Appendix 2 establishes what is permitted (but not required) and not permitted in order to be classified as a Coupon-Eligible Converter Box. In addition to the sensitivity, dynamic range, phase noise, interference rejection, echo handling, PSIP, decoding, and I/O requirements that were adopted based on the NAB/MSTV/CEA proposal; the following are required:

- Meet all applicable FCC rules
- A remote control with batteries
- 75 Ω RF NTSC output on Channel 3 or 4 shall have video and audio
- Baseband video and stereo audio output connectors with left and right stereo when stereo broadcast
- Consume not more than 2 watts in sleep mode (no max power limit specified when operating) and automatic power shutoff feature
- Remote control codes for the included remote control printed in the manual
- LED indicating unit is on
- RF cable for connection to TV set
- Received signal quality indication on the NTSC set's display

The following features are permitted but not required:

- Smart Antenna interface connector
- 300 Ω balun or separate 300 Ω connections
- Ability to pass through NTSC RF signal
- S-Video output
- Processing of associated audio services (other than the Complete Main)
- Choice of either monaural or stereo audio on RF output
- Support for software download
- Display of "other" program information
- Programmable universal remote control
- Dedicated keys on remote for Closed Captioning and descriptive video
- Operation on batteries
- Additional interconnect cables
- Additional signal quality meter display
- Compliance with Energy Star program

The general disqualifying criteria is: "Any device or capability which provides for more than simply converting over-the-air television signal (ATSC) for display on an analog television receiver (NTSC), including but not limited to: Integrated video display; Video or audio recording or playback capability such as VCR, DVD, HDDVD, BlueRay, etc." Technical Appendix 2 also asserts that CECBs cannot have outputs such as YP_{bPr}, DVI, HDMI, VCG, USB, 1394, 802.3, and 802.11. The retailer cannot condition sale of a CECB on purchase of another item, such as a smart antenna.

Final Rules can be accessed at

http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/frnotices/2007/DTVFinalRule_031207.htm. Press releases and information packaged for the public is currently available a <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/index.htm>.

More Information on DST Changes

Broadcasters should check with the manufacturer(s) of their EAS equipment regarding issues related to the recent daylight saving time change. SBE Chapter 24 (Madison, Wisconsin) has posted a web page entitled "EAS encoder update information regarding change in Daylight Saving Time start/end dates" which may also be helpful - go to <http://www.sbe24.org/eas/dst.asp>.



Check Out The 2007 NAB Broadcast Engineering Conference Summary Of Presentations

Summaries of all of the 2007 NAB Broadcast Engineering Conference presentations are now available [online](http://www.nabshow.com/). Additional details on registration and housing are on the <http://www.nabshow.com/>.

Sign up now for NAB's June Satellite Uplink Operators Training Seminar



Whether you are a satellite uplink operator, engineer or even a technical manager who just wishes to become more familiar with satellite communications, NAB's Satellite Uplink Operators Training Course is for you. This four-day course is designed to instruct students in the proper technical and operational practices that will ensure

safe, successful and interference free satellite transmissions. The course will be offered June 4-7, 2007 in at NAB's headquarters in Washington DC. For more information call Cheryl Coleridge at (202) 429-5346 or go to [NAB Satellite Uplink Operators Seminar](http://www.nabshow.com/).

ATSC Digital VSB Fundamentals Seminar

Wednesday April 11, 2007

MGM-Grand Hotel

Las Vegas, NV

A one-day seminar on the ATSC's digital television (DTV) vestigial sideband (VSB) transmission system will be presented on April 11 at the MGM-Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. The seminar will help attendees develop a fundamental understanding of the digital VSB transmission system and its performance attributes as well as current practical application information. Hosted by the PBS Technology Conference the seminar will be talk by DTV transmission engineer, Gary Sgrignoli. The seminar is open to all engineers. For additional information contact Gary Sgrignoli, Meintel, Sgrignoli & Wallace at (847) 259-3352 or Gary. Sgrignoli@IEEE.org or Tricia Moore, PBS, (703) 739-3224, <mailto:tmoore@pbs.org>.