

Making Your Digital TV Transition List and Checking it Twice

Checklist for Alaskans

To help you make a smooth transition to digital television, KUAC recommends the following tips:

- **Perform channel set-up/re-scan periodically.**
 - To ensure you're seeing KUAC's channels in your area, **KUAC TV 9, Create, World, UATV/FNX** and audio only radio **KUAC1, KUAC2** and **KUAC3**, consult your tuner manual and conduct a channel set-up or re-scan the day after the transition and monthly thereafter.
- **Check/remove non-compatible splitters.**
 - Remove any old or unused splitters.
 - Strive for the shortest antenna line possible.
- **Remove extra/unused devices.**
 - Remove any analog VCRs or TVs that are still hooked up. Additional devices can lead to signal loss.
- **Upgrade your antenna.**
 - You can still use rabbit ears, just make sure they are "digital ready" or "HD ready".
- **Check your outdoor antenna.**
 - Antennas can be moved by strong wind or damaged. Check that your outdoor antenna is still in good shape and pointed in the right direction, to determine the best angle to get to your local stations visit www.antennaweb.org
- **Raise the height of your outdoor antenna.**
 - If your outdoor antenna worked fine for analog television but isn't performing up to snuff for digital TV, consider raising the height.

Scanning

For what types of situations do I need to rescan?

You should rescan your converter box or TV set for channels when installing equipment for the first time, and after repositioning or moving an antenna around. You may want to consider rescanning on a periodic basis to get all of the digital programming available.

How often should I rescan?

Re-scan or reset your channel line-up every few weeks. Check your owner's manual for instructions on how to re-scan your TV or converter box.

VCR's

What about my VCR, DVD player, camcorder, and gaming console? Will I be able to use them with a digital television set?

Yes. Digital television sets are “backward compatible,” meaning existing analog equipment (VCRs, DVD players, camcorders, video games, etc.) will work on digital TV sets. However, their video will only be displayed in the maximum resolution that is available with each analog product. Manufacturers are producing a number of different connectors to hook equipment together and improve picture and sound quality when DTVs are used with existing analog equipment. Check with your retailer to determine the types of connectors that will work with your equipment.

Will my VCR or DVD player still work after I plug a converter box into my TV?

Yes. However, after the digital transition, the analog tuner in your VCR will not be able to pick up over-the-air programs for recording. Instead, the input to the VCR must be connected to the output of the DTV converter box. You must set the converter box tuner to the channel you want to record prior to the start of the timed recording programmed in the VCR.

Antennas

Will I need a special antenna to receive DTV over-the-air?

In general, dependable reception of over-the-air digital TV programming will require the same type of signal reception equipment that currently works to provide good quality reception of analog TV programming. If you need a roof-top antenna to receive analog TV broadcasts, the same antenna generally will work to receive digital TV broadcasts. You should not have to purchase new antennas that are marketed as “digital ready” or “HD ready.”

I have an old antenna that attaches to my TV with two wires. Will I be able to use a converter box with this antenna?

Yes, but you will need to get two adapters (also called "baluns" or "matching transformers," which are pictured below). Unscrew the existing twin-lead antenna wire from your TV “Antenna In” twin-lead terminals. Attach the existing twin-lead antenna wire to the twin-lead terminals on the twin-lead adaptor (first picture below). Then plug the twin-lead adaptor’s coaxial connector into the “Antenna In (RF)” port on the Converter Box. Using coaxial wire, plug one end into the “Out To TV (RF)” port on the Converter Box. Plug the other end into a coaxial adaptor (second picture below). Then attach the coaxial adaptor to your TV “Antenna In” twin-lead terminals.

How is this different from having cable in my building?

If you subscribe to the cable TV service offered in your city or town, or if you subscribe individually to satellite TV service and receive local channels through your own satellite dish, you will continue to receive your local broadcast channels without having to buy a digital television or DTV converter box. KUAC TV is broadcast via GCI over the following channels: 6 UATV/FNX, 9 KUAC, 93 World, 94 Create, 657 KUAC HD.

I don't have an antenna. Will I still get reception after the transition?

Antennas can be either indoor or outdoor. If you live in a home or apartment building, there may be an antenna on the roof or a master antenna distribution system to the building residents. If you subscribe to a cable or satellite service, then nothing will change, and you will continue getting reception as usual. However, if you don't subscribe to a pay TV service, then you are actually using an antenna but may not know it.

Do I need to buy a new antenna?

Receiving VHF and UHF signals require different types of antenna elements. Many antennas are designed as combo units and will receive both VHF Channels 2-13 and UHF Channels 14-51 signals.

What's the difference between indoor and outdoor antennas?

There are several types of antennas ranging from the common indoor "rabbit ears" to large outdoor antennas. While the antenna you are using for analog reception may work satisfactorily for DTV, newer designs may work better in some situations. Outdoor antennas, which are usually mounted on a rooftop, are preferable in areas with difficult reception. The best antenna type for you depends on how far you are from the transmitting station, whether you live in a house or an apartment, and whether there are hills, tall buildings or large trees near your home.

How much does an antenna cost?

Depending on the selected features, antennas can cost anywhere between \$10 and \$100 (plus the installation charge for an outdoor antenna) and are sold at electronics retailers nationwide.

Where can I get help determining which antenna is right for me?

Consumers can find suggestions for appropriate outdoor antennas by entering their street address at www.antennaweb.org. Using geographical maps and signal strengths, the site's database predicts which stations are available at a particular location, the type of antenna needed and which direction the antenna needs to be pointed.

Simple Summary

If your TV set is:	And you get your programming from:	You will need the following:
Analog	Over the air by antenna	Converter box & suitable antenna
Analog	Cable or satellite	Nothing more
Digital	Over the air by antenna	Suitable antenna
Digital	Cable or satellite	Nothing more

Standard Terms and Definitions

Analog Spectrum

A traditional, less-efficient and lower quality system that uses radio frequency (RF) waves to transmit and display pictures and sound.

ATSC Tuner

Often called an ATSC receiver or HDTV tuner, allows reception of digital television (DTV) signals broadcast over-the-air by TV stations. May be integrated into a television, VCR, digital video recorder, or set-top box.

Broadcast Spectrum

The entire range of frequencies used for radio and television transmission.

Broadcasting

Using radio waves to distribute radio or TV programs which are available for reception by the general public.

Department of Commerce (DOC)

Department whose responsibility is to "foster, serve, and promote the Nation's economic development and technological advancement".

Digital

Describes a new, more efficient method of storing, processing and transmitting information through the use of computer code.

Digital Television (DTV)

The umbrella term used for the new broadcasting system that uses computer code to transmit pictures and sounds. DTV includes all types of digital broadcasting, including High and Standard Definition television, datacasting and multicasting.

Digital-to-Analog Converter Box

A stand-alone device that receives and converts digital signals into a format for display on an analog television receiver.

High-Definition Television (HDTV)

One type of digital television signal that is broadcast at a higher resolution than the others, providing a higher-quality picture.

Household

All of the people who occupy a housing unit. A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other people in the building and that have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall.

Multicasting

The ability to transmit multiple standard-definition programs at the same time using a single digital broadcast channel.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

The President's principal adviser on telecommunications and information policy issues.

NTSC Tuner

A device built-in to a TV that allows reception of analog broadcasting.

Over-the-air

Refers to the transmission and reception of information in a wireless communication system.

Rabbit ears

A V-shaped set-top antenna that is adjustable in length and angle.

Resolution

Amount of detail that can be seen in a broadcast image.

Rooftop antenna

An antenna mounted on the roof of a structure.

Set-top box

Standard Definition TV (SDTV)

The basic digital television format closest in quality to traditional analog TV.