

ARIZONA ATTORNEY GENERAL
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The following is a My Turn column by Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard and Art Brooks, President and CEO of the Arizona Broadcasters Association.

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Are You Ready for the Next Generation of Television?

Imagine waking up on February 18, 2009, grabbing your cup of morning coffee, turning on the TV and seeing...absolutely nothing.

Monday, November 10, marked the 100-day countdown to the federally mandated switch from analog to digital broadcasting. The Digital Television (DTV) transition will take place across the nation on February 17, 2009.

The DTV transition is the biggest change in broadcast television since the advent of color television in the 1950s. Much like that transition, the switch to DTV will provide a wealth of benefits for viewers who receive over the air broadcast signals. Most notably, digital television will offer viewers a clearer picture, better sound quality and more free channels.

The Arizona Attorney General's Office and Arizona Broadcasters Association (ABA) are working to make sure that all Arizonans are prepared to make this switch smoothly and safely. Over 369,500 Arizona households will have to make some modifications to continue receiving their television signal after the February change. The following tips should help you understand if you are affected, what to do to prepare and how to avoid falling victim to scam artists selling expensive or unnecessary equipment.

Are you ready for DTV?

If you subscribe to cable, satellite or other pay television service, you are already prepared for the digital transition. You do not need to take any additional steps to receive your television signal on February 17.

Consumers who receive free, over-the-air broadcasting signals through a set-top or roof-top antenna can still use an over-the-air antenna to receive their signal. If you recently purchased your television, check to see whether it is a "digital ready" television set. If so, then you, too, are prepared and do not need to take any additional steps.

If you receive your signal through an antenna and **do not** have a digital ready television set, you need to make of the following modifications before February 17:

1. Purchase a DTV converter box at your local electronic retailer. The federal government is offering two \$40 coupons per household towards the purchase of the converter boxes. Details about the coupon program are available on the National Association of Broadcasters' DTV Web site, www.dtvanswers.com, or by calling, toll free, 1-888-DTV-2009. Please note that the federal government will not re-issue lost or expired coupons.
2. Purchase a "digital ready" television set – a television set with a built-in digital tuner.
3. Subscribe to cable, satellite or other pay TV service. To see if all desired local broadcast stations are carried by that service, check with your local service provider.

Avoiding Frauds and Scams

We anticipate the transition to digital television will be a smooth one here in Arizona. But all consumers should be alert to unscrupulous businesses and scam artists trying to take advantage of people confused by the transition.

The Attorney General's Office recommends consumers take the following steps to protect themselves:

- Purchase converter boxes from a reputable electronics retailer. Be wary of vendors selling expensive converter equipment or installation packages. Most converter boxes retail for between \$40 and \$70 and contain instructions for self-installation.
- Do not obtain converter box coupons second hand or purchase them from someone trying to sell unused coupons. The only way to be certain you are receiving a legitimate coupon is to obtain it from the federal government. This can be done at www.DTV2009.com or by calling, toll-free, 1-888-DTV-2009.
- Setting up a converter box should be simple and quick for most consumers. If you do wish have assistance, be careful when inviting someone to do work in your home. Always compare the fees of several service providers, check references and agree on a price *in writing* before having any work done in your home.
- The DTV transition affects television only. It does not affect how you receive radio broadcasts or access the Internet.
- Understand the transition and the choices available to you. The federal government provides a great deal of information on the DTV transition at www.dtvanswers.com.

Both the ABA and the Attorney General's Office provide a number of additional resources to help consumers better understand this change to digital reception.

Over the next 100 days, the ABA will be hosting road shows, speaking at community events and airing public service announcements with details about the transition. For more information or to request an ABA speaker to participate in your community event, go to the ABA Web site, www.azbroadcasters.org or call 602-252-4833.

The Attorney General's Office Web site, www.azag.gov, offers links to numerous DTV resources as well as tips to avoid frauds and scams that could arise during the next 100 days. Any consumers who feel they have been victims of a fraud or scam should file a complaint on the Attorney General's Web site or call (602) 542-5763.

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