

DTV Transition Fact Sheet

On February 17, 2009, all full-power broadcast television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting on analog airwaves and begin broadcasting only in digital. Regardless of whether your company provides video service, your telco has been charged by the FCC with assisting the education of consumers about this transition to digital television.

What are the responsibilities of rural telephone companies?

All telephone companies that receive support from the Universal Service Fund must provide DTV transition information to their Lifeline/Link-Up customers. The information must be sent either:

- 1) in the form of a bill insert;
- 2) in the information section of the bill itself; or
- 3) as a stand-alone mailer (e.g. brochure, postcard) sent independently of the bill.

In addition, the same information must be provided as part of any other Lifeline/Link-Up publicity campaigns.

Multi-channel Video Programming Distributors (MVPDs) must comply with these same rules. Companies that provide both local voice and video service must provide notices for both services to their Lifeline/Link-Up customers.

What information should be provided?

The information your telco provides must be “noticeable”, and state that “on February 17, 2009, full-power analog broadcasting will end, and analog-only televisions may be unable to display full-power broadcasting programming unless the viewer takes action.”

The notice must also alert your customers that they can get more information on the DTV transition by going to www.DTV.gov. They can also obtain information about the converter box programs by going to www.dtv2009.gov or by calling the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) at 888-DTV-2009. You can also link to these sites through WTA’s website under “Agencies and Associations”.

The notice must be provided in the same language or languages as the bill. If the customer does not receive a paper bill from the ETC, then the customer must be provided with equivalent monthly transition notices in whatever medium they receive information about their monthly bill or as a stand-alone mailer.

When must the notices be sent?

All notices, whether in the form of a bill insert, printed on the bill itself, or sent in a stand-alone mailer, must be provided monthly through March 2009.

Note: The FCC is in the process of completing a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on this subject. Therefore, requirements for ETCs may continue to change.