



Consumer FAQs: TV Spectrum Auction

The Federal Communications Commission held a spectrum auction in April 2017 to help improve and expand wireless services across the country to meet the ever-increasing needs of American consumers for faster, higher capacity mobile broadband services. In the auction, TV broadcasters could voluntarily give up their current broadcast frequency in exchange for a share of the proceeds from an auction of their frequency to commercial wireless service providers.

What does this mean for you? Now that the auction is complete, some broadcast television stations will change frequencies, share a channel with another station, or, in some cases, go off the air. However, unless a station in your area is going off the air altogether, this will only affect you if you watch TV over the air using an antenna. If you subscribe to cable or satellite TV, your provider will make any necessary changes for you.

If you have over-the-air TV, there are a few steps you will need to take at the appropriate time. The FCC has worked with broadcasters to plan a post-auction transition that minimizes viewer inconvenience and confusion. Below you'll find answers to commonly-asked questions and links to helpful Commission resources.

For more information about the rescanning your television, visit www.fcc.gov/TVrescan.

When will stations make their moves?

Stations began transitioning to new frequencies April 13, 2017. You should monitor local TV broadcasts for public service announcements, “crawls” running across the bottom or top of your TV screen, and other notifications from your local TV stations to learn the exact date that a station in your area is making its transition. Stations changing frequencies are required to display updated information at least 30 days before their transition. You can also check the FCC's website at www.fcc.gov/media/engineering/dtvmaps for an interactive map that allows you to insert your address to see the frequency change timeframe for most local channels.

Will I need to do anything to continue watching TV over-the-air?

In general, no. You will not need to buy a new TV or purchase a converter box as you may have done during the transition to digital television in 2009. When one or more of your local TV stations move to a new frequency, the only action that you will need to take is to rescan your television set. Stations will provide notice in advance of such a change; however, if a TV channel you are used to seeing with your antenna is missing, you should rescan in case you missed a notice by that station. For information on how to rescan for channels, visit www.fcc.gov/TVrescan, and if you need extra help with the rescan, call 1-888-CALLFCC (1-888-225-5322), option #6, anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. (Eastern time), seven days a week.



Will I need to buy a new antenna?

In very limited cases, a local station may move from a UHF frequency to a VHF frequency, which may affect those few viewers who have a UHF-only TV antenna. For more information about over-the-air TV antennas, visit our guide at: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/antennas-and-digital-television.

Will cable and satellite still carry my local TV stations?

The post-auction broadcast transition will not impact current arrangements between TV stations and cable and satellite TV providers.

A few broadcast TV stations may move their transmission facilities as part of this process, which may affect which TV markets they're carried in as "local" stations. If they shift to a neighboring TV market, it may affect which cable and satellite systems carry their station. Please check with your cable TV or satellite TV provider if at any time you cannot find one of your local TV stations on their systems.

Consumer Help Center

For more information on other consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

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