

Receiving Broadcast TV Stations Dropped from Pay TV Service

Cable operators, satellite operators and other pay TV service providers carry local television broadcast stations through “retransmission consent” contracts negotiated with the broadcasters. These agreements are usually extended or renewed before they expire, with no service interruption. However, if the contract expires, the pay TV service provider must stop carrying the station until an agreement is reached.

Options when a local station is dropped

You may be able to view the station by:

- Using an over-the-air antenna to watch the channel, along with other local broadcasts.
- Subscribing to another pay TV service that is carrying the station. Available pay TV options vary based on your location. Be aware that retransmission consent agreements differ from provider to provider, and switching to another service does not guarantee that a particular broadcast station will continue to be carried after you subscribe.
- Checking the Internet. Some broadcast programming can be found online, though availability is often delayed.

Equipment for watching a station over the air

To watch a television station over the air without a pay TV subscription, you need either a digital TV set or an analog TV set connected to a digital-to-analog converter box. In either case, you will need an appropriate antenna connected to the TV set or the converter box. Depending on your location, this could be either an outdoor or an indoor antenna.

For more information, see the Antennas and Digital Television consumer guide at www.fcc.gov/guides/antennas-and-digital-television.

Converter boxes and analog TV sets

Since 2009, all full-power TV broadcast stations can only be received in digital format. Although cable subscribers can still use analog TVs with a cable box, if you are using an analog-only TV and want to watch a station over the air, you will need to use a digital-to-analog converter box. You can purchase a converter box from a consumer electronics retailer or online.

How broadcast and pay TV negotiations affect non-broadcast programming availability

Retransmission consent negotiations between broadcasters and pay TV service providers sometimes involve the continued carriage of non-broadcast television programs. If a broadcaster and a service provider fail to renew or extend their agreement to carry an associated non-broadcast program, the

service provider must stop carrying it. If that happens, you may wish to check with other local pay TV services about programming options.

Consumer Help Center

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

Alternate formats

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