

## Receiving Broadcast TV Stations Dropped from Pay TV Service

One of the ways cable operators and other pay TV service providers, such as satellite operators, carry local television broadcast stations is through contracts negotiated with the stations. Referred to as “retransmission consent”, this permission generally is extended or renewed before it expires, without service interruption for viewers. If the contract does expire, the pay TV service provider is required by law to stop carrying that station until an agreement is reached. While these are private negotiations, federal law requires the parties to negotiate with each other in good faith.

### What Can I Do if a Local Broadcast Television Station Is No Longer Available on My Pay TV Service?

If you want to view the station, you may be able to do so through one of the following options:

- watch the station (and other broadcasting stations) over the air using an antenna and a digital television;
- watch the station (and other broadcasting stations) over the air using an antenna and an analog television attached to a digital-to-analog converter box;
- subscribe to another pay service that is carrying the station. Available pay services vary based on your location. You should contact the pay service provider to determine whether it provides service to your residence. In addition, different pay TV service providers’ agreements for the same broadcast television station may expire on different dates. Switching to another pay service is not a guarantee that your new service will continue to carry a particular broadcast television station;
- some broadcast network programming is available on the Internet, though it is often delayed for some time after its initial broadcast.

### How Can I Watch a Station Over the Air Without a Pay TV Subscription?

To watch a television station over the air, 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 rooftop antenna or an indoor antenna.

For more information on antennas, see the Antenna Guide at [www.fcc.gov/guides/antennas-and-digital-television](http://www.fcc.gov/guides/antennas-and-digital-television).

## **Why Do I Need a Converter Box if I Have an Analog TV Set?**

As of June 12, 2009, federal law requires that all full-power TV broadcast stations broadcast only in digital format. Although cable subscribers can still rely on analog TVs to work with their cable systems, if you are using an analog-only TV and want to watch a station over the air, you will need to use a converter box. The converter box receives the digital signals broadcast over the air and converts them so you can see them on your analog TV. Converter boxes may be available from consumer electronics retailers in your community and online.

## **Are Non-Broadcast Television Programmers Affected by the Negotiations between Broadcasters and Pay TV Service Providers?**

Retransmission consent negotiations between broadcasters and pay TV service providers sometimes involve the continued carriage of non-broadcast television programmers. If a television broadcaster and a pay TV service provider fail to renew or extend their agreement to carry an associated non-broadcast television programmer, the pay TV service provider must stop carrying that programming service. This non-broadcast television programming, however, may be available from other pay TV services in your area. You can find out from the pay TV service providers serving your area what programming networks they carry.

## **Consumer Help Center**

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at [www.fcc.gov/consumers](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers).

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