



Australian Government



## Digital TV reception

To receive free-to-air digital TV, your television needs to be able to receive digital signals. To do this you will need to connect a digital set-top box or digital video recorder to your analog television, or have a television with a built-in digital tuner.

### Where can I find information about digital television services in my area?

To find information about your local television services, the frequencies they are transmitted on, and the expected coverage of the transmitter serving your local area, go to **mySwitch** on the Digital Ready website. **mySwitch** is a web-based tool developed to provide information that will help you prepare for digital switchover in your area. You can access **mySwitch** by going to [www.digitalready.gov.au](http://www.digitalready.gov.au) and following the links to **mySwitch**.

### Why do I have poor digital TV reception?

There are a number of reasons why you may have poor digital television reception. These include:

- **An incorrectly set up antenna.** You need to ensure that your antenna is:
  - the right one for the television services being broadcast in your area
  - pointing towards the transmitter that provides you with the strongest signal
  - correctly 'polarised' (either vertically or horizontally).
- **Poorly maintained television reception equipment.** You need to ensure that:
  - your antenna is in good condition
  - there are no loose or badly fitting connections or plugs
  - your cabling is of good quality.

- **A weak television signal.**

If you live some distance from the transmitter serving your area, the signal may be weak by the time it reaches you. If this is the case, you may need to install a high gain antenna to strengthen the signal. In areas where the signal is very weak, viewers may also need to install a masthead amplifier or booster to receive an adequate signal.

- **A television signal that is too strong.**

In some areas viewers may find that the signal they are receiving is too strong. This can overload reception equipment, which can cause the picture to pixelate or drop out. This situation can arise if a new local transmitter is set up in an area where viewers have previously been using a masthead amplifier or booster to receive their signal from a more distant transmitter. In this situation, viewers will need to remove their masthead amplifier or booster. More rarely, some viewers (who, for example, live very close to a transmitter) may need to install an attenuator on the input to their digital TV or set-top box which will reduce the signal strength even further.

- **Not watching the best channel.**

In areas where there is more than one transmitter, your digital TV or set-top box might pick up the same channel more than once from different transmitters. If this happens, you need to make sure that you are watching the channel with the strongest signal. However, because of the way the auto-tuning function on digital TVs and set-top boxes works, the channel with the strongest signal might not be in the channel number you would expect to find it in. In this situation, you will need to manually retune your set-top box or digital TV. For further information refer to the factsheet 'Finding the right channel for the best digital TV reception' at [www.digitalready.gov.au](http://www.digitalready.gov.au)

- **Signal obstructions.**

Some viewers may find that the signal from a transmitter serving their area is obstructed from reaching their antenna by features in the local landscape. These might include terrain (hills and mountains), tall buildings or other structures, and dense trees.

- **Impulse noise.**

Impulse noise may be generated by a range of sources, such as light switches, car engines, and electric motors in domestic appliances.

## How can I improve my digital TV reception?

If you want to try to improve your digital reception, you should first retune your set-top box or TV. To do this, follow the instructions in the manufacturer's manual. You may need to retune more than once to tune in to all the available services in your area.

If this does not improve your reception, you should consider engaging an Australian Government Endorsed Antenna Installer to check that your antenna is properly configured to receive the digital signals available in your area. You can find a list of Endorsed Antenna Installers in your area through **mySwitch** on the Digital Ready website.

An Endorsed Antenna Installer should be able to measure digital television signal levels at your home, and provide advice about antenna selection, positioning and orientation, and choice of correct cables, connectors and distribution equipment.

If the signal levels measured by your installer indicate that your signal is inadequate, you should ask the installer whether it is possible to improve your reception by adjusting or upgrading your antenna system. More information about signal measurements and what to ask your antenna installer may be found in the factsheet 'Antenna checklist', which is available from the Digital Ready website.

## What if I still can't receive adequate terrestrial reception?

If your antenna installer advises you that you won't be able to receive adequate terrestrial TV reception from a transmitter serving your area, you may be eligible to access the new government-funded Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service.

For more information about the VAST service, please go to the Digital Ready website, and under the tab 'What is the switch?' click on Viewer Access Satellite Television. You may also wish to refer to the VAST factsheet which may be found under the 'Info centre' tab on the Digital Ready website.

To check your eligibility for receiving the VAST service, go to **mySwitch** on the Digital Ready website, **[www.digitalready.gov.au](http://www.digitalready.gov.au)** or call the Digital Ready Information Line on **1800 20 10 13**.