

Make Your Coach Digital TV Compatible



by Sharleen Nelson

The first time the basic format for TV transmission changed was in 1953 when color broadcasting commenced. The format is scheduled to change again, this time on February 17, 2009, when analog broadcasting will be replaced by a digital signal, or digital television (DTV). DTV is an advanced broadcasting technology that allows broadcasters to offer television with better picture and sound quality, as well as multiple programming options and interactive capabilities.

The transition is the result of a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decision to free up some of the broadcast spectrum for fire, police, and other emergency transmissions. Additionally, the FCC ordered that some of the bandwidth be used to create open cell phone networks, which will give people more options in who they choose to be their cell phone provider.

So after February 17, 2009, a TV that uses only an antenna to receive over-the-air broadcast signals will be obsolete, unless it is connected to a digital tuner. Over-the-air signals include local channels that you can now pick up using an antenna or rabbit ears, which many of us do when we're traveling and want

to check the local weather.

What does all of this mean for Marathon coach owners? First of all, don't panic because most Marathon coaches are equipped with a satellite (DirecTV) system, and all coaches come with a cable input, which the DTV transition will not affect. Customers that own Marathon coach #1080 or higher are already equipped for digital transition. However, if you own coach #1079 or lower, you probably won't be able to receive over-the-air signals through your antenna. "If coach owners only watch DirecTV in their coach, they don't have to do anything," said Marathon's Director of Research and Development Mark Bryan. "But if they want to watch over-the-air programs, they'll need to have a converter box installed."

In addition, how the digital transition will affect individual coach owners depends on the coaches' current setup, and with less than a year before the transition occurs, we encourage coach owners to plan ahead. Dave Dolby, Marathon's audio/video department manager, advises all owners to bring their coach in for an evaluation. "I really don't anticipate a one-fix-fits-all," Dolby said. "We recommend that all owners contact the service center for an evaluation of their particular coach. We'll be able to see exactly what types of equipment owners have, find out what's needed in general, and then dial in specifically for their needs."

If you're unsure how the projected February 2009 digital transition might affect your coach's TVs, please contact Marathon's Oregon technical service department at (800) 365-0156. •

For more information regarding the digital transition, please visit:

<http://www.dtv.gov/>

<http://www.dtvtransition.org>

<http://www.dtvanswers.com/>

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/digitaltv.html/>