



IMPROVING YOUR DTV TELEVISION RECEPTION



Q:
Why Can I Get Some Digital TV Stations All The Time, Others Only Occasionally, And Some Not At All?

A: We get this complaint about KPTH (Fox 44) more often than KMEG, but the principles for resolving the issue of intermittent reception are similar. We are using high-power transmitters, and lots of folks are getting the signal fine, so the most likely possibility is that this is an issue with the antenna system in the viewer's home. In the case of KPTH, 44-1 is physically transmitted on channel 49, which makes it the highest frequency in use – significantly higher than the next channel down the line. As a result, any imperfection in a viewer's antenna system that might cause reduced bandwidth will "roll off" the higher frequencies first. The net result is that KPTH-DT becomes intermittent.

An antenna system "rolling off" higher frequencies can have a large number of causes, including, but not limited to the following common antenna problems:

1. An antenna that is more than 7 to 10 years old, and has become oxidized, corroded, rusted, etc due to being outdoors
2. An antenna that is VHF only, or is hooked up in that configuration
3. An antenna that was not designed for the distance you live from the tower, and doesn't have enough "gain"
4. An antenna that was marketed as a "digital" antenna or a "smart" antenna, but which may not be appropriate for your location
5. An antenna that has had elements blow off of it
6. An antenna that is not pointed in exactly the right direction – possibly caused by wind or a less-than-perfect original installation
7. An antenna that is not well secured, and blows around significantly in the wind – thus causing problems only on windy days
8. An antenna that is not high enough to clear the tree line or buildings, as it really needs to see the horizon if possible
9. An antenna that is inadvertently pointed the opposite direction (the "arrow" formed by some antennas is supposed to point away from the tower site, not toward it)
10. An antenna system that was installed using inferior cable, such as RG-59 instead of heavier RG-6 cable
11. An antenna system that used less-than-professional components such as baluns, splitters, etc. (A balun is the flat wire to coax adapter that is used on most rooftop antennas. We have found that an expensive one will receive twice as many channels as a cheap one. Purchase components at reputable electronics houses, not discount stores!)
12. An antenna system that splits a signal too many ways or too many times. Every time you run your signal through a splitter, you have the same effect as if we turned our transmitter down from 1 million watts to ½ million watts. If you then split it again a second time, you cut the power in half again. If you are going to split the signal, a) do all the splitting at one time in one place with one multi-port splitter, and b) amplify the signal with a booster before you split it – or use a "powered splitter."
13. An antenna system that has too much amplification. Some folks who live right under the tower have a booster on the signal so they can pick up distant stations, for instance from Sioux Falls. They then end up with way too much signal from Sioux City stations, and too much signal will overload your receiver and be as useless as too little signal.
14. An antenna system that simply wasn't designed correctly, such as folks who attempt to use rabbit ears at a distance of 25 miles or more, or in hilly or high foliage areas. Digital signals simply demand the right antenna for the location and situation.
15. An antenna system that was installed incorrectly by well-meaning folks who simply didn't have the expertise to do the job correctly. We recommend having a professional do your installation if at all possible. Many major electronics retailers provide this service, and you can call us for recommendations if necessary.

Other Tips:

If your receiver doesn't pick up our channels in a "scan" try entering the channel manually. Enter 39-3 for KMEG or 49-3 for KPTH

Use the on-screen Signal Strength meter (on most receivers) as an aid while adjusting your antenna for the best position

Depending where you live, you may need to move your antenna when you change channels

We Love Our Viewers!

If your rabbit ears "almost" work, try purchasing a set that comes with a remote control and has variable power boosting levels.

Please remember that the DTV transition wasn't the idea of the TV stations, and that we have had to spend millions of dollars preparing for it without any short-term return on investment.

Thanks For Your Patience!

Remember, the TV set is only half of the reception equation. If you spent thousands on your TV set, realize that spending hundreds on an antenna isn't a comparatively huge investment!



We hope this helps. Thanks for your interest in viewing our stations!

