



FPRA
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The Voice of Leaseholders

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (28th January 2009)

National residents group warn of early 'switch off' for analogue Channel Five for some Meridian viewers.

The Federation have been alerted today of news that 500,000 digital viewers in the Meridian area will require a TV retune which will involve the analogue Channel Five service in parts of the south coast being switched off as part of a reorganisation of TV signals ahead of digital switchover in 2012.

These changes are due to take place on **Wednesday, 25th March, 2009** and will affect viewers in parts of Hampshire, East Dorset, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight. On the same day as the analogue Channel Five switch off, existing digital terrestrial TV services (those received via an aerial), such as Freeview, Top Up TV or BT Vision, will move to new frequencies.

Federation Chairman Bob Smytherman said:

"We understand an estimated 500,000 homes watching these services will need to retune their equipment or risk losing access to dozens of channels, including those from the BBC, ITV and Channel 4." (Satellite and Cable TV are not affected.)

"Digital UK have said making these changes is vital to protecting existing services from interference and ensuring that the process runs smoothly in the Meridian TV region in three years' time."

Bob added:

"It is essential that any Analogue viewers living in blocks of flats with a communal aerial and not yet made the switch to digital should contact their Landlord or Managing Agent urgently do discuss what arrangements are being made to upgrade the TV equipment for the building."

ENDS

FPRA Chairman Bob Smytherman is a member of the Digital UK Housing Expert Group

Attached for information is a copy of a letter that has gone out to all public sector housing providers and useful information for private sector landlords and managing agents to assist with the process of switchover and preparing for digital.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The analogue Five service is broadcast from the Fawley transmitter to around 100,000 homes in the Southampton, Gosport and Portsmouth areas and parts of the Isle of Wight. Latest research suggests that 84 per cent of homes in the region already watch digital TV on the main set, though one-in-three households still have an analogue secondary set.

2. Existing Freeview services will move to new frequencies, including those currently used by analogue Channel Five. Homes affected are those served by the Rowridge transmitter on the Isle of Wight which broadcasts to Hampshire, east Dorset and West Sussex. Viewers can check if they are served by the Rowridge transmitter by using the postcode checker at digitaluk.co.uk or calling the helpline: 0845 845 0231.

3. The reorganisation of Freeview channels will be complete by 6am on Wednesday, 25th March. To retune Freeview equipment, follow these steps:

- Switch on your digital box or digital television
- Press 'menu' on the remote control
- Select 'set up' or 'installation' option
- Select 'auto set up' or 'update'
- Channels will be automatically installed

4. Switchover in the Meridian TV region will taken place in 2012. Analogue terrestrial TV services (those received via an aerial) will be switched off and replaced with an expanded line up of Freeview channels. Freeview coverage will be extended to reach 97 per cent of households, up from 61 per cent today.

The Switchover Help Scheme is run by the BBC under an agreement with the Government to help older and disabled people make the change to digital TV. Every eligible person will be offered practical help to convert one of their TV sets to digital in the run-up to switchover in each region. People are eligible if they are aged 75 years or more, have lived in a care home for six months or more, get (or could get) certain disability benefits, or are registered blind or partially sighted. Most people will be asked to contribute £40 towards the help but for those on certain income-related benefits, it's free.

The FPRA exists to advise and support leaseholders (flat owners) and residential management companies, to lobby for the interests of leaseholders, to be a forum for debate and to keep members informed of legal and practical developments in leasehold matters. The FPRA was set up in 1971 as a non-political, non-profit making voluntary organisation by a group of private sector residents' associations. It became a limited company in 1986. Its directors are unpaid volunteers, and have long experience in leasehold matters.

This email was sent from or on behalf of The Federation of Private Residents Associations Ltd.

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