

Six digital TV programme channels to use new transmitting frequencies from December 1

Six existing digital TV programme channels will use new transmitting frequencies from 0.00am on December 1 this year. In this connection, the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) appeals to the public to make preparations for the continued reception of these TV programme channels, having regard to their antenna reception systems in use (common antenna broadcast distribution (CABD) systems or self-provided TV antennae), paying attention to notices and arrangements promulgated by their buildings and contractors, and performing rescanning where necessary.

The six digital TV programme channels involved are Jade 81 of Television Broadcasts Limited, ViuTVsix 96 and ViuTV 99 of HK Television Entertainment Company Limited, and RTHK TV 31, RTHK TV 32 and RTHK TV 33 of Radio Television Hong Kong.

The above digital TV programme channels are currently using transmission frequencies in the 600/700 MHz bands. After the switching off of analogue television services on November 30, 2020, transmissions on these frequencies will cease and be migrated to the 500 MHz band so as to vacate spectrum for high value-added mobile telecommunications services including 5G, enhancing network capacity and coverage, and relieving the currently congested indoor mobile telecommunications hotspots (such as MTR stations). The Government plans to assign the relevant spectrum by the end of this year to support Hong Kong's overall telecommunications services and smart city development.

In general, public housing estates, private residential buildings/estates and multi-storey buildings use CABD systems or in-building coaxial cable distribution systems (IBCCDS) to distribute television signals. To allow sufficient time for owners or property managers to arrange for the necessary system reconfiguration, the above six digital TV programme channels will be broadcast on both the existing and new transmitting frequencies (digital simulcast) from April 1 to November 30 this year. When the digital simulcast ends on December 1, the six digital TV programme channels will be broadcast on the new transmitting frequencies only. The channel numbers of these TV programmes channels (i.e. 31, 32, 33, 81, 96 and 99) will remain unchanged.

"In light of the channel migration, owners of CABD systems/IBCCDS should get prepared for engaging contractors to reconfigure the systems during the digital simulcast period so as to ensure that the households of their buildings can continue to receive the TV programme channels concerned. Depending on the design of the individual CABD systems/IBCCDS, property managers may need to inform their residents or users to rescan the TV programme channels on their digital terrestrial television receivers upon completion of the reconfiguration work," a spokesman for OFCA said.

"For households using self-provided antennae, including residents of village houses, bungalows and old tenement buildings, they generally do not need to upgrade their receiving antennae. If they are not able to receive any of the TV programme channels affected by the channel migration after 0.00am on December 1 this year, they can rescan the programme channels on their digital TV equipment for continued reception of the TV programme channels concerned," the spokesman continued.

To raise the public's understanding of the channel migration and the preparatory work required, OFCA will launch a series of publicity programmes. The publicity programmes cover issuing letters to building management offices, incorporated owners of buildings and other parties maintaining/operating CABD systems/IBCCDS; putting up posters and distributing flyers at public housing estates and private residential buildings/estates; and launching TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest. OFCA will also provide further information and assistance to households using self-provided antennae in the second half of this year.

Details of the channel migration can be found on the thematic webpage on OFCA's website (www.ofca.gov.hk/en/consumer_focus/tv_broadcasting/migration_of_dtt_programme_channels/index.html). For enquiries, please call OFCA's hotline at 2961 6333.