

*Basic advice about the switch to digital television...*

# PROFESSIONAL AERIAL RIGGERS AGAINST THE SHARKS



*Don't let the sharks empty your wallet*

## Sheet 4 – Your TV Aerial

- If you are still using analogue you can buy a cheap digital set-top box any time and try it on your existing aerial (but see the sheet about local relay stations).
- When analogue is switched off your digital reception can only stay the same or get better. It will not get worse.
- If you have digital reception now you will NOT lose your reception because you have an old aerial.
- You can wait and see. Once you have digital reception (even with some missing channels) you can if you wish wait until analogue is switched off before you decide about aerial replacement.

If you buy a digital set top box or a digital TV set you should plug in your existing aerial and find out how well it works before you think about spending money on a new aerial. If you have been getting good reception from your existing aerial there's a good chance that it will be fine for digital. **If you can get all the channels you want and the picture is stable there's no need to buy a new aerial.** Even if a few digital channels are missing they will probably appear after analogue is switched off.

In most areas, if your aerial is giving good analogue reception now it will be all right for digital both now and after analogue is switched off. But once analogue is switched off the digital signals will be much stronger, so even if digital reception is not perfect now (or if some channels are missing), after analogue switch-off your reception will probably be perfect. If analogue switch-off is coming soon in your area it most likely isn't worthwhile buying a new aerial now. Wait until after analogue switch-off and then decide. The chances are you will not need to replace the aerial.

In some of the areas where analogue TV is still available, some of the digital signals have to be transmitted for the time being on frequencies that an old aerial can't receive. In these areas you will find that quite a lot of channels are missing when you try your set-top box (or your digital TV) with your old aerial. But if you can get the basic five channels and you really aren't concerned about the missing ones it could be sensible to wait until analogue is switched off before buying a new aerial. The reason is that once analogue has finished, the channels will be re-arranged and it's quite likely that you will be able to receive everything on your existing aerial. Of course, if it bothers you that some channels are missing you have the option of replacing your aerial at any time.

*More detail on our web site at [www.paras.org.uk](http://www.paras.org.uk)*

*Basic advice about the switch to digital television...*

# PROFESSIONAL AERIAL RIGGERS AGAINST THE SHARKS



*Don't let the sharks empty your wallet*

## ► Beware of the shark!

If you do replace your aerial the installer might point to a neighbour's roof and show you a large aerial with a lot of funny shaped prongs, and say, "That's what you need. That's a digital aerial!" He might show you such an aerial in a catalogue. However, as you should know by now, **there is no such thing as a digital aerial!**

If most of the other aerials on the street are small ones then it's very likely that all you need is a small one. The installer could be trying to sell you an expensive aerial that you don't need. There have already been countless examples of people being sold massive aerials for digital (costing perhaps £350) when a normal one is all that's needed.

It's true that until analogue is switched off digital reception can be tricky in some areas, but you should bear in mind that an expensive aerial you buy now could be unnecessary when analogue ends and the digital powers are boosted.

There's a limit to what you should spend on an aerial, because there's always the alternative of using satellite, as explained in our sheet about the **satellite options**.

## Choosing an installer

The biggest adverts in the yellow pages are often franchise operations that take a fee for passing your details to local installers - who might be good or bad.

The best bet is to get a good recommendation from someone who has had an aerial or satellite dish fitted recently and been happy with the service they received.



*More detail on our web site at [www.paras.org.uk](http://www.paras.org.uk)*