

Retransmission



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Retransmission Consent? Why are the TV stations charging you?

Since 1992, television stations have been authorized by the U.S. Congress to grant or deny permission for a cable television provider to carry their signals. This right is renewable every three years. The agreements with the broadcast TV stations we carry in Paducah, Cape Girardeau, Carbondale, Memphis, Nashville and Jackson expired at the end of 2011. When these agreements expired, the local broadcast channels can deny WK&T the right to carry their station unless we pay an exorbitant price increase per subscriber. There is almost zero room for negotiation although the FCC states they must negotiate in "good faith".

2. How does this affect WK&T's TV service?

In the past, WK&T has reached mutually acceptable agreements with all of the local stations. In 2012, these same stations have demanded unreasonable payments for the right to carry their channels. In some cases, the rate has increased over 150%. We believe that above all else broadcast television is a public resource and should continue to be made available without charging our customer additional fees. For several months, we have fought for this right but unfortunately, the TV stations did not back down. They have demanded these unreasonable amounts or we must take them out of our line-up.

3. Why can't I drop these channels and just subscribe to the expanded package?

By law, WK&T TV is required to place all broadcast TV stations in their basic package. Currently, the law does not allow us to sell any services a la carte and we cannot sell you any level of service without the basic package included.

4. Why is this different than paying for channels like ESPN and Discovery?

Cable networks like ESPN and Discovery also bill TV providers a charge for each subscriber. However, broadcast TV stations are given free spectrum by the federal government to provide service to the local communities. Therefore, you are already paying for these stations with your tax dollars. Cable networks like ESPN pay millions of dollars to be transmitted by a satellite and are not available free over the air. You cannot view ESPN on your TV with just an antenna. In addition, for cable channels like Discovery, we are allowed to sell advertising to help offset a portion of these costs. In this case, the local affiliate stations are not providing us an opportunity to insert local advertisements but still charge our customers a rate similar to ESPN and Discovery.

5. Which TV stations are charging WK&T and how much are they charging you?

In addition to the price per sub they demand for the carriage of their channel, the TV stations demand complete confidentiality in their agreements. We are not allowed to tell you which stations are charging and how much they are forcing us to pay. This is another frustration and we would like to publicize this information. We do encourage you to take action and complain to the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) and/or your local Congressman and Senators.

6. Why shouldn't I switch to satellite or another provider?

While satellite or another provider may appear appealing at this point in time, please keep in mind the advantages of being a WK&T TV customer. We are a local employer and we are committed to our communities that we serve. We have local offices where you can still speak to a real person. Plus, without WK&T TV, you will not have access to WK&T Sports - your home for local high school and college sports. Dish, DirecTV, and other providers experience similar rate increase challenges with programmers as referenced by the recent headlines when DirecTV almost dropped 25 very popular Fox networks over a very heated battle of programming rate increases with Fox. All providers are fighting this battle with local affiliates.