

Video Description

Video description is audio-narrated descriptions of a television program's key visual elements. These descriptions are inserted into natural pauses in the program's dialogue. Video description makes TV programming more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Availability of video description

FCC rules require local TV station affiliates of ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC located in the top 60 TV markets (see list below) to provide 50 hours per calendar quarter (about 4 hours per week) of video-described prime time and/or children's programming.

- Local TV stations in markets smaller than the top 60 also may provide video description. Check with your local TV stations.
- Many Public Broadcasting System stations also provide video description on a number of programs. Check with your local PBS station.

The top five non-broadcast networks - Disney Channel, History, TBS, TNT and USA - must provide 50 hours per calendar quarter (about 4 hours per week) of video-described prime time and/or children's programming.

- Subscription TV systems (offered over cable, satellite or the telephone network) with 50,000 or more subscribers must carry video description.
- Subscription TV systems with fewer than 50,000 subscribers also may provide video description. Check with your subscription TV provider.

How to access video description

Video description is provided through the TV or set top box "secondary audio" feature, which some TV controls identify as "SAP" or "secondary audio program." The secondary audio may also be identified as a language feature, such as "Spanish" or "SPA," because it is also used to provide Spanish or other language translations of English language TV programs. Depending upon the program being viewed, when listening to the secondary audio, you may hear the primary audio with video description, Spanish or other language translation, a duplicate of the primary audio, or silence.

Your TV user manual may provide information about activating the secondary audio feature, or you may contact the customer service department where you bought the TV or the customer service department of the TV manufacturer for assistance. If you have a set top box for subscription TV service, you may contact your subscription TV provider for assistance in activating the secondary audio.

Learn more

Networks, broadcasters and subscription TV systems may provide information about the availability of programs with video description through their websites and in program guides. Some program guides may use the symbol (D) to indicate that the program is video described.

Top 60 TV markets

1. New York, NY
2. Los Angeles, CA
3. Chicago, IL
4. Philadelphia, PA
5. Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX
6. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA
7. Washington, DC (Hagerstown, MD)
8. Boston, MA (Manchester, NH)
9. Atlanta, GA
10. Houston, TX
11. Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL (Sarasota, FL)
12. Phoenix, AZ (Prescott, AZ)
13. Detroit, MI
14. Seattle-Tacoma, WA
15. Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN
16. Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, FL
17. Denver, CO
18. Cleveland-Akron, OH (Canton, OH)
19. Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne, FL
20. Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto, CA
21. St. Louis, MO
22. Charlotte, NC
23. Pittsburgh, PA
24. Portland, OR
25. Raleigh-Durham, NC (Fayetteville, NC)
26. Baltimore, MD
27. Indianapolis, IN
28. San Diego, CA
29. Nashville, TN
30. Hartford & New Haven, CT
31. Columbus, OH
32. San Antonio, TX
33. Kansas City, MO
34. Salt Lake City, UT
35. Milwaukee, WI
36. Cincinnati, OH
37. Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson, SC
38. West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce, FL
39. Austin, TX
40. Las Vegas, NV
41. Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo-Battle Creek, MI
42. Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, VA
43. Oklahoma City, OK
44. Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York, PA
45. Birmingham (Anniston and Tuscaloosa), AL
46. Greensboro-High Point-Winston-Salem, NC
47. Jacksonville, FL
48. Albuquerque-Santa Fe, NM
49. Louisville, KY
50. Memphis, TN
51. New Orleans, LA
52. Providence, RI-New Bedford, MA
53. Buffalo, NY
54. Fresno-Visalia, CA
55. Wilkes Barre-Scranton-Hazleton, PA
56. Richmond-Petersburg, VA
57. Little Rock-Pine Bluff, AR
58. Mobile, AL-Pensacola, FL (Ft. Walton Beach, FL)
59. Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY
60. Tulsa, OK

Source: <http://www.tvb.org/Portals/0/media/file/DMA/2015-2016-dma-ranks.pdf>

For more information

For more information about FCC programs to promote access for people with disabilities, visit the FCC's Disability Rights Office website at <http://www.fcc.gov/general/disability-rights-office>.



Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers, or contact the FCC:

- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) ; ASL: 1-844-432-2275
- By mail:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Accessible formats

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