



Before You Cancel Cable: Check Your Local Channels First

Before you cancel cable, make sure you can still get the local channels you actually watch.

This checklist helps you test your local TV signal, compare your antenna results, and avoid canceling too soon. Use it over 7 days, not just once, because antenna reception can change with weather, time of day, and antenna placement.

Print this page and fill it in as you test.

Step 1: Mark the Local Channels You Want to Keep

My must-have channels:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ ABC | ☐ PBS | ☐ Local news |
| ☐ CBS | ☐ MeTV | ☐ Local weather |
| ☐ NBC | ☐ Cozi TV | ☐ Local sports |
| ☐ FOX | ☐ Antenna TV | ☐ Other: _____ |

Step 2: Check Your Signal Before Buying Anything

Go to one of these free tools: AntennaWeb.org or the [FCC Reception Map](http://FCCReceptionMap)

Enter your ZIP code or address and look for the channels you marked above. Write down what you find.

My strongest channels are: _____

My weak or missing channels are: _____

Most of my towers seem to be:

- ☐ North
- ☐ South
- ☐ East
- ☐ West
- ☐ Mixed directions
- ☐ Not sure

My home signal looks:

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Not sure

Step 3: Try an Indoor Antenna Test

Before canceling cable, test an antenna with one TV first.

- ☐ Place the antenna near a window
- ☐ Raise it as high as practical
- ☐ Aim it toward the broadcast towers
- ☐ Keep it away from metal, thick walls, and electronics
- ☐ Connect antenna directly to the TV
- ☐ Set the TV input/source to TV or Antenna
- ☐ Run a fresh channel scan
- ☐ Write down which channels come in clearly

Channels I received: _____

Channels still missing: _____

Step 4: Track Your Channels for 7 Days

Do not test your antenna only once. Use this simple log to write down your results for one full week before calling the cable company.

Day 1: Channels Found: _____

Channels Missing: _____

Weather: _____

Day 2: Channels Found: _____

Channels Missing: _____

Weather: _____

Day 3: Channels Found: _____

Channels Missing: _____

Weather: _____

Day 4: Channels Found: _____

Channels Missing: _____

Weather: _____

Day 5: Channels Found: _____

Channels Missing: _____

Weather: _____

Day 6: Channels Found: _____

Channels Missing: _____

Weather: _____

Day 7: Channels Found: _____

Channels Missing: _____

Weather: _____

Step 5: What Your Results Mean

If most channels come in clearly: You may be able to use an indoor antenna for local channels. Test it for several days before canceling cable, especially during bad weather.

If some channels are missing: Move the antenna higher, try a different window, aim it in another direction, and run a new channel scan each time.

If channels freeze, break up, or disappear: The signal may be weak or blocked by distance, trees, hills, buildings, metal, splitters, or poor antenna placement.

If the FCC or AntennaWeb map shows weak signals: An indoor antenna may not be enough. You may need better height, an attic antenna, an outdoor antenna, or a streaming backup for some local channels.

Step 6: Do Not Cancel Cable Until You Test These

- ☐ Your must-have channels come in clearly
- ☐ You tested during the day and evening
- ☐ You rescanned after moving the antenna
- ☐ You checked local news and weather channels
- ☐ You tested the TV you actually watch most
- ☐ You know what you will use for channels that do not come in

Quick Note An antenna can be a great way to watch local TV for free, but results depend on your location, distance from towers, home layout, and nearby obstacles. Test first, then decide.

Don't forget to test one free streaming app, such as Pluto TV or Tubi, during this week. That way, you know what backup options you have if some antenna channels do not come in clearly.

Helpful Next Steps:

[How to Set Up an Indoor TV Antenna](#)

[What Channels Can I Get With an Antenna?](#)

[How to Rescan TV Channels With an Antenna](#)