

HD RADIO FAQ

How can I tell if my radio gets HD Radio™ ?

Radios that can use the new transmission display a special HD Radio™ logo. Almost all radios display the station selected on a digital screen, but that's a different thing and does not mean the radio can use the digital audio of HD Radio™. The special logo is the key.

What's on WFCR's HD Radio™ signal?

WFCR actually transmits two HD Radio™ program streams. One is a digital version of what you hear on standard WFCR — the radio will show this as WFCR-1 or HD-1. The other offers classical music all day, and is labeled WFCR-2 or HD-2.

How do I tune in an HD Radio™ signal?

Just tune to 88.5 FM — the HD Radio™ will play the standard WFCR signal for about eight seconds, then automatically switch to WFCR-1. The delay allows the radio to acquire the digital data it needs, and an indicator in the display will confirm the switch. (On some radios you can manually switch back to analog for that listening session.)

To tune in WFCR-2, you also start by tuning to 88.5, but you'll have to consult your radio's instruction manual to see how to get from WFCR-1 to WFCR-2, for not all radios do that the same way.

There's no fee charged for HD Radio™, unlike for XM/Sirius. Once you have the right radio, it's free.

When I tune it in, it doesn't always stay tuned in. Why not?

Sometimes an HD Radio™ can't get a good enough signal to get all the data it needs. For WFCR-1, the standard analog broadcast is always present and is used as a back-up signal. Your radio will switch seamlessly between the two if it needs to

WFCR-2 is different, in that there is no analog equivalent of its programming to fall back to. If the radio loses the WFCR-2 signal, it will either mute for a few seconds until new data is acquired or automatically switch to the analog version of WFCR.

Do WNNZ and WFCR's low-power (translator) stations in the Berkshires also have HD Radio™ signals?

No, they don't. There is a version of HD Radio™ for AM radio stations like WNNZ, but the technology is problematic and has not been widely adopted. As to the Berkshire translators, the power level that the FCC would permit for HD Radio™ on them is so low that it would not be effective.

Will I get a better signal for HD Radio™ or standard FM radio?

HD Radio™ was designed to overcome one of FM radio's weaknesses, something called multipath. FM signals bounce off buildings, poles and hills on the way to your radio, and these reflected signals arrive slightly later than the direct signal does, and sometimes interferes with it. HD Radio™ was designed with built-in redundancy to overcome this, and while it doesn't solve the problem all the time in all terrains, it will overcome a lot of multipath problems.

Also, the HD Radio™ signal does not reach out as far as the standard transmission does, so listeners far away from WFCR's transmitter in Pelham, Massachusetts may not be able to receive it.

Does HD Radio™ sound better than analog radio?

HD Radio™ has some of the beneficial characteristics of CDs, and the sound tends to have less background noise, greater clarity, a wider dynamic range, and greater separation of the left and right stereo signals than standard FM does. The data has to be compressed for transmission, but a sophisticated algorithm is used to make it sound as good as possible. As is true with standard radio, stations can tailor their equipment to create the sound they want, so HD Radio™ will not sound the same on every station.

Where can I buy an HD Radio, and in general find out more about it?

We suggest the main HD Radio™ site as the best resource for information. It includes lists of radios for different purposes (for cars, tabletops and home stereo systems) and links to vendors. The site is <http://www.hdradio.com/>.