

# FCC lets cable cos encrypt signals to foil theft

October 16 2012, by Peter Svensson

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Federal regulators are letting cable companies scramble all their TV signals, closing a loophole that lets many households watch basic cable channels for free.

The [Federal Communications Commission](#) voted Friday to lift a ban on encryption of basic cable signals, saying it will reduce the number of visits by cable technicians to disconnect service and reduce cable theft.

Neither the FCC nor the National Cable & Telecommunications Association knows how many households are taking advantage of the unencrypted signals. NCTA spokesman Brian Dietz says most of the theft is by cable modem customers who also connect their line to a TV set.

Comcast Corp. and Time Warner Cable Inc., the two largest [cable companies](#), could not say when they will start encrypting their basic signals.

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