BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Spectrum TV App, Box & Remote

The Xumo Stream Box, your cable box, the remote and the app — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for every Spectrum TV home

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

Covers Spectrum Stream TV plans, Xumo Stream Box, Spectrum Guide & the Spectrum TV App · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your plain-English guide to watching Spectrum TV: the Xumo Stream Box, the traditional cable box and its remote, and the Spectrum TV App on your own devices. Read it in any order and at your own pace; there's no test, and you can't fall behind.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Spectrum TV

What Spectrum TV actually is today, the three ways you can watch it, what your plan includes, and the two Spectrum apps that are easy to mix up. Start here and the rest of the book will make sense.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you have Spectrum TV in your home, you're in good company. Spectrum is the cable company for most of Portage County, and a great many of the folks I help each week watch their shows through it. Some have a cable box that's been sitting under the TV for years. Some just got a small new box called a **Xumo Stream Box**. Some watch on a tablet or a smart TV with the **Spectrum TV App**. And plenty have a little of all three.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years in professional technology work, and these days I help people in Portage County, Ohio, both in person and remotely, get comfortable with the gadgets in their lives. I wrote this book the way I'd explain things sitting next to you on the couch: slowly, in plain English, with the remote in your hand. When I use a word you might not know, I'll stop and explain it.

What this book covers

- **Your plan** and the streaming apps that now come with many Spectrum TV plans at no extra cost.
- **The Xumo Stream Box**: setting it up, the voice remote, and getting around.
- **The traditional cable box** (Spectrum calls it a *Spectrum Receiver*), its guide, DVR and remote.
- **The Spectrum TV App** on phones, tablets and smart TVs, including why some channels disappear when you're away from home.
- Captions, audio description, parental controls, restarting equipment, your bill, returning equipment, and the scams that use Spectrum's name.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this book does for you

By the end you'll know which kind of Spectrum equipment you have, how to find any show, how to record, how to get your remote working with your TV again, and how to fix the most common hiccups yourself. Just as important, you'll know how to reach the *real* Spectrum and how to spot the fakes.

The big promise: you can't break it

You cannot hurt your TV or your Spectrum box by pressing buttons and exploring menus. The worst that happens is you land on a screen you didn't expect. There's always a way back: the **Exit** or **Back** button on a cable box remote, or the **Home** or **Back** button on a Xumo remote. The one exception I'll warn you about is a *factory reset*, which erases settings. I'll always flag it clearly so you never do it by accident.

And I'm only a phone call away

If you get stuck, call or text me at **(330) 200-8042**. We'll sort it out together, no judgment, and there's no such thing as a silly question. Now, let's find out which kind of Spectrum you have.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Three Ways to Watch Spectrum TV

Spectrum TV used to mean one thing: a cable coming out of the wall into a box under your TV. Today there are three ways to watch, and your home may use more than one. They all show the same Spectrum channels you pay for, but they look and work a little differently. Knowing which one you're holding the remote for will save you a lot of head-scratching.

What you have	What it is, in plain terms
The cable box (Spectrum Receiver)	The traditional box. A round **coaxial cable** (the screw-on kind) runs from the wall into the back of the box, and another cable runs to your TV. Some have a built-in recorder (a DVR). Its remote usually says Spectrum on it and has a big **Guide** button.
The Xumo Stream Box	A small, newer box from Spectrum that plugs into your TV's **HDMI** port and gets everything over your home internet instead of a coax cable. It runs the Spectrum TV App plus hundreds of other streaming apps like Netflix and YouTube. It comes with a voice remote.
The Spectrum TV App	A free app for Spectrum TV customers that you put on things you already own: an iPhone or iPad, an Android phone or tablet, a Roku, an Apple TV, a Fire TV, and many smart TVs. No Spectrum box needed for that TV.

How to tell which one is on your TV

1. Look behind or under the TV. A box with a **coax cable** screwed into it is a cable box. A small, rounded box with only a power cord and an HDMI cable is very likely a Xumo Stream Box. It says Xumo on it.
2. Look at the remote. A Xumo remote has the word **Xumo** on it and a **microphone** button for voice. A cable box remote usually has **TV**, **DVD** and **CBL** buttons across the top, or a blue **Menu** button.
3. No box at all, but you still watch Spectrum channels? Then you're using the Spectrum TV App, either on a streaming stick like a Roku or Fire TV, or built into a smart TV.

GOOD TO KNOW

One account, many screens

It's perfectly normal to have a cable box in the living room, a Xumo box in the bedroom, and the Spectrum TV App on your tablet, all on the same account. Some settings, such as parental control PINs, are set separately on each box. Chapter 14 compares a Xumo box and a cable box side by side.

CHAPTER 3

Your Plan and the Streaming Apps That Come With It

Spectrum has changed its TV plans a lot over the last couple of years. Two changes matter most for you: the plans got new names in September 2026, and many plans now include popular streaming apps, such as Disney+ and HBO Max, at no extra cost. Let's untangle both.

The new plan names (September 2026)

On September 16, 2026, Spectrum renamed its TV plans. If you see a new name on your bill or in the app, your channels didn't change because of it. In its filing about the change, Spectrum said the new names don't alter current customers' services, channel lineups or pricing. Here's how the old names line up with the new ones:

If your old plan was called…	It's now called…
Spectrum TV Select (Signature)	Spectrum **Stream TV Signature**
Spectrum TV Select Plus	Spectrum **Stream TV Pro**
Spectrum TV Platinum	Spectrum **Stream TV VIP**
Spectrum Mi Plan Latino	Spectrum **Stream TV Latino Más**
Spectrum Sports View	Spectrum **Sports Pack** (an add-on)
Entertainment View	**Entertainment Pack** (an add-on)

GOOD TO KNOW

"Stream" in the name doesn't mean you lost cable

Despite the word "Stream," these are still Spectrum's regular TV plans, and they work with a cable box, a Xumo box or the app. The new names reflect Spectrum's push toward streaming, not a change to how your cable box works.

Which streaming apps are included

Spectrum's **Spectrum App Central** page (it used to be called the Spectrum App Store) lists which apps come with each plan. As of November 2026, Spectrum says:

Plan	Included apps (per Spectrum, November 2026)
Stream TV Signature	HBO Max Basic With Ads, Disney+, Hulu, ESPN Unlimited, Paramount+ Essential, Peacock Premium with Ads, AMC+ with Ads, discovery+, FOX One and ViX Premium with ads.
Stream TV Pro	Everything in Signature, plus Tennis Channel.
Stream TV VIP	Everything in Pro, plus the ad-free versions of HBO Max and Paramount+, and STARZ.
Stream TV Latino Más	ViX Premium with ads and Paramount+ Essential.

Most of these included versions show commercials. Spectrum lets you upgrade some of them to an ad-free version by paying the difference each month. The amount depends on the app, so check App Central before you agree to it. These included apps are for residential customers on qualifying plans only.

Turning on (activating) an included app

Included apps don't switch on by themselves. You have to **activate** each one once, which links it to your Spectrum account. Spectrum's instructions are simple:

1. Sign in to **Spectrum App Central** with your Spectrum username and password. You can get there from Spectrum.net, or from the **Activate now** button on Spectrum's App Central page.
2. Find the streaming app you want in your list of included apps.
3. Click that app and follow the prompts to activate it.
4. Then open that streaming app on your TV, tablet or Xumo box and sign in the way the activation screen told you to.

HEADS UP

Already paying for one of these apps yourself?

If you already pay Disney+ or Peacock directly with a credit card, activating the Spectrum version doesn't automatically cancel your own subscription. Spectrum's own fine print says an included app may not replace subscriptions you already have, and those must be managed separately. Check your credit card statement so you're not paying twice.

Chapter 23 covers what the TV part of your bill means, including the Broadcast TV Surcharge, which is separate from your plan price.

CHAPTER 4

Your Spectrum Username and the Two Spectrum Apps

Almost everything in this book needs one thing: your **Spectrum username** and password. It's the same sign-in you use to pay your bill on Spectrum.net. If you've never made one, or you've forgotten it, sort that out first. It makes everything else easier.

Two apps with very similar names

This trips up almost everyone. Spectrum has two different free apps, and they do different jobs:

The app	What it's for
My Spectrum app	Your **account** app. Pay your bill, see your services and equipment, restart a cable box, check for outages, and chat with Spectrum support. It does not play TV shows.
Spectrum TV App	Your **watching** app. Live channels, On Demand, Cloud DVR recordings and the guide. On a Xumo Stream Box it's already installed.

TIP

A simple way to remember

My Spectrum is about **my account**. Spectrum **TV** is about **watching TV**. If you're trying to pay a bill and see a TV guide instead, you've opened the wrong one.

Making or recovering your username

1. On a computer, go to **Spectrum.net**. Type the address yourself rather than clicking a link in an email or text.
2. To make a new username, choose the option to create one and follow the prompts. Have your Spectrum bill handy, since you'll be asked for details from it.
3. If you've forgotten it, choose **Forgot Username or Password?** and follow the steps.
4. Write your username somewhere safe, such as the "Keep this handy" table in Chapter 28.

GOOD TO KNOW

New usernames take a little while to work

Spectrum says a brand-new username can take up to 60 minutes before it works in the Spectrum TV App. If you just made one and the app says it doesn't recognize you, give it an hour and try again.

HEADS UP

Changed your password? Update it everywhere

If you change your Spectrum password, for example while paying your bill, the Spectrum TV App on your tablet or TV will need the new one. Spectrum lists an old saved password as a common reason the app suddenly won't sign in.

One more thing: anyone who calls you asking for your Spectrum password is not Spectrum. You never need to read it to anyone. Chapter 25 covers the scams that try exactly this.

PART 2

The Xumo Stream Box

Spectrum's newer TV box. It plugs into your TV's HDMI port, runs over your home internet, and brings Spectrum's live channels together with Netflix, YouTube and hundreds of other apps, all under one voice remote.

CHAPTER 5

Setting Up the Xumo Stream Box

A **Xumo Stream Box** (say it "ZOO-mo") is a small streaming box that Spectrum offers to its TV customers, with the Spectrum TV App built in. Instead of a coax cable, it gets your channels through your home WiFi. Setting one up takes about as long as a cup of coffee, and the TV walks you through most of it.

Before you start, have these ready

- Your **Spectrum Internet** working, and your **WiFi network name and password**. They're often printed on a sticker on your Spectrum router.
- Your **Spectrum username and password** (Chapter 4).
- The **Quick Start Guide** from the Xumo box.
- Your TV's **brand and model number**, in case the remote can't find your TV on its own. It's usually on a sticker on the back of the TV.

Connecting the box

1. Plug the **HDMI cable** from the Xumo Stream Box into an HDMI port on your TV. Note the port's number, such as HDMI 1 or HDMI 2.
2. Plug the **power adapter** into the Xumo box and into a wall outlet.
3. When the small light on the bottom front of the box comes on, turn on your TV and switch it to that HDMI input with your TV's own remote (the **Input** or **Source** button).
4. Pull the plastic tab out of the back of the Xumo voice remote so the batteries connect.
5. Follow the on-screen steps to pair the remote and activate the box.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **A blank screen during the first update is normal**
>
> The box downloads a software update while it's activating, and the screen may go blank afterward. Spectrum says that if it doesn't update and restart by itself within ten minutes, unplug the power adapter, then plug it back in.

The on-screen setup steps

1. **Choose your language**: English (U.S.) or Spanish.
2. **Connect to WiFi**: pick your network from the list and type the password using the arrows and the on-screen keyboard.

3. **Connect the remote to the box**: if asked, press and hold the **1** and **3** buttons together for three seconds.
4. **Connect the remote to your TV**: test it by changing the volume. If asked, pick your TV's brand and enter the model number. Most TVs pair automatically.
5. **External speakers**: if you have a soundbar, enter its brand and model. If you don't have one, or it isn't listed, see the tip below.
6. **Link your account**: choose **Continue with Spectrum** to create your Xumo account from your Spectrum sign-in, or **Continue with Xumo** to set one up with an email address.
7. **Pick the room** where the box lives, such as Living Room.

TIP

Stuck on the speaker screen?

Spectrum documents a workaround if setup won't move past the speaker questions: type the number **3** in the search, then choose **My brand is not listed** at the bottom of the results on the right. Setup should then carry on.

TIP

Using Continue with Spectrum

If you choose Continue with Spectrum, Spectrum says the phone or tablet you use to finish signing in should be on your home WiFi at the time. After setup, open the **Spectrum TV App** from the Xumo main menu. If it doesn't sign you in automatically, enter your Spectrum username and password there.

If activation freezes at any point other than the software update, Spectrum's advice is to unplug the Xumo box's power cable, plug it back in, and pick up where you left off.

SCAM ALERT

Setup never asks for a credit card or a phone call

Nothing in Spectrum's Xumo setup steps involves paying a fee or calling a phone number you found online. If a website or pop-up says you must pay to "activate" your Xumo box, or call a number for activation help, close it. Use only the steps on your TV screen, and get help through the My Spectrum app or Spectrum.net.

CHAPTER 6

The Xumo Remote: Buttons, Pairing and Voice

The Xumo remote does three jobs: it runs the Xumo box, it can turn your TV on and off and change its volume, and it listens when you hold the microphone button. It talks to the box by **Bluetooth**, a short-range wireless signal, so you don't have to aim it perfectly. Setting up TV volume uses an infrared signal, so for that part, aim at the TV.

Which Xumo remote do you have?

Remote	How to recognize it
PR1 remote	The Xumo logo is at the **bottom**, below the number keys.
PR3 remote	The Xumo logo is at the **top**, and the app buttons are arranged in a diamond shape.
Large Button remote	Bigger, easier-to-read buttons. Spectrum's support pages list it alongside the others, and it unpairs the same way as the PR1.

Pairing the remote to the box

1. Put in fresh batteries, and make sure nothing is between the remote and the Xumo box.
2. Press and hold the **Microphone** button for 10 seconds.
3. Watch the TV. It will say it's connecting your remote, then "Your remote is now connected."

If that doesn't work, Spectrum gives a backup method for each remote:

Remote	Backup pairing method
PR1	Hold **1** and **3** together for two seconds, then wait 10 seconds.
PR3	Hold the **…** (Quick Access) button and **Mute** together for two seconds, then wait 10 seconds.

Still no luck? Turn off the TV and unplug the Xumo box from power, plug it back in, turn the TV on, and start the pairing steps again.

Teaching the remote to control your TV's volume and power

1. Point the remote at the box and press the **Settings** button (or press **…** and choose **Settings**).
2. Scroll to **Connected devices** (on some screens it reads Remote / Connected devices) and press **OK**.

3. Choose **Pair your remote to your TV** and follow the on-screen steps. Enter the TV's brand and model number when asked.
4. To control a soundbar instead, choose **Pair your remote to your Speakers** in the same place.

> **TIP**
>
> **Volume works but power doesn't (or the other way round)?**
>
> Spectrum says this usually means the remote picked a code that only does one of the two jobs. Go back into the pairing steps above and choose your TV's brand and model by hand rather than letting it guess.

Unpairing (for when the remote seems linked to the wrong box)

- **PR1 or Large Button**: hold **Back** and **+** together for three seconds until the light turns green, then press **9**, **8**, **1**. The light flashes red when done.
- **PR3**: hold **…** and **Back** together for five seconds.

If you have two Xumo boxes, a remote can end up talking to the wrong one. Unpair it, then pair it again while standing near the box you want.

Talking to your TV

Press and hold the **Microphone** button for about two seconds, speak, then let go. Here are some of the commands Spectrum lists:

Say this	What happens
"ABC" or "CNN"	From the Xumo home screen, shows what's on that channel. Inside the Spectrum TV App, it tunes right to that channel.
"Guide"	Opens the guide showing what's on now.
A show's name	Goes to the show, or opens the app where you can watch it. Series names work; episode titles don't.
An actor's name	Shows their movies and TV shows.
"Where's my game?" or a team name	Opens a page for your team with live games first. Works for major North American teams, so "Cleveland Guardians" is worth a try.
"Free"	Lists things you can watch at no extra cost.
"Set sleep timer"	Turns things off after a set time.
"Settings" or "Home"	Opens Xumo Settings or the Home screen.
"Turn off"	Turns the Xumo box off.

GOOD TO KNOW

Voice search only searches certain apps

Spectrum notes that voice results only include apps that are built into Xumo's search, and voice search only works on the home screen or inside those apps. Spectrum lists Prime Video, Apple TV, BritBox, Disney+, ESPN, HBO Max, Hulu, Netflix, Peacock, Spectrum TV, Tubi, Xumo Play and YouTube. In other apps, you'll be asked to type instead.

TIP

Voice not working?

Voice won't work until the remote is paired. If it is paired and still won't listen, Spectrum suggests unplugging the Xumo box from the wall for about 10 seconds and plugging it back in.

CHAPTER 7

Getting Around Xumo: Home Screen, Apps and Settings

The Xumo home screen is a menu of rows: things you've been watching, your apps, and suggestions. You move with the arrow ring on the remote and press the center **OK** button to choose. Press **Home** at any time to come back here.

Apps come already installed

Spectrum says the Xumo box comes with more than 250 apps already installed, so there's nothing to download. That list includes Netflix, Prime Video, Hulu, Disney+, HBO Max, Peacock, Paramount+, YouTube, PBS Kids, Pluto TV, Tubi, Spectrum News and, of course, the Spectrum TV App. Xumo also puts the apps you use most at the top of the home screen.

HEADS UP

Free to open is not always free to watch

Each app is there, but many need their own subscription. If you're on a Spectrum plan that includes an app (Chapter 3), activate it through Spectrum App Central first. If you sign up for something new directly from the Xumo home screen, it's billed to your credit card and shows on your Xumo account, not on your Spectrum bill. Purchases made inside the Spectrum TV App go on your Spectrum bill.

Opening Settings

Press the **Quick Access** button (the one with three dots, **...**), move right to **Settings**, and press **OK**. Or just hold the microphone button and say "Settings." Here's what's inside:

Settings section	What you'll find there
Picture and sound	Picture resolution (choose **2160p** for a 4K TV, **1080p** for a regular HD TV), audio language and HDMI audio options.
Network	Check your WiFi connection, switch networks, or reset the network connection.
Accessibility	Closed captions, audio description, voice guidance, high contrast and more (Chapter 20).
Connected devices	Pair the remote with your TV, or connect a soundbar or speakers.
Parental	Require a PIN for purchases or before certain apps open (Chapter 21).

Settings section	What you'll find there
Privacy	Watch history, personalized recommendations and advertising choices.
Start up and standby	When the box goes to sleep, a sleep timer, and whether TV starts playing when you turn it on.
Viewing preferences	Pick your preferred TV provider and arrange your apps.
System management	Software information, app updates, restart, factory reset, time zone and language.

TIP

Set Spectrum TV as your preferred provider

Under **Viewing preferences**, choose **Spectrum TV** as your preferred TV provider. Xumo says this personalizes the home screen so your Spectrum channels, the live TV guide and what's currently playing are easier to reach. It doesn't change your Spectrum service or your bill.

Inputs and the Xumo box

The Xumo box only shows up when your TV is set to the HDMI input it's plugged into. If you also have a DVD player or an antenna, your TV's own remote switches between them with the **Input** or **Source** button. If you ever see "No signal," the TV is simply on the wrong input. Switch back to the Xumo box's HDMI number.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why the box seems to switch itself off

Spectrum says Xumo boxes go into **Standby** after eight hours with no button presses. To wake it, hold the **Home** button for three to five seconds. If that bothers you, open **Settings** > **Start up and standby** and turn **Auto Standby** off.

The **Xumo TV** app for phones won't control a Xumo Stream Box, according to Spectrum, so don't download it hoping for a spare remote.

CHAPTER 8

Spectrum TV on Xumo: Live TV, the Guide and Favorites

Your Spectrum channels live inside the **Spectrum TV App** on the Xumo box. Open it from the main menu and you'll usually land on live TV. These are the moves you'll use every day, taken from Spectrum's own instructions for the app on Xumo.

To do this	Do this
See what's on, or turn on captions	While watching, press **Up** on the arrow ring. You'll see show information plus options for subtitles and closed captions, chapters, and restarting from the beginning.
Open the Guide	While watching live TV, press **Back**.
Jump to a channel you just watched	While watching, swipe or press **Down** to see Recently Watched.
Sort or filter the Guide	With the Guide open, press and hold **OK**. You can sort by network name or channel number and filter by Favorites, Movies, Sports and more.
Pause live TV	Press **OK**, then use the arrows to pause, rewind or fast-forward. You can pause up to 30 minutes.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pausing has two small limits

You can't pause or rewind within the first minute after you change channels, and the pause buffer starts when you tune to a channel. If you change channels or leave the app, the buffer starts over.

Make a Favorites list

1. Open the Guide and find a channel you watch often.
2. Move left into the channel's name box so it's highlighted.
3. Press the center of the remote. The outlined heart turns into a filled white heart.
4. Later, press and hold **OK** in the Guide and choose **Favorites** to see only your channels.

On Demand: shows and movies whenever you like

On Demand means shows and movies you can start whenever you like, rather than waiting for them to air. Spectrum says your plan includes On Demand at no extra charge, but some titles, like new-release movies, cost extra. When a title costs money, the price appears under

it, and you'll see a reminder before anything is charged to your account.

1. Choose **On Demand** from the Spectrum TV App's main menu.
2. Move down to browse categories such as TV Shows, Movies, Kids and Networks.
3. Highlight a title and press **OK** for details, then choose **Watch**.
4. Rentals live in the **Video Store** tab. Anything you've already rented appears at the top for the rental period.

Picture in Picture

Spectrum says the Spectrum TV App itself doesn't do Picture in Picture, but the **Xumo guide** does. Browse the Xumo guide and the show you're watching keeps playing in a small window. Press **OK** on a channel to switch the small picture, and **OK** again to make it full screen.

4K channels

Some live events come in **4K**, a sharper picture. Spectrum lists FOX, FS1, NBC, USA, ESPN, Telemundo and Universo 4K. You need a 4K TV and an HDMI 2.1 cable, and the Xumo box set to **2160 UHD** under **Settings** > **Picture and Sound**. Tune to one of those channels and you'll be offered **Enable 4K** or **Maybe Later**.

> **TIP**
>
> **Things a Xumo box doesn't do**
>
> Spectrum says **Caller ID on TV** only works with a cable box, and **screen mirroring** (showing your phone's screen on the TV) isn't supported in the Spectrum TV App on Xumo. If you rely on either, see Chapter 14 before swapping a cable box for a Xumo box.

CHAPTER 9

When the Xumo Box Acts Up

Most Xumo hiccups fix themselves with a simple restart. Work down this chapter from the gentlest fix to the strongest, and stop as soon as things are working again.

1. If one app freezes: close it

Closing an app keeps its data and your sign-in, so you won't have to sign in again.

1. Open **Settings** > **System Management** > **Resets & Updates**.
2. Choose **Close Apps**, then the app that's misbehaving.
3. Open the app again.

2. Restart the box

Unplug the power cord from the Xumo box, wait 10 seconds, and plug it back in. Or go to **Settings** > **System Management** > **Resets & Updates** > **Restart Device**.

HEADS UP

The button underneath is not a power button

Spectrum warns that the button on the bottom of the Xumo box is not a power button and shouldn't be used. To turn the box off and on, use the remote or unplug the power cord.

3. If one app keeps acting up: reinstall it

Same path, but choose **Reinstall Apps**. This returns the app to how it was when new and erases its sign-in, so have that app's password ready.

4. Last resort: factory reset

STAY SAFE

A factory reset erases everything on the box

Settings > **System Management** > **Resets & Updates** > **Factory Reset** puts the box back the way it came from the store. You'll have to go through activation again (Chapter 5) and sign back in to every app. Try the steps above first, and if in doubt, call me before you do this.

Common problems and what to try

What you see	What to try
No picture	Check the HDMI cable at both ends. Make sure the TV is on the right input. Unplug the Xumo box for 10 seconds, plug it back in, wait 30 seconds, then press **Home**. Try a different HDMI port on the TV.
Box won't power on	Check the power and HDMI plugs, try another outlet, and make sure the outlet isn't controlled by a light switch that's turned off.
"HDCP unauthorized"	Spectrum says to switch your TV off at the wall for at least a minute, then back on.
"No WiFi / No Internet"	Unplug the TV for about 10 seconds and plug it back in. Check that your other devices have internet. If not, the problem is your internet, not the box.
"The batteries in your remote control are running low"	Replace the remote's batteries.
"A PIN is required to watch this"	A parental control is on. See Chapter 21.
"Software Error"	Spectrum says to contact them for this one.

Checking your WiFi signal

Go to **Settings** > **Network** > **Network Connection**. The status reads Disconnected, Bad, Fair, Good or Excellent. If it's Bad or Fair, the box may be too far from your router, or walls may be in the way. Moving the router, or adding a WiFi extender, often helps. My manual on home WiFi and routers covers that in more detail.

FROM BILL

When it's the WiFi, not the box

Because the Xumo box gets everything over WiFi, a weak signal in the bedroom shows up as freezing and buffering. I can check your WiFi coverage room by room and fix the weak spots. $49 remote · $99 in your home.

PART 3

The Cable Box (Spectrum Receiver)

The traditional box that many homes have had for years. Here's how to tell which guide yours runs, how to find and record shows, how to get the remote working with your TV, and how a cable box compares with a Xumo box.

CHAPTER 10

Your Spectrum Receiver and Which Guide You Have

Spectrum calls its cable box a **Spectrum Receiver**. It's the hub of your TV: a coax cable from the wall brings the channels in, and an HDMI cable (or, on older setups, other cables) carries the picture to your TV. Some receivers are also a **DVR**, a digital video recorder with a hard drive inside for recording shows.

Here's what confuses people: different receivers show different on-screen **guides**, the grid of channels and times you see when you press **Guide**. Spectrum says the guide you have depends on your area and your box. The buttons and menus differ from guide to guide, so it's worth knowing which one you've got.

Find your guide in one minute

1. Press **Guide** on your remote and look at the grid.
2. Press **Menu** and look at the list of choices.
3. Match what you see with the table below.

If you see…	You have…
Spectrum Guide (the newest)	The guide grid has a dark blue or white background and shows network **logos**. The remote has a blue **Menu** button. The menu includes **My Library**, and its last option is **Settings & Support**.
i-Guide	Common on Arris, Pace and Motorola boxes. The grid is dark gray (or blue and purple on older versions), with network names as text and an information banner along the bottom.
Passport	Common on Cisco and Scientific Atlanta boxes. Standard-definition look, usually a violet grid, with shortcuts along the bottom.
ODN Guide	A gray or blue grid with network names as text. Pressing **On Demand** opens an On Demand Portal, and the menu includes a Feature Tour.

GOOD TO KNOW

This book focuses on Spectrum Guide

Spectrum calls Spectrum Guide its flagship guide with the most features, and it's what most newer Spectrum Receivers in our area show. If you have one of the older guides, the ideas are the same, but the menu names differ. Spectrum's support site has a page for each guide; search it for your guide's name.

Getting connected right

If a receiver ever acts strangely, Spectrum's first checklist is about cables:

- The **power cord** is firmly in the receiver and the outlet.
- The **coax cable** is screwed onto the cable outlet in the wall and the back of the box.
- The **HDMI cable** is firmly in the box and the TV.
- The receiver is plugged into an outlet that is **not controlled by a light switch**. Spectrum notes that losing power can make a receiver restart over and over.

> **TIP**
>
> **Give it a few minutes after any restart**
>
> When a receiver starts up, it downloads channel information, and Spectrum says that can take several minutes. On some models you'll see "Stick around, we're setting things up for you" and then "Retrieving channel info." That's normal. Wait for live TV to appear before deciding something's wrong.

CHAPTER 11

Using the Spectrum Guide

The guide is your TV listings. On Spectrum Guide, three buttons do most of the work: **Guide** shows the grid of what's on, **Menu** opens everything else, and **Info** tells you about the show you're on. The arrow ring moves you around, and **OK** chooses.

Finding something to watch

1. Press **Guide**. Channels run down the left, times run across the top.
2. Use **Up** and **Down** to move through channels. **Page Up** and **Page Down** (on remotes that have them) jump a screenful at a time.
3. Use **Right** to look ahead at later shows.
4. Press **OK** on a show that's on now to watch it, or on a later show to see options such as recording it.
5. Press **Exit** to go back to full-screen TV.

The main Menu

Press the blue **Menu** button for the main menu down the left side of the screen. You'll find the Guide, On Demand, **My Library** (recordings and things you've watched), search, and at the bottom, **Settings & Support**, where captions, parental controls and remote setup live.

Searching for a show

Spectrum Guide has a search tool for finding a show by name. Open **Menu**, choose the search option, and spell out a few letters of the title with the arrow keys and **OK**. Results appear as you type. It's often faster than scrolling the guide.

On Demand on a cable box

Press the **On Demand** button on your remote, or choose On Demand from the Menu. Browse by category, pick a title, and choose to watch. Like on Xumo, many titles are included in your plan and some, like new movie rentals, cost extra. The price is shown before you confirm. Chapter 21 explains the Purchase Controls PIN, which stops anyone renting something by accident.

TIP

The two buttons that always get you home

If you're ever lost in menus, press **Exit** to go back to live TV. If the screen is a mess, press **Guide** and then pick a channel. You can't break anything by pressing these.

GOOD TO KNOW

Programs in the guide you can't watch

Spectrum lists "programs on your guide that you can't actually watch" as a sign the receiver needs a restart. Before you call, try the restart in Chapter 22. If it still happens, the channel may not be part of your plan. Your current lineup is in your account on Spectrum.net.

CHAPTER 12

Recording with a Cable Box DVR

If your receiver is a DVR, it can record shows onto its own hard drive so you can watch them later, skipping the commercials if you like. (If you use a Xumo box or the Spectrum TV App instead, recording happens in the **Cloud DVR**, which Chapter 18 covers.)

Recording a single show

1. Press **Guide** and find the show, whether it's on now or later this week.
2. Highlight it and press **OK**.
3. Choose the option to record that episode. A red dot appears next to it in the guide.
4. To record right now while watching, press the red **Record** button on the remote.

Recording every episode of a series

Spectrum Guide can record a series automatically. Highlight the show in the guide, press **OK**, and choose the series recording option. You can usually pick new episodes only, or all episodes. This is the "set it and forget it" choice for a favorite program.

Watching what you recorded

1. Press **Menu** (or the **DVR** or list button on some remotes).
2. Choose **My Library**, then your recordings.
3. Highlight a recording and press **OK** to play it.
4. Use the rewind, play, fast-forward and pause buttons as you would on any recorder.

GOOD TO KNOW

A cable box DVR fills up

A box DVR has a hard drive of a fixed size. When it's full, new recordings can't be saved or old ones are removed first, depending on your settings. Delete shows you've finished with. Recordings on a box DVR stay on that box. They don't appear in the Spectrum TV App. If you return or swap a DVR, its recordings go with it, so watch the ones you care about first.

CHAPTER 13

Programming Your Remote to Your TV

"Programming" a remote just means teaching it to turn your TV on and off and change the TV's volume, so you only need one remote. Spectrum has used many remote models over the years, and each has its own steps. First, find out which one you have.

Find your remote's model number

Spectrum says the model number is inside the **battery cover**. Slide the cover off and look for a code such as **UR5U-8780L** or **UR3-SR3S**. Then find your remote below. Spectrum's "How to program your Spectrum remote" page has steps for more than two dozen models if yours isn't here.

The Spectrum Guide remote

This is the remote that comes with Spectrum Guide boxes. Spectrum Guide will often detect your TV and walk you through setup on the screen. If not, use the brand shortcut:

1. With the TV on, press and hold **MENU** and **OK** together until the **INPUT** key blinks twice.
2. Press and release the **TV POWER** key once.
3. Press and hold the number for your TV brand from the table below.
4. Let go of the number as soon as the TV turns off. Turn the TV back on and test the volume.

Number	TV brands	Number	TV brands
1	Insignia, Dynex, Onn	6	Samsung
2	LG, Zenith	7	Sharp
3	Panasonic	8	Sony
4	Philips, Magnavox	9	Toshiba
5	RCA, TCL	0	Vizio

Brand not listed, or it didn't work? Spectrum's support page for this remote has a code lookup. Choose Television and your brand, press **Get Device Codes**, then hold **MENU** and **OK** until **INPUT** blinks twice, enter the first code, and test. If it doesn't work, try the next code.

TIP

Make the remote work from another room (RF pairing)

If your box is hidden in a cabinet, you can pair the Spectrum Guide remote by radio instead of infrared. Press **MENU** and go to **Settings & Support** > **Support** > **Remote Control** > **RF Pair New Remote**, then follow the steps on screen.

The Universal CLIKR-5 (model UR5U-8780L or 8790L)

This one has **TV**, **DVD**, **CBL** and other device buttons across the top. Spectrum gives a quick method and a manual method. Here's the manual method, which works for most TVs:

1. Turn on your TV.
2. Press and hold **TV** and **OK/SEL** together for three seconds. The TV button lights up for 30 seconds.
3. While it's lit, point the remote at the TV and type a code for your brand. Pause about a second between digits. Spectrum's page for this remote has a code lookup, and the codes are in the remote's manual.
4. Press **POWER**. If the TV turns off and back on, the code works. Test the channel and volume too.
5. Press **TV** to save. The light blinks twice to confirm.

CLIKR-5 extras	How
Volume always controls the TV	Spectrum's steps for locking volume to one device start by holding the device button and **OK/SEL** for three seconds, then pressing **VOL+** and the device you want.
Start over (factory reset)	Hold **CBL** and **REC** until the lights move from right to left three times, about 10 seconds.
Box shows error 1103 or 232	Spectrum says to contact them about these. For other errors, restart the box.

Other common remotes

Model	What to know
UR3-SR3S (big button remote)	Spectrum's **big button remote**, designed for people with low vision. Spectrum's programming steps for it use **auto search**, where the remote tries one code after another until your TV responds.
Philips RC122	Also uses an **Auto-Search** method that scans its built-in codes.
URC 2060	Program with direct code entry or code search.

Model	What to know
Digital adapter remotes	Small remotes for the little digital adapter boxes. Spectrum has steps for each model on its support site.

GOOD TO KNOW

Auto search is slow, and that's normal

With auto search, the remote steps through its whole list of codes one at a time. On some models this can take several minutes. Keep pointing it at the TV and follow your model's steps exactly. When the TV turns off, you press the button that saves the code.

TIP

Ask for a remote that's easier to use

Spectrum offers a cover for some of its remotes that hides the buttons you rarely use. The cover snaps on and off. You can also ask about the big button remote. Contact Spectrum through the My Spectrum app or Spectrum.net to request one, and ask whether there's any charge.

CHAPTER 14

Xumo Box or Cable Box: What's Different

Spectrum is steering many customers toward the Xumo Stream Box, and you may be offered one. Both give you your Spectrum channels, but they're built differently. Spectrum publishes a comparison of a standard cable box (they call it a set-top box) and a Xumo Stream Box. Here are the parts that matter most at home.

Feature	Cable box	Xumo Stream Box
Needs a coax cable from the wall	Yes	No. Uses WiFi or an internet cable
Needs your home internet to work	No	Yes
Recording	Box DVR (on DVR models) and Cloud DVR	Cloud DVR only
Streaming apps (Netflix, YouTube and others)	No	Yes, 250+ already installed
Voice search with the remote	No	Yes
Remote connects by	Infrared (and RF on some)	Bluetooth (infrared for the TV)
Caller ID on TV	Yes	No
Screen magnifier for low vision	No	Yes
Guide narration (talking guide)	Yes	Yes
Parental controls and purchase PIN	Yes	Yes
Restart a program from the beginning	Yes	Yes

Spectrum's comparison table also lists "Pause Live" as a cable-box-only feature, but Spectrum's own Xumo help pages describe pausing live TV for up to 30 minutes inside the Spectrum TV App on Xumo. In practice, you can pause on both.

Questions to ask yourself before you switch

- **Is your WiFi strong where that TV is?** A Xumo box depends on it. A cable box doesn't.
- **Do you use Caller ID on the TV?** Only a cable box shows it.
- **Do you have recordings on your box DVR?** They don't move to the Xumo box. Watch them first.
- **Would you use Netflix, YouTube or the included apps on that TV?** That's where Xumo shines: one remote, one home screen.

- **Does anyone in the house have low vision?** Xumo's screen magnifier and voice guidance can help a lot (Chapter 20).

GOOD TO KNOW

Equipment costs

Spectrum's equipment charges differ by box, by plan and by area, and they change. I'm not going to print a price that may be out of date by the time you read this. Before you agree to any swap, ask Spectrum what the monthly charge will be for each box, and check your next bill to be sure it matches (Chapter 23).

FROM BILL

Not sure which is right for your TV?

I'm happy to look at your setup, test the WiFi where each TV is, and talk it through with you before you call Spectrum. $49 remote · $99 in your home.

PART 4

The Spectrum TV App on Your Own Devices

Watch Spectrum on a tablet, a phone, a Roku, an Apple TV, a Fire TV or a smart TV, with no Spectrum box at that TV. Here's how to get it, why some channels vanish when you're away from home, and how to record in the cloud.

CHAPTER 15

Getting the Spectrum TV App

The **Spectrum TV App** is free for Spectrum TV customers, and Spectrum says it's included with every TV plan. It lets you watch live channels, On Demand shows and your Cloud DVR recordings, browse the guide, pause and rewind live TV, watch several games at once with **Multiview** during select big sports events, and set parental controls, on devices you already own.

Devices that can run it

Spectrum's current list of devices, from its Spectrum TV App features page (November 2026):

Brand	Supported (per Spectrum)
Apple	iPhone and iPad with iOS 15 and above, Apple TV HD and Apple TV 4K.
Android	Android phones and tablets with Android 6.0 and above. Google TV and Android TV devices with Android 10 and above.
Amazon	Fire TV devices (2017 and newer models), Fire tablets, Fire HDX 2nd generation and above.
Roku	Roku players and Roku TVs, 2013 and newer models.
Smart TVs	Samsung (2017 and newer), LG (2021 and newer), Vizio (2016 and newer), plus Xumo TVs.
Other	Xbox One and newer, and the Xumo Stream Box (already installed). On a computer, use **SpectrumTV.net** in a current web browser.

GOOD TO KNOW

Spectrum's lists don't always agree

Spectrum publishes a few slightly different device lists on different pages, especially for model years. If your device is close to the cutoff, the simplest test is to search for **Spectrum TV** in your device's app store. If it's there and installs, it should work.

Installing and signing in

1. Open your device's app store: the **App Store** on an iPhone, iPad or Apple TV, **Google Play** on Android, the **Roku Channel Store**, or the Fire TV or smart TV's app store.

2. Search for **Spectrum TV**. Choose the official Spectrum TV app with Spectrum's logo, not a look-alike. Spectrum's own app page on Spectrum.net links to the real one for each device.
3. Install it. It's free.
4. Open it and sign in with your **Spectrum username and password**.
5. If the app asks to use your location, allow it. Spectrum says that with location permission turned off, you won't get access to all your channels.

SCAM ALERT

Get the app only from your device's own store

Never install a "Spectrum" app from a link in a text, an email or a pop-up. The real app is free and comes from the App Store, Google Play, the Roku store or your TV's store. A website that asks you to pay to download it, or to call a number for help installing it, is not Spectrum.

What the app needs to work well

- An internet speed of at least **10 Mbps** (megabits per second), Spectrum's stated minimum.
- A Spectrum account in good standing.
- To be in the United States. Spectrum says the app and SpectrumTV.net don't work outside the U.S. and its territories, which matters if you travel abroad.

GOOD TO KNOW

No surround sound in the app

Spectrum notes that the Spectrum TV App doesn't carry 5.1 surround sound. If you have a home theater system and the app sounds flatter than your cable box, that's why. It isn't a problem with your speakers.

CHAPTER 16

At Home or Away: Why Some Channels Disappear

This is the question I hear most about the Spectrum TV App: "I watched it fine at home, but at my daughter's house half the channels are missing." Nothing is broken. It's how Spectrum's agreements with the TV networks work.

The rule, in plain English

- **At home**, connected to your own Spectrum internet, you get **all** the channels in your plan, and Spectrum says there's no limit on how many devices can watch at once.
- **Away from home**, on someone else's WiFi or your phone's cellular data, **some channels are turned off**, and you can watch on up to **three** devices at a time.
- **Outside the United States**, the app doesn't work at all.

Which channels you keep when you're away depends on each network's agreement, so the list can differ from channel to channel. Your Cloud DVR recordings, on the other hand, play anywhere you have internet (Chapter 18).

The messages you might see

Message	What it means
WLC-1006 "We See You're Away From Home"	On SpectrumTV.net. Some channels need your home WiFi. Connect to it, then restart and try again.
DLC-1001 "Behind Modem Service Error"	On Android. Make sure you're on your home WiFi, then restart the app.
SLC-1000 "Connect to Spectrum Internet"	On a Samsung TV. Connect to your home Spectrum internet and try again.
XSTVP-1105 "Maximum Video Streams"	On Xumo. Too many devices are watching. Stop one, then try again.

TIP

"I'm home, but it still says I'm away"

Check that the phone or tablet is on **your** WiFi network and not on cellular data. On an iPhone or iPad, look for the WiFi fan symbol at the top of the screen. If your device uses a VPN (a privacy service that hides where you are), it may make the app think you're away. Turn the VPN off while watching. Also check that the app's location permission is on.

CHAPTER 17

Live TV, the Guide and On Demand in the App

The Spectrum TV App looks a little different on a phone, a Roku and a smart TV, but it's organized the same way everywhere. Along the top or side you'll find a main menu with sections for **Live TV** and the **Guide**, **On Demand**, **My Library** or **DVR**, **Search** and **Settings**.

Watching live TV

1. Open the Spectrum TV App. It often starts playing a channel right away.
2. Open the **Guide** to see what's on across channels.
3. Tap or select a channel to watch it.
4. To change channels, go back to the Guide, or swipe or press up and down on a TV remote.

Choosing the channel the app opens to

If you always start with the same channel, such as your local news, you can set a **Startup Channel**. Spectrum says that if this is turned off, the app opens to Spectrum News. On the Xumo box the steps are: **Settings** > **Preferences** > **Startup Channel** > **Manage Startup Channel**.

On Demand

Choose **On Demand** to browse TV shows and movies by category. Your plan includes many titles at no extra cost. Ones that cost money show a price, and the app asks you to confirm before charging your Spectrum account. Spectrum notes that some On Demand titles expire or are removed. If you see "Program Unavailable," that title may simply be gone.

Searching

Choose **Search** and type a show's title, an actor, a network or a sports team. On a TV, you'll use the arrows and an on-screen keyboard. On the Xumo box you can hold the microphone button and say it instead.

Watching on the big TV from a phone

If you have a **Chromecast** or a TV with Chromecast built in, Spectrum supports casting from the Spectrum TV App: sending what's playing on your phone to the TV. My Google TV and Chromecast manual explains how.

CHAPTER 18

Cloud DVR: Recording in the Cloud

A **Cloud DVR** records your shows on Spectrum's computers instead of a box in your house. Spectrum calls it **cDVR**. Because the recordings live online, you can watch them on any device with the Spectrum TV App: the Xumo box in the living room, a Roku in the bedroom, or a tablet at the cabin. If you have a Xumo box, Cloud DVR is how you record.

The two kinds

Service	What Spectrum says it includes
Cloud DVR (cDVR)	Record up to 50 shows at the same time. Recordings are kept for up to 90 days.
cDVR Unlimited	Record any number of shows at once. Recordings are kept for up to 270 days.

Whether Cloud DVR is included or extra depends on your plan, so check your bill or ask Spectrum. Spectrum's marketing also describes Cloud DVR as up to 50 hours of storage. If those numbers matter to you, ask which applies to your account.

Recording a show

1. Find the program in the Guide or with Search.
2. Select it to open its information page.
3. Select **Record**. A red circle shows it's scheduled.
4. For every episode, choose **Record Series** instead. You can pick all episodes or only new ones, how long to keep them, and a specific channel.
5. Select **Confirm** or **Record**.

On the Xumo box, while watching live TV, press **Up** and choose **Record** for that episode. For a series, press **Up**, choose **Get More Info**, then **Record**, then **Record Series**.

Watching your recordings

On…	Go to…
Phone, tablet, or SpectrumTV.net	**DVR** > **My Recordings**
Roku or Apple TV	**My Library** > **Recordings**
Xumo Stream Box	Press **Back** for the main menu, then **My Library**

Select a recording, then **Play** or **Watch**. To delete one, open its page and choose **Delete Recording**. To stop a scheduled recording, find it in the **Scheduled** list and choose **Cancel** or **Cancel Series**.

HEADS UP

Moving? Your cloud recordings don't come with you

Spectrum says that if you transfer your Spectrum services to a new address, you lose your Cloud DVR recordings. Watch anything precious before moving day.

GOOD TO KNOW

A few more Cloud DVR facts from Spectrum

You need an internet connection to play recordings, but you don't have to be home. Recordings don't mix with a cable box DVR: the two store shows separately. And switching from Cloud DVR to cDVR Unlimited keeps the recordings you already have.

CHAPTER 19

Spectrum TV App Error Codes

When the app can't do something, it shows a code: a few letters and numbers such as **RLP-1035**. The letters tell you which device you're on (R for Roku, I for iPhone and iPad, D for Android, S for Samsung, X for Xbox, XST for Xumo, W for SpectrumTV.net), and the number tells you what went wrong. Here are the ones Spectrum documents that people actually run into.

Code (examples)	What it means	What to try
WLC-1006, DLC-1001, SLC-1000, XLC-1001	You're not on your home Spectrum WiFi	Connect to home WiFi, restart the app (Chapter 16)
ILI-1010, DLI-1010, WLI-1010	Unable to sign in	Check your username and password. Use Forgot Username or Password? on Spectrum.net
RLI-1301, XSTVP-1305	Password reset required	Reset your password at Spectrum.net, then sign in again
IFE-1004, DFE-1004, XFE-1004	Check connection	Make sure the device is online
RLP-1025, RVP-1025, RCD-1025	Update required (Roku)	Update the Roku's software and the Spectrum TV app
XSTVP-1105	Too many streams	Stop watching on another device
RLP-1035, SLP-1035, WLP-1035	Program unavailable	Pick another program or try later
DCM-1602	Can't play (Android with a receiver)	Make sure the Spectrum Receiver is on and you're on home WiFi
SXTWL-2200	Routine maintenance	Spectrum says to check back in about an hour

For any other code, try these in order

1. Close the Spectrum TV App completely and open it again.
2. Make sure you're on your home WiFi.
3. Unplug the device (or turn it off) and let it power down completely. Wait a few minutes, then plug it back in.
4. Make sure you're signing in with the right username and password.

5. If it's still happening, check for an outage in the My Spectrum app, or use **Chat With Us** on Spectrum.net.

TIP

Freezing or slow to load?

Spectrum's checklist: make sure the app is up to date, install any updates for the device itself, turn the device off for 60 seconds, and if that doesn't help, uninstall and reinstall the Spectrum TV App.

HEADS UP

Look up codes on Spectrum.net, not in a search ad

Searching an error code online can lead to "support" websites run by scammers, with a phone number in big letters. Spectrum's real error code page is on Spectrum.net, under Support. Chapter 25 explains why this matters.

PART 5

Comfort, Family Settings and Quick Fixes

Make the words bigger, hear what's happening on screen, keep the grandchildren out of the wrong channels, stop surprise rental charges, and restart your equipment the way Spectrum recommends.

CHAPTER 20

Closed Captions, Audio Description and Talking Guides

Spectrum has more accessibility help built in than most people realize. **Closed captions** put the words on the screen. **Audio description** is a narrator who quietly describes what's happening when no one is talking. A **talking guide** reads menus aloud. Here's how to use each one, depending on what you watch with.

Captions on a cable box (Spectrum Guide)

The quick way: while watching a show full-screen, press **Options** (or the **A** button on some remotes), then press **1**. Do the same to turn them off.

To make captions bigger or easier to read:

1. Press **Menu** and go to **Settings & Support** (on some screens just **Settings**), then press **OK**.
2. Choose **Accessibility**, then **Closed Captioning Settings**.
3. Under **Text Settings**, choose a larger **Size**, a clear **Font** and a **Color** you can read.
4. Under **Background Settings**, a solid dark background behind white text is easiest for most eyes.
5. Highlight **Save** and press **OK**.

TIP

Captions still not showing?

Your TV has its own caption setting too. Spectrum notes you can also manage captions with the **CC** button on your TV's remote or in the TV's menu. If both are on, you may see two sets. If neither works, turn the TV's captions off and use the Spectrum box's.

Captions on the Xumo Stream Box

- **Fastest:** press the **Quick Access** button (**…**) on the remote, move right once to **Closed Captions**, and press **OK**.
- **In Settings: Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Closed Captions**.
- **Change how they look: Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Customized Caption Style**, turn it on, choose **Manage**, then change the text size, font, color and background.
- **Inside the Spectrum TV App** on Xumo: press **Up** while watching for the captions option.

Audio description: hearing what's on the screen

On many shows, a second soundtrack describes the action, the settings and people's expressions during pauses in the dialogue. Spectrum calls it **Descriptive Video Service** (DVS) on cable boxes. It comes through the **SAP** setting, which stands for Secondary Audio Programming.

- **Cable box: Menu** > **Settings & Support** > **Accessibility**, then turn **Secondary Audio Programming** on. Save.
- **Xumo box: Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Audio Description**. You can also turn on **Beep on Audio Description** to hear a beep when a described program is on.
- **Spectrum TV App:** open the show and turn on the SAP audio track.

GOOD TO KNOW

SAP can mean Spanish, too

Spectrum points out that on some channels the SAP track is audio description, and on others it's the program in Spanish. If you turn on SAP and suddenly hear Spanish, that channel uses SAP for a second language. Turn it back off for that show.

Menus read out loud

Equipment	Feature and where to find it
Cable box	**Guide Narration**, also called the Talking Guide, in **Menu** > **Settings & Support** > **Accessibility**. It reads the Spectrum Guide's menus and listings aloud.
Xumo box	**Voice Guidance**, in **Settings** > **Accessibility**, or press **…** and move right twice. It reads menus, guides and settings aloud.
Xumo box, low vision	**High Contrast** darkens backgrounds behind white text. **Screen Magnifier** enlarges the whole screen. Both are in the same Accessibility menu.

TIP

Find shows that have captions or description

On the Xumo box, **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Highlight Programs** can mark which shows and movies have closed captions or audio description, so you can choose ones that work for you.

My manual on hearing help tech covers TV listening devices, captions on other services and hearing-aid streaming, if sound is the bigger challenge in your house.

CHAPTER 21

Parental Controls and Purchase PINs

Parental controls aren't just for parents. They're also how you stop a visiting grandchild from renting five movies, and how you hide channels you never want to land on. They work with a **PIN**, a four-digit number you choose.

On a cable box with Spectrum Guide: three separate PINs

PIN	What it controls
Parental Controls PIN	Blocks by rating, content, channel or time of day, and can hide adult titles.
Purchase Controls PIN	Required for Video Store rentals and Pay-Per-View, above a dollar limit you set.
On Demand PIN	Locks the whole On Demand library, including rentals.

They can all be different. Each PIN belongs to one receiver, so with two cable boxes you set them up twice.

Setting up parental controls

1. Press **Menu** and use the arrows to choose **Settings & Support**.
2. Highlight **Parental Controls**, press **OK**, then choose **Parental Control Settings**.
3. The first time, you'll be asked to create a four-digit PIN. Enter it twice and select **Save**.
4. Turn **Parental Controls** ON. This is the master switch.
5. Add the rules you want: **Rating Restrictions** (pick the first rating to block and stricter ones are added automatically), **Channel Restrictions**, **Content Filters** or **Time/Day Restrictions**.
6. Select **Save** after each change.

GOOD TO KNOW

Things Spectrum says about these rules

Channel restrictions block the channel number, not the network, so block both the regular and HD versions of a channel. They don't block On Demand or Netflix. Time/Day restrictions, up to 10 of them, block live TV and recordings but not On Demand. And **Hide Adult Titles** hides racy titles in the guide, but doesn't block the shows by itself.

HEADS UP

Forgot your PIN?

On a cable box, Spectrum says to call customer support to reset it. Keep your PIN in a safe place, such as the "Keep this handy" table in Chapter 28, but not on a sticky note on the remote.

On the Xumo Stream Box

1. Open **Settings** and go to **Parental**.
2. Choose **Set up your PIN** and enter a four-digit PIN.
3. Under **Manage PIN Settings**, turn on **PIN for Purchase** to require the PIN before purchases.
4. Turn on **PIN for Apps** to require it before chosen apps open. You can lock individual apps or all apps.

Inside the **Spectrum TV App** on Xumo there's a separate set of controls: **Settings** > **Parental Controls** lets you block movies by rating, TV shows by rating, and individual channels.

STAY SAFE

Forgetting the Xumo PIN means a factory reset

Spectrum says that if you forget your Xumo box PIN, the fix is a factory reset, which erases the box's settings and sign-ins (Chapter 9). Write the PIN down somewhere safe the day you create it.

In the Spectrum TV App on phones and tablets

The app has its own parental controls in its **Settings**. Spectrum notes that if you can't see some programs at home, parental controls may have been turned on in the app by mistake. Check there before calling. On SpectrumTV.net, you need to sign in with a username that has Primary or Admin privileges to change parental controls.

CHAPTER 22

Restarting Your Equipment the Official Way

A restart fixes a surprising number of TV problems: a frozen picture, a guide with no listings, channels that say they're unavailable, or a remote that stops responding. Spectrum gives you three ways to do it. Try them in this order.

1. Restart a cable box from your account

This sends a signal from Spectrum to your box. It's handy because you don't have to crawl behind the TV. Spectrum's steps:

1. Sign in to your account at **Spectrum.net**, or open the **My Spectrum app**.
2. Select **Services**, then **TV**.
3. Choose the box that's having trouble from your list of equipment.
4. Select **Restart Equipment**.
5. Wait several minutes while the box starts back up and loads channel information.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> **"Restart," not "reset"**
>
> Older guides and some websites call this button "Reset Equipment." Spectrum's current instructions call it **Restart Equipment**. It's the same gentle restart: it doesn't erase your settings or recordings.

2. Restart by unplugging

Unplug the cable box's power cord from the wall for **60 seconds**, then plug it back in. Spectrum's Xumo instructions say 10 seconds is enough for a Xumo box. Then be patient: the cable box can take several minutes to finish starting up.

3. The Reset button on some boxes

On Spectrum Receiver models 101, 201, 110 and 210, Spectrum says to make sure the TV is on, then press and hold the **Reset** button on the box for a full five seconds. The Spectrum logo appears, then messages about setting things up and retrieving channel info, and finally live TV. If you see "No Signal," press the power button on the box or remote to turn it on.

TIP

After a power outage

If the power flickered or the whole neighborhood was out, your box and your internet may both need a few minutes. Spectrum also has instructions for rebooting a receiver after an emergency alert test, which can occasionally leave a box stuck. A restart is the cure for that too.

HEADS UP

Leave fiber equipment alone

If you have Spectrum's newer fiber service, Spectrum says its fiber modem (the Optical Network Unit) must stay plugged in, and you shouldn't return it. For internet equipment in general, a restart from the My Spectrum app is the safest choice.

When a restart doesn't fix it

- Check the My Spectrum app for an **outage** in your area. If there is one, the fix is on Spectrum's end.
- Check every cable is firmly in place (Chapter 10).
- Make sure the TV is on the right input.
- Then contact Spectrum through the My Spectrum app or **Chat With Us** on Spectrum.net (Chapter 26).

PART 6

Your Bill, Your Equipment and Staying Safe

What the TV charges on your Spectrum bill mean, how to return equipment without a charge (and which nearby stores no longer take returns), and the scams that borrow Spectrum's name.

CHAPTER 23

Understanding the TV Part of Your Bill

A Spectrum bill has more lines on it than most people expect, and the TV portion is often more than the plan price you were quoted. That's not necessarily a mistake. Spectrum says the total of taxes, fees and charges is in the **Summary** on the first page, and the details of which service each one belongs to are on the **second page**. Here's what the TV-related lines mean, in Spectrum's own terms.

Line on the bill	What it is
Your TV plan	The monthly price for your package, such as Stream TV Signature. Promotional prices end after the promotion period, and the regular rate takes over. Check the date on your offer.
Broadcast TV Surcharge	A separate monthly fee. Spectrum says local broadcast stations (the ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX affiliates) charge it to carry their signals, and it passes that cost on to you. It's on top of the plan price.
Franchise fee	Collected for your local government for the use of public rights of way. Spectrum says it's a percentage of cable revenue, generally 5% in most areas.
PEG fee	Supports local public, educational and government access channels. Spectrum says all of it is passed to the municipality.
FCC fee	Covers the cost of the FCC's regulation of cable service.
Equipment	Monthly charges for each cable box, Xumo box or other device, if your plan charges for them. Amounts vary by area and plan.
On Demand and Pay-Per-View	Any movies you rented or events you bought through a Spectrum box or the Spectrum TV App.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why the Broadcast TV Surcharge exists

Spectrum's explanation: federal law since 1992 lets local broadcast stations negotiate fees with cable companies for "consent" to carry their channels. Those fees have risen, so Spectrum lists them as their own line. Spectrum says it won't tell customers what each individual station costs. The amount appears on your bill. If you want to know it before signing up, ask for it in writing.

HEADS UP

Two fees worth knowing

Spectrum says that since May 14, 2025, a **$5.00 fee** applies when an Auto Pay payment fails, and it notifies you and gives you three days to update your payment method first. A **late fee** applies to unpaid past-due balances, and the amount varies by state.

Purchases through Xumo are billed differently

Spectrum explains that what you buy on a Xumo box is billed in two different places. Things bought **inside the Spectrum TV App** go on your **Spectrum bill**. Things bought from the **Xumo home screen**, such as a new streaming subscription, are charged to the **credit card** on your Xumo account. If you see a charge you don't recognize, check both.

Reading your bill online

1. Open the **My Spectrum app** or sign in at **Spectrum.net**.
2. Go to the billing section and open your latest statement.
3. Compare this month to last month. If the total jumped, look for a promotion that ended, a new equipment line, or a rental.
4. Have questions? Use **Chat With Us**, or call the customer service number printed on your bill.

TIP

Saving money without losing your shows

Look at what you actually watch. If you mostly use the included streaming apps, ask Spectrum whether a smaller plan still includes them. If you have a box on a TV nobody uses, returning it may lower your bill. My Cutting the Cord manual walks through the bigger question of whether you need cable at all.

CHAPTER 24

Returning Spectrum Equipment

If you cancel service, swap a cable box for a Xumo box, or replace a broken box, the old equipment has to go back to Spectrum. Spectrum says returning it avoids **unreturned equipment charges**, which can be costly. Here's how to do it and get proof.

What to return

- The box itself (cable box, DVR or Xumo box).
- Its **remote**.
- Its **power supply** or power cord. Spectrum specifically says power supplies must be returned too.
- Do **not** throw old or broken Spectrum equipment away. Spectrum asks that you bring it to a Spectrum Store or The UPS Store.

Three ways to return it

Option	How it works
A Spectrum Store	Bring the equipment in. You'll get a receipt listing what you returned and the date. Spectrum suggests booking a store appointment online.
The UPS Store	Tell the associate you're returning Spectrum equipment. Spectrum says they'll pack and ship it to Spectrum at no additional cost. Keep the receipt to track the return.
A home shipment kit	If you can't get to either store, contact Spectrum for a kit with a box, a prepaid label and bubble wrap. (Spectrum Apple TVs and Spectrum Mobile devices can't go back this way.)

HEADS UP

Several Northeast Ohio Spectrum Stores no longer take returns

As of November 2026, Spectrum lists Ohio stores that no longer accept in-person equipment returns, including the stores it lists as **Stow, OH-Kent**, **Akron, OH-Arlington**, **Cuyahoga Falls, OH-Howe**, **Fairlawn, OH-W Market** and **Canton, OH-Everhard**, plus others around Cleveland. Spectrum says to take your equipment to The UPS Store instead, where it's packed and shipped at no additional cost. Check Spectrum's return page before you drive anywhere, since the list can change.

Get proof, and keep it

1. Before you go, take a quick photo of the equipment, including the labels with serial numbers.
2. Get a receipt at the store or UPS counter. Make sure it lists each item.
3. Keep the receipt with your Spectrum papers for at least several months.
4. If you keep getting return reminders after you've returned everything, contact Spectrum and have your receipt ready.

SCAM ALERT

Never mail equipment to an address someone gives you on the phone

Spectrum warns that it will never ask you to ship a device back unless you contacted Spectrum first to request a return or exchange. A caller who says there's a problem with your delivery and asks you to send equipment to a different address is running a scam.

CHAPTER 25

Spectrum Scams and How to Spot Them

Because so many people in our area have Spectrum, scammers use the Spectrum name constantly. They're betting you'll be worried about losing your TV or internet, or tempted by a discount. Here are the ones I want you to recognize instantly, along with what Spectrum itself says.

What Spectrum says it will never do

- Text you asking for your payment information.
- Ask you to pay a fee to get a discount.
- Ask you to pay with **gift cards**, **cryptocurrency**, or apps like **Venmo**, **Zelle**, **Cash App** or **PayPal**.
- Ask you to ship a device back unless you contacted Spectrum first.
- Send messages with attachments.
- Charge a one-time fee for a modem or receiver "upgrade."
- Offer discounts that aren't available on its website or in its stores.

SCAM ALERT

"Your service will be cut off in 30 minutes"

A caller, text or email says your Spectrum bill is past due and your TV and internet will be shut off today unless you pay right now, often with a gift card or an app. This is a scam. Hang up or delete it. Then open the **My Spectrum app** or sign in at **Spectrum.net** yourself and look at your balance. If your account is fine there, it's fine.

SCAM ALERT

Fake Spectrum support numbers in search results

When you search the web for "Spectrum customer service" or an error code, the first results can be advertisements. Some lead to look-alike sites with a big phone number answered by people who aren't Spectrum, who may ask to "connect to your computer" or charge for a "repair." Use only the number printed on your Spectrum bill, the help inside the My Spectrum app, or the contact page you reach by typing **Spectrum.net** yourself.

SCAM ALERT

"40% off your bill for two years"

Spectrum describes this exact scam: someone pretending to be Spectrum offers a huge discount, but you have to pay a fee first, often with gift cards from a store like CVS or Target. Spectrum says it never asks for a fee to get a discount. A deal that sounds too good to be true is the giveaway.

SCAM ALERT

Phishing texts and emails about your bill

A message says your payment failed, your account is locked, or you're owed a refund, with a link to "fix it now." The link leads to a fake sign-in page that steals your password or card number. Don't tap it. Spectrum also says it never sends messages with attachments. Delete it, or report it as spam.

SCAM ALERT

Someone at the door from "Spectrum"

An unexpected person at your door says they're from Spectrum and need to check, upgrade or swap your equipment, or offers a special deal. You don't have to let anyone in. Ask for their name, close the door, and check with Spectrum using the number on your bill or the My Spectrum app. A real appointment will show up in your account. Never hand over equipment, cash or a card at the door.

Red flags in any message

- Pressure to act **right now**, or a deal that's "about to expire."
- A request for payment by gift card, wire transfer, crypto or a payment app.
- A message about an order or delivery you don't remember.
- Poor grammar, odd wording, or a logo that looks a little off.

If you think you've been targeted

1. Stop replying. Hang up, or don't answer the text.
2. Don't send any more money or information.
3. If you already paid, call your bank or credit card company right away using the number on the back of your card.
4. Change your Spectrum password, and any other password you may have shared.

5. Report it to the Federal Trade Commission at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**, and tell Spectrum through the My Spectrum app.

FROM BILL

Not sure if it's really Spectrum?

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 before you pay anyone or click anything. Checking costs you nothing but a minute, and it's the best way to avoid a scam. My Spotting and Avoiding Scams manual covers many more.

CHAPTER 26

Reaching the Real Spectrum

Spectrum has several phone numbers for different departments, and they change. Rather than print one here that could go stale, here are the reliable ways to reach the real company, every time.

Way to reach Spectrum	How
Your paper or emailed bill	The customer service number printed on your Spectrum statement is the safest number to call.
The My Spectrum app	Free from the App Store or Google Play. Sign in, then use its support section to chat, check outages and restart equipment.
Spectrum.net	Type the address yourself. Use **Support** for help articles, and **Chat With Us** for a live person.
A Spectrum Store	Find locations through Spectrum's store locator on Spectrum.com. Call ahead about returns (Chapter 24).

Before you call, have these ready

- Your **account number** (on your bill) and the **address** of service.
- Which device is acting up: cable box, Xumo box, or the app on which device.
- Any **error code** on the screen, written down exactly.
- What you've already tried, such as restarting (Chapter 22).

TIP

Ask for things in writing

If a Spectrum representative offers a new price, a credit or an equipment swap, ask them to confirm it by email or text, or note the date, time and the representative's name. It makes any later billing question much easier to settle.

HEADS UP

Real Spectrum won't ask for your password

A genuine representative may ask you to confirm your identity, but you never need to read your Spectrum password aloud, and you should never give anyone a one-time code that was texted to you unless you started the call yourself to the real number.

PART 7

Help and Quick Reference

When it's worth having me come by, a one-page cheat sheet of the buttons and paths you'll use most, a place to write down your own details, and a short glossary of Spectrum words.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

Most of what's in this book you can do yourself, and I hope you'll try. But some jobs are simply easier with a second pair of hands, especially ones that involve crawling behind a TV cabinet or deciding between a cable box and a Xumo box. Here's an honest list of when a call makes sense.

A visit or remote session is worth it when…

- You're **switching from a cable box to a Xumo box** (or adding one) and want it set up, paired with the TV and soundbar, and signed in to your included apps.
- The **remote won't control the TV** no matter which code you try.
- The Xumo box keeps **buffering**, which usually points to WiFi coverage in that room.
- You want the Spectrum TV App set up on a **tablet, Roku or smart TV**, along with your included streaming apps activated through Spectrum App Central.
- You'd like **captions, audio description** or a talking guide set up and tested.
- Your **bill** doesn't make sense and you'd like someone to go through it with you before you call Spectrum.
- You got a **call, text or visit** you're not sure about.

What working with me is like

I'm a local, one-person business serving Portage County, Ohio, with more than 30 years of professional experience. I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing as I go, and write down the steps you'll want later. I don't sell equipment or Spectrum plans, so my only interest is getting your TV working the way you want it. If something is Spectrum's job, like an outage or a billing change, I'll tell you so and help you get the right person on the line.

FROM BILL

Call or text Bill

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book online at **billshometech.com/book**. Help is $49 remote · $99 in your home. When you call the main line, my AI receptionist, Sophie, may answer first. She'll take your details and find a time that works.

CHAPTER 28

Cheat Sheet

Print this page and keep it by the TV.

Xumo Stream Box

To…	Do this
Pair the remote	Hold the **Microphone** button 10 seconds
Talk to it	Hold **Microphone**, speak, let go
Open Settings	Press **…** (Quick Access), move right to **Settings**
Captions on or off	Press **…**, move right once, press **OK**
Voice Guidance on or off	Press **…**, move right twice, press **OK**
Guide (in Spectrum TV App)	Press **Back** while watching live TV
Show info, captions, start over	Press **Up** while watching
Restart the box	Unplug 10 seconds, or **Settings** > **System Management** > **Resets & Updates** > **Restart Device**
Wake it from Standby	Hold **Home** 3 to 5 seconds

Cable box (Spectrum Guide)

To…	Do this
Captions on or off	Press **Options** (or **A**), then **1**
Accessibility and parental controls	**Menu** > **Settings & Support**
Program remote to TV	Hold **MENU** + **OK** until **INPUT** blinks twice, press **TV POWER**, hold your brand's number
Recordings	**Menu** > **My Library**
Back to live TV	Press **Exit**
Restart the box	My Spectrum app or Spectrum.net: **Services** > **TV** > your box > **Restart Equipment**. Or unplug 60 seconds.

Spectrum TV App

If…	Then
Channels missing?	You're probably away from home WiFi. Connect to home WiFi and reopen the app.
Recordings	Phone or tablet: **DVR** > **My Recordings**. Roku or Apple TV: **My Library** > **Recordings**.
Any error code	Close and reopen the app, check WiFi, restart the device, check your sign-in.
Included streaming apps	Activate in **Spectrum App Central** (Spectrum.net)

SCAM ALERT

Three rules that stop most Spectrum scams

1. Spectrum never asks for gift cards, crypto or payment apps. 2. Never call a number from a search ad or a pop-up. Use the number on your bill. 3. Check any "you owe money" message yourself in the My Spectrum app.

Keep this handy

Fill this in and store it somewhere safe, not taped to the TV.

Item	Mine
Spectrum account number	_____
Spectrum username	_____
Spectrum customer service number (from my bill)	_____
My TV plan name	_____
Living room: box type and model	_____
Bedroom: box type and model	_____
Remote model (inside battery cover)	_____
TV brand and model number	_____
Parental / purchase PIN location	_____
Equipment return receipt date	_____
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book

CHAPTER 29

A Short Glossary of Spectrum Words

Word	What it means
Audio description	A narrator who describes what's happening on screen during pauses in dialogue. Spectrum also calls it Descriptive Video Service (DVS).
Cable box / Spectrum Receiver	The traditional Spectrum box connected to a coax cable from the wall.
Cloud DVR (cDVR)	Recording that's stored online by Spectrum, playable on any device with the Spectrum TV App.
Coax cable	The round TV cable with a screw-on end that comes out of the wall.
DVR	Digital video recorder. Records shows to watch later.
HDMI	The flat-ended cable that carries picture and sound from a box to your TV.
Input (or Source)	The TV setting that chooses which connected device you're watching.
My Spectrum app	Spectrum's account app: bills, equipment, outages, support.
On Demand	Shows and movies you can start any time, rather than when they air.
SAP	Secondary Audio Programming. A second soundtrack, which may be audio description or Spanish.
Spectrum App Central	Spectrum's page for activating the streaming apps included with your plan. It used to be called the Spectrum App Store.
Spectrum Guide	Spectrum's newest on-screen guide for cable boxes.
Spectrum TV App	Spectrum's watching app for phones, tablets, streaming devices and smart TVs.
Stream TV Signature, Pro, VIP	Spectrum's TV plan names since September 2026.
Xumo Stream Box	Spectrum's newer HDMI streaming box with the Spectrum TV App and 250+ apps built in.

Thank you for reading. Take it one chapter at a time, and remember: you can't break it, and help is a phone call away.

— Bill