



DATS News



Dedicated Accessible Transit Service Spring 2022

Stay in Touch Sign up for Email!

Email is a convenient way to stay connected and is timely and saves on paper!

If you would like to receive communications like the DATS Newsletter or Customer Bulletins electronically, please email us at: DATS@Edmonton.ca or call the DATS Registration Team at (780) 496-4567 (option 3) to sign up for email communications.

Safety Note Door to Door Service

DATS requires all operators to escort clients between the vehicle and the first set of accessible doors. If your operator does not provide door to door service, call us at (780) 496-4567 (option 4) and let us know!

**Edmonton
Transit
Service**

Edmonton

DATS Travel Notes

Spring Safety

Please dress for Edmonton weather, and wear layers for travel on vehicles that may be drafty as doors are opening and closing, or warm in the Spring sunshine.

Same Day Trip Requests

As the weather improves, and demand for trips on DATS increases, please keep in mind that there is no guarantee that we can fulfill your Same Day Trip requests. Booking trips three days out is still the best way to improve your chances of securing your trip.

Call before you buy!

If you are considering new equipment for travel use on DATS, please contact our Community Relations team at (780) 496-4567 (option 4) first to make sure your equipment can be safely secured on our DATS vehicles and contracted vehicles.



Note: All wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters must meet the specific size, weight, and safety guidelines for DATS travel.

Phone Calls to DATS

Please note: phone calls into DATS are recorded for quality assurance and training purposes. DATS uses the recordings to ensure we are providing the very best customer service.

Manager's Message

As demand for DATS increases and we look forward to easing Covid-19 restrictions (when it is safe to do so), we remain committed to your safety. We will continue to thoroughly sanitize our vehicles, screen our team members as they come to work and follow any changes made by our local, provincial and federal governments. The City of Edmonton also recently announced a plan to install HEPA air filters on transit vehicles, including our DATS buses.

In this issue, you will find a summary of the recent customer satisfaction survey (see page 3). Your suggestions for improving customer service are heard. We use this feedback to help shape any changes to our DATS Customer Improvement Plan. While the past year has been another challenging year for all of us, we are grateful for the positive feedback about our commitment to the safety of everyone on DATS buses and our Covid-19 processes in particular, and your suggestions for improvements. Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey.

In our ongoing commitment to transparency and providing a better understanding of DATS services to all, we will be publishing some key performance indicators (KPI's) moving forward. This report will provide a snapshot of how our service is working and will be available in upcoming DATS Newsletters, and online (Edmonton.ca).

We have some good news on the technology front for this year. We are moving forward with a major upgrade to the computer system that we use to manage all our processes at DATS - from general administration to booking and scheduling functions, to the operational functions including driver on-road support, like dispatch. The last full upgrade was completed in 2017 although we did have a minor update in 2020. There are many potential improvements that we hope will streamline our work and as a result, help us to provide a better service. For customers, this update brings enhancements to IVR (Interactive Voice Response) and IBook (online booking). These new options should also help to reduce call volumes to our call centre, benefitting our clients and assisting us with managing resources in booking. We will update you on our progress through the year as we test the new features and implement them.

We are committed to making sure customer service remains a top priority, along with safety, in 2022 and beyond. As always, if you have any concerns about your service, please contact our Community Relations team at (780) 496-4567 (option 4).



Paul Schmold, Manager Paratransit DATS



DATS Customer Satisfaction Survey

As a part of the larger Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) customer researcher satisfaction program, Pivotal Research Inc. conducted a survey with DATS clients, parents, caregivers and guardians towards the end of 2021. In total, 282 respondents participated. Messaging about survey participation was provided in advance in the DATS newsletter, the City of Edmonton website and on-hold messaging.

The survey focused on client satisfaction throughout the DATS journey, as well as the impacts to the service due to Covid-19. Findings from this survey will be used to explore potential customer service improvements.

Highlights from the survey are listed below. Satisfaction with the overall DATS experience stands at 84% (2020: 81%). Respondents were particularly happy with the general safety while on board at 94% (2020: 82%), the courteousness of the operator at 90% (2020: 86%) and with operator assistance at 90% (2020: 84%). Overall, most satisfaction elements showed increased points, with the exception of reliability (on time performance) which had a slight percentage dip of 3% compared to 2020.

In terms of the booking experience, satisfaction scores ranged from a low of 70% (2020: 59%) for the wait time to ease of making a booking to 90% (2020: 89%) with the courteousness of the booking agent. One of the top service improvements requested by participants was the ability to book trips more than three days out and more availability of same day booking time slots.

Satisfaction with the pick-up and drop off experience ranged from 67% to 74% (2020: 61% to 69%). This includes timeliness with on-time pick-ups, pick-ups within the 30 minute window, and on-time arrival. Satisfaction with the total travel time was 75% (2020: 73%).



When asked to share potential service improvements, the number one request was for improvements to the overall travel time (including on time-arrival and pick-ups) and decreased waiting time for clients.

Satisfaction with enforcement of Covid protocols and safety measures while on board was at 91% (note: only those who had taken DATS during the pandemic were asked). When considering non-Covid related aspects of the on-board experience, safety received the highest score at 94% (2020: 82%), closely followed by cleanliness of DATS vehicles at 93% (2020: 78%) and on-board comfort at 86% (2020: 71%).

Note: ETS plans to launch another survey later in 2022 to track progress, and to gather additional information from our customers.

DATS Notes

Escorts on DATS

On DATS, a designated mandatory attendant travels free while accompanying a fare paying DATS registrant. Children, aged twelve years and younger, of a registered user ride free of charge.

Note: Escorts accompanying a registered DATS client can use any valid ETS Fare.

Lost and Found

Take all your belongings with you when exiting the vehicle. All personal articles should be labeled, as this helps to recover your belongings.

Note: ETS handles all lost and found items on DATS. Call ETS Lost and Found at (780) 496-1622.

DATS Tip: Be Ready

Operators do not ring the buzzers at apartment buildings or search the buildings or other areas for clients who are not present at the exterior doors during a scheduled pick-up window.

Please be ready for the entire pick up window at the designated door.

*ETS Historical
Archives Photo*

Trip Cancellations

If you have booked trips you no longer need, please phone DATS as soon as possible to cancel these trips. Although a half hour is the minimum cancellation notice required, by giving us as much notice as you can, trips can be made available for other clients to use.

To cancel a DATS trip, call (780) 496-4567 (option 1).

No-Shows

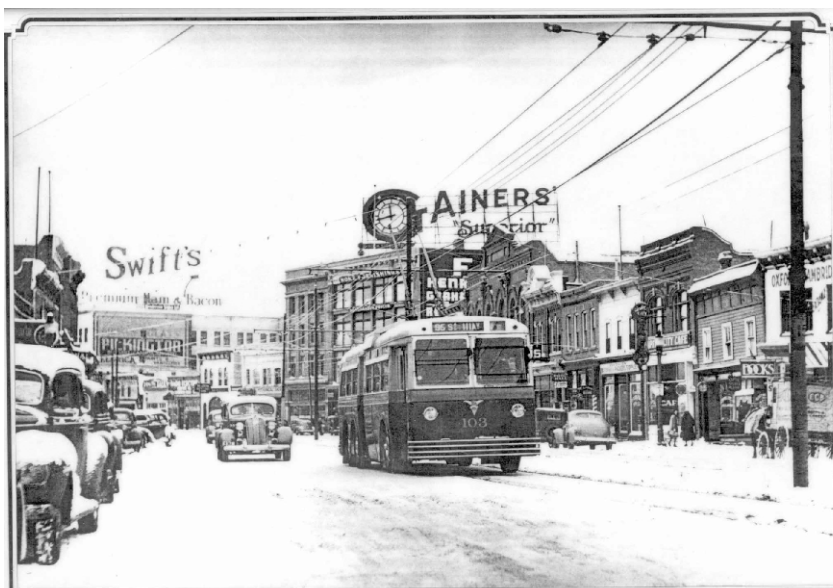
A passenger is considered to be a "no-show" when the driver has arrived at the scheduled time and pick-up location and no one is there. No-shows are recorded in a client's file. Multiple no-shows over the course of a month may result in temporary suspensions.

To help prevent no-shows, booking agents may double-check a pickup or drop-off location with you, especially where there may be multiple doors, such as at a mall.

If you think your trip was recorded as a no-show incorrectly, please contact Community Relations at (780) 496-4567 (option 4) and we will investigate.

Subscription Note

If you no longer need all the days you have booked in your subscription, please cancel a day (or two) and still maintain your subscription. Your canceled trips can then be made available for other clients to use.



DATS Advisory Group (DAG)

The DATS Advisory Group is excited to welcome two new user representatives (Yasmin and Gordon) to our team. We look forward to working together!

This year we are planning a number of projects:

- ▶ Developing a greater understanding of DATS policies and business by scheduling guest speakers. The more we know about DATS, the better we can provide our support and feedback as an advisory group.
- ▶ Provide orientation to new members and set up our subcommittees to maximize the work we can do.
- ▶ Discuss how we can move forwards after the pandemic, as a group and in support of fellow users and the team at DATS. See below...
- ▶ Get to understand the new technology and customer tools coming in 2022 and how they impact DATS service and customers. How can we support DATS users in getting the best of these new tools?
- ▶ We also thought it might be helpful to include a breakdown of all the fare options for travel for our fellow DATS users, see page 7.

The isolation and restriction of regular activities due to Covid-19 has caused us all some stress which may affect our mental health. The DATS Advisory Group would like to share some resources provided by one of our DAG User Representatives (thanks Yasmin!):

- ▶ Talk to someone - a friend, family member, medical or support person. Reaching out for help is a part of managing our wellness and getting necessary support.
- ▶ Take care of yourself - get enough sleep and exercise, fresh air, and eat nutritious meals.
- ▶ Call AHS Mental Health Helpline: 1-877-303-2642.
- ▶ Call the local Canadian Mental Health Association: 780-482-4357 (HELP). The Distress Line provides confidential, non-judgmental and short-term crisis intervention, emotional support and resources (24/7).
- ▶ Call Alberta Health Services Addiction Helpline: 1-866-332-2322 (available 24/7), with concerns about alcohol, cannabis or other drug use.

About DAG

What is the DATS Advisory Group?

The DATS Advisory Group (DAG) is made up of a team of volunteers who provide advice to Edmonton Transit in the planning and operation of DATS, and in the development of other transportation policies and programs that affect persons with disabilities.

There are 12 members appointed for two year terms. The Group has five (5) User Reps, six (6) Agency Reps (Chrysalis, Elves Special Needs Society, Council of India Societies of Edmonton, Paralympic Sports Association) and one (1) Community-at-large Representative (currently vacant).

Question or Comment for DAG?

We would love to hear from you, please email us: DAG@edmonton.ca

Or, call DATS Community Relations at (780) 496-4567 (option 4) and leave a message with them to pass on to us. Thanks!

Holiday Booking Schedule

April 2022 (Easter)

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Client Services Centre will be closed) on Friday, April 15 and on Sunday, April 17, 2022.

Please Note: Subscription bookings will be cancelled on Friday, April 15, 2022. If you still require your subscription booking on the day, call (780) 496-4567 (option 2) to book it. Subscription trips are not cancelled on Sunday, April 17, or on Monday, April 18, 2022.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 10	April 11	April 12	April 13	April 14	April 15	April 16
April 2022		Can book for April 13 (till noon) April 14, 15, 16	Can book for April 14 (till noon) April 15, 16, 17	Can book for April 15 & 16 (till noon) April 17, 18, 19	HOLIDAY Client Services Closed Subscription Trips Cancelled	Can book for April 17, 18, 19 & 20 (till noon)
April 17	April 18	April 19	April 20	April 21	April 22	April 23
Client Services Closed Subscription Trips NOT Cancelled	Client Services Open Subscription Trips NOT Cancelled	<i>Regular Booking Schedule resumes</i>				

May 23, 2022 (Victoria Day)

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Client Services Centre will be closed) on: Monday, May 23, 2022.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 15	May 16	May 17	May 18	May 19	May 20	May 21
May 2022					Can book for May 21 (till noon) May 22, 23, 24	Can book for May 22, 23, 24, 25 (till noon)
May 22	May 23	May 24	May 25	May 26	May 27	May 28
Can book for May 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 (till noon)	HOLIDAY Client Services Closed Subscription Trips Cancelled	<i>Regular Booking Schedule resumes</i>	Please Note: Subscription bookings will be cancelled on Monday, May 23, 2022. If you still require your subscription booking on May 23, call (780) 496-4567 (option 2) to book it.			

ETS Fare Notes

ETS Current Fares

Note: No increase (February 2022)

Cash: \$3.50

Ticket (Book of 10): \$27.75

Monthly Pass: \$100

Day Pass: \$10.25

*Tickets come in packs of 10 and are valid for travel on all ETS services.

Senior Fares

Senior fares are available to those who are 65+. Reduced rates are available on tickets, monthly passes and annual passes. Senior annual passes are valid from April 1, 2022 until March 31, 2023. Passes need to be mailed because the Edmonton Service Centre remains closed due to Covid-19. Please check on the ETS website (Senior Annual Passes) for more information, or call 311.

Subsidized Pass

The Ride Transit Program provides greater access to Edmonton Transit Service by reducing financial barriers for individuals and families in Edmonton. Through a partnership with the Government of Alberta, this program provides Adult and Youth monthly passes to eligible Edmontonians at a subsidized rate. If you are a first-time applicant, please check on the ETS website (Ride Transit Program) for more information, or call 311.

DATS Attendants Ride Free: Regular ETS

On regular ETS Services (bus and LRT), any attendant with a fare paying DATS registrant can travel free. The DATS registrant must show their DATS registrant card in order for their attendant to travel free.

Fragrances



DATS is a shared ride service, so all passengers are asked to please avoid using scented products on our vehicles.

Booking Tips

Call over the weekend (till noon)

Avoid busy Mondays in our Call Centre and book your trips for Tuesday and Wednesday on the weekend instead!

The call centre is open (7:30am to 12:00 noon) on weekends.

This helps us to keep up with the call volume on Mondays and should decrease your on-hold times.

DATS Pro Tip: Holiday Monday Weekend Ahead?

The Call Centre is closed on Stat Mondays. To book your trips for the Tuesday or Wednesday after a long weekend, call over the weekend prior to make your bookings!

The call centre is open (7:30am to 12:00 noon) on weekends. This will save you having to call to make your trip booking during the extra busy Tuesday morning rush in our Call Centre. And, call wait times are usually shorter over the weekend.

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Please direct
comments/submissions to:

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Edmonton Transit Service:
www.takeETS.com
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E-mail Newsletters

Would you like to receive a copy of
the DATS Newsletter by e-mail? Just
send an e-mail to:
dats@edmonton.ca - please put
"DATS Newsletter" in the subject line.
Or call us at (780) 496-4567.

Contact DATS

DATS Client Service Centre (780) 496-4567

- ▶ Cancel a trip or check on a late ride: Press 1
- ▶ Book or change a trip: Press 2
- ▶ Register for DATS: Press 3
- ▶ Submit a commendation, concern or any other inquiry: Press 4

Nextalk (780) 944-5555

Lost & Found (780) 496-1622

E-mail / Website DATS@edmonton.ca takeETS.com/DATS



DATS Client Service Centre Trip Booking

Monday to Friday:
7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday:
7:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
**Registration, Commendations,
Concerns**
Monday to Friday:
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Outside of Regular Hours
(trip cancels, checking late ride)
Monday to Thursday:
5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
Friday: 5:00 a.m. to midnight
Saturday: 6:00 a.m. to midnight
Sunday and holidays:
6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

**Edmonton
Transit
Service**

Edmonton

Return undeliverable Canadian address to:

**DATS
Percy Wickman Garage
5610 86 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta T6E 2X3**

post office indicia here