



DATS News



Dedicated Accessible Transit Service Winter 2022



**A new DATS Operator in training
- read more about what it takes
to become a DATS Operator: pg 3**

DATS Booking Tip:

Call over the weekend: Avoid the busy Monday morning rush in our Call Centre and book your trips for Tuesday and Wednesday on the weekend instead!

The DATS call centre is open on weekends (7:30am - noon). This helps us to keep up with the call volume on Mondays and should decrease your on-hold times.

Holiday Travel Reminders

Visiting family and friends over the holidays?

Avoid disappointment - send in your DATS registration forms early so we can register you in time for all your holiday travel!

Caregivers and Facility Staff:

Please make sure any resident who may want to take DATS over the holiday season is registered. DATS receives many registration applications and phone calls just before Christmas and with the large volume of applications, registration may take a little longer to process than usual

Holiday shopping?

Clients are reminded that Operators are not required to carry parcels or shopping bags for passengers. Please limit the number of packages to what you can hold on your lap while traveling in the vehicle. If you need assistance, please arrange for delivery or make alternative travel arrangements.

Going out of town?

If you are planning a trip and need paratransit at your destination, we recommend you research your transportation options. Many towns and cities offer a similar service and may offer a visitor service. Note: your registration with DATS does not guarantee automatic acceptance from other paratransportation service providers.

**Edmonton
Transit
Service**



Manager's Message

Safety and excellent customer service continues to be our priority at DATS as we continue to meet the increasing demand for service. We are always looking for ways to make our service as safe as possible for everyone while being an efficient use of our resources. From big projects like the new DATS vehicles, revising our Operator training program, upgrading our current software technology, to the small tweaks and policy adjustments as we go - we take pride in managing and providing a safe, efficient and customer focused service for all.

You can help! We are looking for volunteers to participate in future focus groups and testing around the new self-serve features that we're planning with the current software upgrade. Please leave your contact information with our Community Relations Team at (780) 496-4567 (option 4). Also, we are recruiting volunteers for our DATS Advisory Group (DAG) see page 6 to see if you might be interested in participating and helping to shape DATS policy.

In this newsletter, you will see an article about what it takes to be a DATS Operator (page 3). It is a demanding, but incredibly rewarding job and we appreciate our Operators and the key role they play in our service. This fall we welcomed eight new Operators to the City of Edmonton team and have a second class of Operators training this month. These two classes will bring us back up to a full 132 Operators in service.

As the weather turns colder, we also would like to remind all DATS clients to dress warmly and prepare for winter. Page 5 has a number of tips and reminders about traveling on DATS in the colder months. Remember to keep walks free of snow and ice so we can avoid slips and falls. If you need assistance with snow removal, we have a list of places to call as well.

You'll also find the holiday schedule and calendars for Christmas and New Years service. Planning ahead will help us serve you better during the busy season.



Paul Schmold,
Manager Paratransit (DATS)



DATS Operator Team

Ever wondered how someone becomes a DATS Operator? We have a great team of experienced Operators that are committed to providing you with a safe, reliable trip on DATS. So we thought we should tell you a little bit more about our comprehensive Operator training program.

The journey to become a City of Edmonton DATS Operator starts when our Talent Acquisition Office uploads a posting on the website (www.edmonton.ca). Once applications are screened to determine initial eligibility there is a security, testing and interview process. Applicants are also evaluated on their driving, map reading, customer service and even their physical ability to succeed in this job - all skills required to be a DATS Operator.

Each successful applicant is paired up with an experienced Operator for on road ride-alongs where they can see how an Operator provides actual service with clients. These ride-alongs give a better sense of what the job of DATS Operator is all about - what it entails physically and mentally - and what a typical day for an Operator involves.

Next stop is the classroom where successful applicants move on to complete a series of training modules over four weeks. A team of experienced ETS trainers focus on specific training, including: disability awareness, loading and unloading processes, door to door service and other customer service and assistance features. In addition, there are technical, operational tasks, which include: lift operation, securement, vehicle features, defensive driving, and the use of on-board computer and communications with the DATS office.

Once training is complete, our new Operators are paired with more experienced Operators as they start their on-road transition to fine tune their driving and customer service skills. New operators are given shorter, simpler routes as they adjust and learn the ropes. This transition usually takes three months, and new operators are closely monitored, coached and mentored.



DATS service is delivered by a team of City of Edmonton Operators, contracted drivers and taxi drivers. This allows us to make the best use of available resources, and meet the demand for service and trips for customers. The training modules we use in-house are supplied to the contracted and taxi service providers as expectations for safety and service must be met by everyone providing DATS service. And, as always, if you have any questions or concerns about your safety on DATS vehicles or in accessing our services, please contact our Community Relations team at (780) 496-4567 (option 4).

DATS Operator Update

Fall 2022 was busy with the recruitment of new operators and we are happy to announce the graduation of a class of new DATS Operators last month. A second class is scheduled to graduate this month. These two classes will bring us back up to 132 DATS Operators in service.

Holiday Booking Schedule

DATS operates on a holiday schedule (Customer Care Centre is closed) on:

- Sunday, December 25, 2022 (Christmas Day)
- Monday, December 26, 2022 (Boxing Day)
- Sunday, January 1, 2023 (New Year's Day)

Note: All subscription bookings are cancelled from December 25 to January 1, 2023 inclusively. If you still require your regular subscription booking during this time, call (780) 496-4567 (option 2).

Season's Greetings &
Best Wishes for 2023
From the DATS Team!



December 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			Can book for: Dec 22 (till noon) Dec 23, 24, 25, 26	Can book for: Dec 23 (till noon) Dec 24, 25, 26, 27	Can book for: Dec 24 (till noon), Dec 25, 26, 27, 28	Can book for: Dec 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 (till noon)
25 HOLIDAY No Trip Booking <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	26 HOLIDAY No Trip Booking <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	27 Can book for: Dec 28 (till noon), Dec 29, 30 <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	28 Can book for: Dec 29 (till noon) Dec 30, 31 <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	29 Can book for: Dec 30 (till noon) Dec 31, Jan 1, 2 <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	30 Can book for: Dec 31 (till noon) Jan 1, 2, 3 <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	31 Can book for: Jan 1, 2, 3, 4 (till noon) <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 HOLIDAY No Trip Booking <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	2 <i>Regular booking schedule resumes</i>	3	4	5	6	7

New Year's Eve Service:

DATS is extending our hours of service on Saturday, December 31 (New Year's Eve) with the last pick-up of the day at 2:00am. In conjunction with ETS's Community Program, service on New Year's Eve from 6:00pm until closing is free!

Holiday Booking Schedule—

Family Day: Monday February 20, 2023

DATS operates on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre is closed) on Monday, February 20, 2023 (Family Day).

Note: Subscription bookings will be cancelled on Monday, February 20, 2023. If you still require your subscription booking for that day, please call (780) 496-4567 (option 2) to book it.

Winter Safety Notes

Please be prepared for Edmonton weather, and wear layers and suitable footwear for travel on buses.

Snow Clearance

DATS is a shared ride public transportation system and we depend on caregivers and facility managers to maintain their properties. We need a clear, wide pathway to ensure the safe pick-up and drop-off at your residence or facility.

Ramps, sidewalks, driveways and roadways must be cleared from the door to where the door or the lift of the vehicle is opened. In order for the lift to lower safely, a width of 2.14m or 7 feet needs to be clear of snow. If a clear and safe path is not available, DATS may be unable to provide service until it is cleared.

To find a service that may help you with snow clearance:

- 311 (Main telephone number to call, 24 hours a day, to ask questions and connect with City of Edmonton programs, services and events)
- 211 (Connect to seniors organizations and groups throughout Edmonton who provide services for seniors)
- Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton: (780) 701-9011
- Your Community League

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your safety on DATS vehicles or in accessing our services, please contact our Community Relations team at (780) 496-4567 (option 4).

DATS Trip Notes

Subscriptions:

Changing your subscription trips? Please note that we cannot accommodate changes of less than 30 minutes. It can take up to two weeks for a subscription change to take effect, including equipment type and location changes. While waiting for a subscription change request to be approved, we ask that you make reservation trips.

Subscription requests: (780) 496-4567 (option 6).

Trip Confirmation:

Confirm your trip with your booking agent. Booking agents should read back the details of your booking(s) to you at the end of each booking call. Listen carefully to ensure they have the correct information.

Our calls are recorded for quality assurance, and let us know if a booking agent does not confirm this information by contacting us at (780) 496-4567 (option 4).

Cancellation Notes:

Please cancel trips with at least two hours' notice to avoid a no-show and allow other clients to use those trip times.

For all cancellations, call (780) 496-4567 (option 1). Thank you for doing your part!

DATS Advisory Group (DAG)

The DATS Advisory Group would like to wish everyone all the best in the holiday season and in the new year!

Here are some tips to make the best use of DATS:

- Try the online booking system, I-Book, rather than using the phone lines and waiting on hold to book trips. Email DATS@edmonton.ca if you need assistance getting signed up or have any questions.
- DAG would like to remind fellow users to avoid using DATS if you feel ill. Consider staying up to date with vaccinations and take care to protect yourself.
- Reminder: Do NOT leave the house until the DATS Operator comes to your door to assist you, especially if it is icy.
- Leave outdoor lights on during dark hours. Days are getting shorter - help your Operator find you by leaving your outside lights on for pick-up and drop-off times.
- Stay Warm - Dress warmly and wear footwear for the season. Vehicles are heated, but there may be drafts as passengers get on and off vehicles.
- Pick-up window - be there at the start of the pick-up window and wait for the full 30 minutes.
- When booking your trip, listen carefully and record your pick-up window.
- If you are booking a trip, three days in advance is best!

DAG: Volunteers Needed

DAG is looking for volunteers to join the advisory committee and provide input based on their experience of using DATS services. DAG representatives must commit to being a member for two years and require access to email in order to fully participate in a timely manner.

- User Representatives (registered DATS users).
- Agency Representatives (provide input, on behalf of their agency, based on their staff and customer experiences with DATS Service).
- DAG Meeting Attendance: Meetings are typically held the second Tuesday of each month from 4:30 to 5:30 PM. Virtual attendance is available.

What is DAG?

DAG is an advisory group 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.

Applying to Join DAG:

To find out more about joining us, please email us at DAG@edmonton.ca or contact Shirley at (780) 496-4554. Applications are reviewed at the DAG Monthly meetings.

International Day of Disabled Persons December 3, 2022

IDDP's annual World Disability Day is hosted by the United Nations and encourages business leaders across the globe to value the unique contributions of disabled people.

In 2022, the theme is 'Not All Disabilities are Visible'. Some disabilities, like mental health disorders, chronic pain and fatigue, are invisible – but that does not make them any less devastating to someone's quality of life.



Visit:
idpwd.org

Edmonton Transit Service

ETS Arc Update

Regular ETS Bus and LRT Service:

Over the winter, Arc will be launched for standard adult riders on regular bus and LRT services across the regions. Later in 2023, ETS is planning to extend Arc use to riders on regular bus and LRT that travel using different fares (e.g. seniors, youth, low income passes). Note: regular ETS buses are now equipped with permanent validators ready for Arc card use.



DATS Update:

The next step for DATS is to test the handheld validators to ensure they are working properly. These validators will be carried by your DATS operators so that you can tap your Arc card when you travel on DATS in the future. For now, please continue to purchase and use the same fares as you do today. We will have more information on the use of Arc on DATS when we are closer to being ready to introduce it on DATS.

Volunteers Needed:

We will be looking for DATS users (including friends, family and program staff) who are willing to participate in an Arc pilot specifically for paratransit services. Look for information on how to apply in the next newsletter.



ETS Mobility Choices

Mobility Choices in-person travel training is also back. The program is free, open year-round and is aimed at current and potential transit users who need extra support and instruction to learn to use regular ETS bus, LRT, and On-Demand services independently and with confidence, including people with disabilities, seniors, and newcomers.

Would you like to learn more about ETS services and programs, including trip planning options, fares and fare programs, and important accessibility and safety features? Instruction is tailored to personal needs and abilities, including one-on-one training on the transit system for those who need more individualized attention and guided practice on the system.

Other hands-on learning includes guided trial and practice of mobility aids on not-in-service transit buses as well as sessions focused on trip planning and electronic trip planning tools.

For more information on customer travel training opportunities, please contact Vicki Gudelj, Accessibility Coordinator (780) 496-3000.

DATS Winter 2022

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Please direct comments/submissions to:

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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. Or call us
(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
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Edmonton

Return undeliverable Canadian address to:

DATS

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post office indicia here