



DATS News

Disabled Adult Transit Service

January, 2010

Ambulatory Contract Awarded

DATS provides trips using employee operated wheelchair vehicles and contracted van and mini-van ambulatory service. The supplemental ambulatory contract initiated in July 2005 is coming to the end of its term in 2010. This is an important component of the DATS service and we re-tendered this contract.

DATS is pleased to announce we have awarded the DATS Supplementary Ambulatory Contracts (mini van, passenger van and accessible vehicle) to Prestige Transportation Ltd. The new contracts provide DATS with improved service delivery options. Prestige is the current contract service provider.



Safe Soles for a Safe Winter

DATS is encouraging staff and customers to take precautions so we can all enjoy another safe winter season! Wearing slip-resistant footwear can be very beneficial on slippery, icy sidewalks and streets. In general, the greater the contact area between outsole and walkway surface, the better the slip resistance. Some information to consider when choosing proper slip-resistant footwear includes:

- ▶ Soft, flexible materials generally maintain greater contact with walkway surface than hard materials.
- ▶ Flat shoes with low, wide-based heels provide increased contact area and are therefore recommended.
- ▶ Tracks on outsole of the shoe help keep traction on slippery surfaces.

ETS
Edmonton Transit System

DATS Fare Notes

Exact Change

DATS Operators do not carry change, so it is much easier to use a DATS pass or ETS adult tickets. DATS passes allow unlimited rides. ETS adult tickets are a great option for occasional travel - they are convenient to use and are a great value. If you do plan to pay cash fare, please have the correct amount. Passes and tickets are available at many sales locations across the city. Look for the ETS logo at local retailers and banks to purchase passes and tickets.

Fare Increase

Effective February 1, 2010

- ▶ Adult cash fare: \$2.75
- ▶ Adult ticket book (10): \$22.00
- ▶ DATS monthly pass: \$81.50



Message from the Director

It's hard to believe that we've completed the first decade of the new millennium! It's been a tremendous year and decade at DATS. I'd like to share some of our successes with you in this message. Looking in the rear view mirror to take stock of our achievements is a normal activity at this time of year. Also, we begin to make plans and resolutions for the upcoming year.

We celebrated EDITH's first anniversary on November 23rd. EDITH is the name we've given the DATS computer system, as most of you may know. It's been a year of great challenges and great accomplishments. I want to acknowledge, both those who work for DATS as well as those who ride the service, for their patience and understanding during 2009 and our transition to a new set of computer tools. The first few months were a bit trying but we've learned so much from you, our customers, DATS staff and the many specialists from Trapeze and the City's Information Technology Branch.

Here are a few of the many accomplishments in 2009:

- ▶ trip volumes are up and we expect to complete around 923,000 trips in 2009;
- ▶ 'unaccommodated trip requests', defined as the number of trip requests that cannot be accommodated at the time requested or at a reasonable alternative time on the same day due to insufficient service, are down at less than one half of one per cent of total bookings;
- ▶ customer satisfaction overall remains strong at 95 per cent of riders somewhat or very satisfied with DATS service;
- ▶ the Supplemental Ambulatory service contract was re-tendered and Prestige Transportation Ltd. was successful in their bid to undertake this work;
- ▶ the 'cold garage' section of Percy Wickman Garage was enclosed so now all the City buses have a warm place to sleep every night.

Looking ahead we're ready to start replacing the City fleet of lift equipped buses in 2010 after receiving excellent input from clients, drivers and maintenance personnel. We are purchasing 10 replacement vehicles to start. We're planning to begin using a small number of accessible taxis/vehicles in the new year to deliver a few trips that are at the fringes of service day or fringes of the city. It's part of our commitment to make best use of the resources that City Council has entrusted to us on behalf of the taxpayers. This change means that we can move more of the City fleet capacity into the rush hour time periods and hopefully offer additional service at the times that clients want to travel.

In 2010, we're also planning to host an open house so clients, family and friends can come and meet the people you talk to on the phone. We're working hard to roll out the 'automated night before reminder calls' and the web booking service. These service enhancements should improve convenience for DATS riders. City Council passed 'The Way We Move', the new Transportation Master Plan in September 2009 and ETS staff are involved in ensuring accessibility is front and centre in Department and Branch plans.

Finally, a big 'thank you' to everyone who contributed to the success of DATS in 2009 and best wishes for a successful 2010.

Lorna Stewart
Director of DATS



2009 DATS Customer Survey

DATS retained Hargreaves and Associates to complete its annual customer satisfaction survey in November. Hargreaves called a random sample of clients who completed 10 or more trips in the last year.

A total of 409 telephone interviews were conducted with registered DATS users or their caregivers. Of those interviewed, 66% travel by DATS sedan and 33% travel on wheelchair buses.

The results are in and we are very pleased to see that in most categories, DATS does as well, if not better, than when we surveyed in 2008 (using the same survey questions). The overall results indicate that we have maintained our high quality service standards over the past year. We will now be reviewing all of the raw data to determine areas for improvement and check for any trends that we need to be aware of.

Here are some of the overall highlights:

- ▶ 95% are somewhat or very satisfied with DATS (same as in 2008)
- ▶ 91% are somewhat or very satisfied with the value DATS provides for the fees that are charged (similar to 2008)
- ▶ 97% of customers rate DATS staff as being usually or always courteous
- ▶ 93% of customers receive useful help when they contact DATS
- ▶ 88% are satisfied that they can reach DATS staff in a timely manner
- ▶ 97% of customers rate drivers as usually or always polite (same as in 2008)
- ▶ 97% feel safe when traveling on DATS (up from 94% in 2008)
- ▶ Other areas that showed an improvement included better assistance to and from vehicles, securing mobility aids and assisting with seatbelts
- ▶ 80% of customers report usually or always being picked up on time
- ▶ 86% are satisfied with the length of time they spend on the vehicle
- ▶ 90% agree that DATS provides the services it promises and meets customer expectations

Here are the leading suggestions for improvement:

- ▶ On-time service
- ▶ Better route planning and travel times
- ▶ The booking process
- ▶ Issues around early arrivals and wait-times



Stay Warm

Please wear proper winter clothing on DATS - boots, mitts, headwear, gloves and scarf. Your Operator may have pick-ups and drop-offs along the way and the vehicle doors may be opened and shut frequently.

Trip Window

When you call to request a trip, you will be given a 30 minute trip pick-up window. *That's when you need to be ready.* You must be ready for the entire 30 minute pick-up window at the first set of accessible doors.

DATS NOTES

Lost and Found

Take all your belongings with you when exiting the vehicle. If you gave the driver something to place in the trunk, remind the driver. All personal articles should be labelled, as this helps you to recover your belongings. ETS Lost and Found: 780-496-1622.

Show your Pass

Reminder to all clients you are required to show your pass for every trip on DATS. Operators are instructed not to accept anything other than the original pass. Thanks!

DATS Phone Calls

All phone calls to DATS are monitored and recorded to ensure customer service satisfaction.

Door to Door Service

DATS requires Operators to escort clients between the vehicle and the first set of accessible doors. If your Operator does not provide door to door service - ask them to. If you have any concerns, call us at 780-496-4567 (option 4) and let us know!

Fragrance Note

DATS is a shared ride service, so we ask clients to avoid using any scented products.

Lights On

Now winter is here, please make sure your outside lights are on to make it easier for operators to find you.

Winter Notes

In winter it is even more important to maintain your mobility equipment. Please ensure the lifts and/or ramps at your residence are in safe working condition.

Ramps, sidewalks, driveways and roadways must be cleared from your door to where the door or the lift of the vehicle is opened. Make sure you clean off the ramps and areas beyond the ramp, so that Operators can maneuver the wheelchairs onto the vehicle lift. This is for client and Operator safety.

If a clear and safe path is not available, DATS may be unable to provide service until it is cleared. City of Edmonton bylaws require snow to be cleared from public walks within 48 hours of the last snowfall.

To find an agency or service that may help you with snow clearance, try calling:

- ▶ City of Edmonton: 311
- ▶ 211 The Support Network (Information and referral to human services, community and volunteer programs)
- ▶ Your Community League

Winter driving can be difficult for our Operators who have schedules to keep and for our Dispatchers who try to accommodate client requests. Road conditions and cold weather often affects travel time. Be ready on time and allow yourself a few extra minutes of travel time to ensure you get to your destination on time.

*Best Wishes
in the New Year
from the Staff
at DATS!*



Holiday Booking Schedule

New Year's

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre will be closed) on Friday, January 1, 2010 (New Year's Day). The vehicles will be running as usual. Note: all subscription trips will be cancelled. If you still require your regular subscription booking during this time, please call 780-496-4567 (option 2).

- ▶ Bookings for December 31 start Monday, December 28
- ▶ Bookings for New Year's Day, January 1 and Saturday, January 2 start Tuesday, December 29
- ▶ Bookings for January 3 start Wednesday, December 30
- ▶ Bookings for January 4 start Thursday, December 31

DATS will be extending its hours of service on Wednesday, December 31 (New Year's Eve) to have the last pick-up of the day at 2 a.m. In conjunction with Edmonton Transit's Community Program, service on New Year's Eve from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. will be free.

Family Day

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre will be closed) on Monday, February 15, 2010. The vehicles will be running as usual. Note: all subscription bookings will be cancelled on Monday, February 15. If you still require your regular subscription booking on Monday, February 18, call 496-4567(option 2).

- ▶ Bookings for Monday, February 15 start Friday, February 12
- ▶ Bookings for Tuesday, February 16 start Friday, February 12
- ▶ Bookings for Wednesday, February 17 start Saturday, February 13
- ▶ Bookings for Thursday, February 18 start Saturday, February 13.





DATS Escort Note

As our list of registrants continues to grow each day, we would appreciate your cooperation in helping us reduce the number of trips scheduled in a day. Please avoid booking an escort on your trip unless absolutely necessary. By limiting DATS trips for mainly DATS registrants, we can offer our clients better scheduling options. Instead of taking an escort with you on your DATS trip, you can:

- ▶ Have people meet you at a pre-arranged meeting destination. DATS has designated drop-off points at major locations so your escort can meet you exactly where you will be dropped off.
- ▶ Opt to take a conventional ETS bus or LRT where your escort can ride with you for free.

JANUARY 2010

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

FEBRUARY 2010

DATS Customer Care Centre
780-496-4567

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

DATS Advisory Group Report (DAG)

DAG would like to wish DATS clients all the best in 2010!

DAG would also like to thank DATS staff and drivers for their service.

Communication Committee

Stay safe in winter - keep your sidewalks clear of ice and snow, dress warmly with appropriate footwear, and allow extra travel time. Put on your outside lights so that your driver can see your address and entryway. We also encourage all users to make sure they are secured safely for travel on DATS. If not, please report it to DATS Administration!

Question or comment?

We would love to hear from you, send a note to us by e-mail: dats@edmonton.ca or by mail: DAG, c/o DATS, 5610 86 Street, Edmonton AB T6E 2X3.

DAG Members Needed!

The DATS Advisory Group (DAG) has openings for a User Representative for 2010. Call DATS Administration at 780-496-4554 to discuss the position by January 15, 2010.

Note: DAG provides advice to Edmonton Transit in the planning and operation of DATS, and in the development of transportation policies and programs that affect persons with disabilities. There are twelve members, each appointed for a two-year term. The DATS Advisory Group has five persons representing disabled and elderly consumer groups; six persons representing service users; and one community-at-large representative (as required).

DATS Team Member Profile

Roman Gomon has been involved in the transportation industry since August 1992 and joined DATS in July 2000. His work involves a multitude of tasks including driver supervision, driver training, client relations, driver-hiring and contract management.

Roman's roots run deep in Edmonton: he was raised in this city, and his parents and many of his relatives still reside in Edmonton. Roman received his degree from the University of Alberta and in his spare time enjoys many sports activities. He is an active participant in several ball hockey leagues and he extensively participates in downhill skiing. You can also find Roman and his family hiking in the river valley.

Roman enjoys working with DATS clients and he strives to make their trips as pleasant as possible through conversation, humour and music. His great sense of humour adds a light-hearted touch to both his vehicle and the DATS team!



Community Notes

Paralympic Sports Association (PSA) is a nonprofit organization that offers recreation and sport programs to persons with physical disabilities. Please contact Suzanne at 780-439-8687 or suzanne@parasports.net for more information.

Wheelchair Square Dancing is on Mondays from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Villa Marguerite gym (9810-165 Street). Officially known as the Swinging Spokes, this group of wheelchair dancers meet Mondays at the ACT Centre and performs locally and nationally. On occasion, they travel and meet other wheelchair square dancers in Canada and the U.S. The cost is \$50. If this cost is too much they have the ability to waive registration fees.

Next session: January 4 - May 3, 2010 (excluding February 15, April 5 & May 24)

Driving Angels

Give a senior a lift.

Earn Your Wings... Be a Driving Angel to a senior who doesn't drive:

- ▶ Offer to drive them for groceries, errands or appointments
- ▶ Buy them a voucher book from a cab company
- ▶ Buy ETS tickets for them

Driving Angels is proudly sponsored by: City of Edmonton Community Services, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and AMA

For Driving Angel information go to www.seniorscouncil.net



ETS's Mobility Choices Program

Freedom, Flexibility, and Choice - that's what Edmonton Transit System is all about. Our family of services provides a wide range of transportation choices for you to choose from, including DATS, LRT (light rail transit), and bus services... and best of all, we're accessible!

DATS, as you know, offers door-to-door driver-assisted service, but ETS conventional services can also meet your trip needs. Our buses (low floor standard-sized, articulated, and community buses) are all accessible. Low floor and community buses are equipped with ramps and kneeling (lowering) features, priority seating areas, and spaces for wheelchairs/scooters, and the LRT system offers complete accessibility throughout the rail network via ramps, elevators, escalators, automatic door openers, and fully accessible trains.

We also offer a range of customer tools, designed to make your use of ETS even easier, including mobility cards to signal to drivers your need for deployment of ramps or kneeling features; bus hailer kits to let drivers know which bus you need to take, and customer communication cards to allow bus operators to offer the assistance you need in completing your trip successfully. More importantly, we have a travel training program, to help you learn how to use our buses and trains, how to board and where to sit with your mobility aids, and companioned travel to teach you how to get where you want to go, when you want to go there. Best of all - all of these tools and training programs are offered free of charge - all you need to do is call us!

We're ready to take your call and help you learn about ETS services - call us at 780-496-3000.

Wherever Life Takes You - ETS will get you there!



DATS NOTES

ETS Fully Accessible Bus Fleet

ETS's vision of a fully accessible bus fleet is now a reality! In December, the last of the non-accessible ETS GMC vehicles - or 'Jimmies', as they've been affectionately called - were taken out of service, having been the 'workhorse' of the ETS bus fleet and providing more than 50 years of reliable service to the citizens of Edmonton.

ETS is one of the first Canadian transit properties to adopt a low-floor accessible bus model, with customer-friendly features that make it easier and more comfortable for all transit users but especially those with mobility challenges to use public transit. The features include no-step entrance and exits, the ability to lower to curb height, an entrance ramp, and are equipped with accessible seating areas for customers using mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, walkers or strollers.

Join Us...

Join us as we bid farewell to the long-serving GMC and celebrate a fully accessible fleet at a media event on January 27 at 10 a.m. City Hall, City Room. Members of City Council, transit management, local accessibility champions and advocates and transit customers will be on hand to commemorate this important ETS milestone.

A Client's Poem

In December, we received a call from a customer who wanted to thank DATS and also to wish everyone a Merry Christmas. Here is the poem she sent us.

*They come and pick me up at my door,
how could anyone ask for more?
They drive me where I want to go,
I trust them because I know,
they will take me back when I am ready to go.
Thanks DATS for all you do!
Merry Christmas and God Bless.*

DATS News, January 2010

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Please direct comments/submissions to:

DATS, Wickman Garage
5610-86 Street
Edmonton, AB T6E 2X3
(780) 496-4567
Fax: (780) 496-4149
Edmonton Transit System:
www.takeETS.com/DATS
E-mail: dats@edmonton.ca

Editor

Caroline Wenzel

Contributors this Issue

Glenda Roberts; Shirley
Masterson; Arlene Wicentowich;
Deanna Crozier; Margaret Dorey;
Lorna Stewart; Colleen Reed-
Kowalski; Vicki Gudelj

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 Customer Care Centre

780-496-4567

- ▶ To cancel a trip or to check on
a late ride: **Press 1**
- ▶ To book or change a trip:
Press 2
- ▶ To register for DATS: **Press 3**
- ▶ To submit a commendation,
concern or any other inquiry:
Press 4

TTY Line

780-496-5506

Nextalk

780-944-5555

Lost & Found

780-496-1622

E-mail / Website

DATS@edmonton.ca

www.takeETS.com/DATS



DATS Customer Care Centre

Full Service Hours:

*(trip booking, registration,
commendations & concerns)*

Monday to Friday:

7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday:

7:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

DATS Customer Care Centre

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.

Return undeliverable Canadian address to:

City of Edmonton Transportation & Streets
Suite 500, Scotia Place
10060 - Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3R8

post office indicia here

