



DATS News

Disabled Adult Transit Service

May 2009

DATS Computer System Update

In November last year, DATS implemented a new computer system with automated scheduling. Since then, DATS staff have mastered this new technology and stabilized the system to continue to provide service to clients. It's been a challenging process, but we have confidence in our new technology and are looking ahead. Here is an update.

The new computer system is up and running with automated scheduling and trip delivery is at seasonal norms. Now staff are looking at fine-tuning the automated functions and finding additional efficiencies and opportunities to improve service delivery.

The new system also offers the opportunity to implement some additional features to enhance service delivery.

- ▶ Viewpoint (a business intelligence tool to mine data)
- ▶ More automated telephone (IVR) options (e.g. night before reminders of trips the next day);
- ▶ More self-serve options such as web bookings (cancelling, checking rides, etc.)

Monthly Pass Reminder

All passengers on DATS using a DATS Monthly Pass must show the pass for each and every trip. DATS operators are required to check the passes to make sure they are valid.

Phone, Address and Equipment Changes

We need accurate, current information. Call the DATS Customer Care Centre at 780-496-4567 (option 3) immediately if you have a new address, new phone numbers, or new or modified equipment so we can update your files!

Trip Stats

Trip delivery is high with DATS delivering approximately 3,500 trips each weekday. The average ride time continues to be less than 30 minutes as before. The DATS service standard continues to be 90 minutes as a maximum ride time.

During the first three months of 2009, DATS delivered 236,322 trips, which is higher than the number of trips delivered last year at this time. Client concerns were up during implementation of the new computer system but are now back to previous levels.

Unaccommodated trips were slightly higher in January and February. This issue has now been resolved after investigation and the number of unaccommodated trips has decreased to expected levels.

Fares on DATS

Adult Cash Fare: \$2.50

Adult Ticket Pack (10): \$21.00

DATS Monthly Pass: \$74.25

Message from the Director

Awe, spring is in the air! The sun is staying up longer and it's much warmer than just a few weeks ago. It's certainly nice to put the long, cold winter behind us and welcome the return of the birds, flowers and greenery. In this message, I'm pleased to update you on the latest goings on here at DATS.



Firstly, we've been gathering input into the future needs of clients and operators for the next generation fleet. DATS acquired its first 10 lift van vehicles in 2004 with the remainder, 81, arriving in 2005. Seven additional maintenance spare buses were purchased in 2008 bringing the total City fleet to 98. With a seven-year life expectancy, DATS needs to begin the work of planning the fleet replacement over the next eight to 10 years. One of the goals is to ultimately replace one seventh of the fleet or 14 buses every year. In order to accomplish this, we need to retire some vehicles early and extend the life of others beyond the seven-year expected life. In 2009, DATS is scheduled to replace five buses. To prepare for this, we asked clients and DATS staff to give us their thoughts on changes to consider when purchasing the replacement fleet. The top three improvements that DATS operators would like to see are 1) a better driver's seat; 2) improved back-up safety systems and 3) enhanced securement features. DATS clients identified their improvements to be 1) a smoother ride; 2) a quieter ride; and 3) improved climate control. The City's Mobile Equipment Services (MES), the group that maintains and manages the fleet for DATS, are now taking this information and updating the specifications that will be used to seek proposals from vehicle manufacturers. Thank you to everyone who took the time to offer their input into this important fleet replacement project. I'll keep you updated as new information becomes available.

DATS is out and about in the community keeping the public and registrants/caregivers informed of the service. By the time you read this newsletter, the LRT will be serving McKernan-Belgravia and South Campus as it opens for regular service on Sunday, April 26, 2009. DATS is taking part in the first ETS Community Fair on April 25th. The LRT is fully accessible and well worth checking out. DATS passes are valid on Edmonton Transit buses and trains plus as a DATS registrant, you can bring a companion with you for free. If you'd like to book a trip to the new South Campus LRT Station, let us know. On Tuesday, May 5, 2009, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., DATS is participating in the Cerebral Palsy Association in Alberta (CPAA) Edmonton Disability Resource Fair, the 1st Annual Life without Limits Resource Fair, at the Chateau Nova Hotel and Suites by the City Centre Airport.

Finally, I want to congratulate the DATS Customer Care Centre for a very successful first year of operation. The staff and team leads deserve a standing ovation for their excellent work in improving the service to callers over the last year. In February 2007, only 77 per cent of callers were satisfied with the time it took to reach DATS on the telephone. In October 2008, seven months after introducing the Customer Care Centre, 91 per cent of clients were somewhat or very satisfied in being able to reach DATS in a timely manner. This is a large improvement in DATS ability to answer your calls and deliver the information or assistance required. Well done, everyone!

On behalf of everyone at DATS, please enjoy the coming warm spring weather.

Lorna Stewart, Director of DATS

DATS Customer Care Centre - One Year!

One Year

Anniversary

On March 12, DATS celebrated the one year anniversary of the implementation of the new Customer Care Centre. The Care Centre provides enhanced customer service and provides customers with easier access to DATS and its services.



DATS alleviated multiple phone numbers and implemented the use of one phone number with four menu options. A drastic improvement was noted within the first three months of implementation in regards to the number of abandoned calls, or calls that end prior to being answered.

During very busy time periods, more agents can be deployed to answer calls for trip bookings. DATS has witnessed a dramatic improvement in calls answered. In 2008, DATS answered 95 per cent of calls offered up a full 4.4 percentage points over 2007 levels which were at 90.6 per cent. Client satisfaction with reaching DATS in a timely manner increased to 91 per cent by October 2008, a statistically significant increase from 77 per cent 18 months earlier.

The Care Centre promotes efficiency, effectiveness, and team building through better utilization of staff resources and amalgamating Trip Booking, Registration, and Community Relations. Agents are trained to be Universal Agents and possess strong comprehensive understanding of all areas. A collective team effort is employed and staff members from other departments are trained to provide additional support during peak periods.

Answering the Phone

Overall, we are seeing a very slight increase in the number of calls received in 2009 compared to 2008. The trip booking queue continues to experience longer wait and call times than this time last year. Currently, calls into the cancel queue (menu option 1) have similar wait times and call lengths to 2008.

On average, callers to DATS are waiting a bit longer to talk to a booking agent. Because the new system actually finds a ride on a DATS vehicle, each call takes on average an extra 60 seconds to complete a trip booking.



DATS NOTES

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.

780-496-4567

Community Notes

Travel Service for Seniors

Call Seniors Driving Center at 780-732-1221. Or, call Seniors Caring About Seniors at 780-465-0311. Volunteer drivers always required.

Disabled Placard

Call 780-427-7013 for information.

Adult Day Support

We help seniors remain independent and provide caregivers opportunities for time for themselves. Central & West-end locations. 780-434-4747.

Free Computer Workshops

for people with disabilities.
Call 780-477-8030 for more info.

Driving Miss Daisy

Seniors' transportation, accompaniment & assistance service.
Call 780-470-0123.

WC Accessible Vans

Available for rent, call
The Driving Force at 780-483-9559.

Alzheimer Support

Call us at 780-488-2266 or the
Capital Health Link at 780-408-5465
www.alzheimer.ab.ca

S.E.E.S.A. 780-468-1985

Special events, programs, classes
and support groups!

Meals on Wheels

Meal Delivery to your door!
Hot Meals, Frozen Food Delivery,
Lunch Clubs plus. 780-429-2020.

Westend Seniors Activity Centre

Special events, classes and
support groups! 780-482-8625.

Send announcements to:

Caroline Wenzel, DATS
Fax: 780-496-4149, or, e-mail:
dats@edmonton.ca

Holiday Booking Schedule

Victoria Day, Monday May 18, 2009

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre will be closed) on Monday, May 18, 2009. The vehicles will be running as usual.

All subscription bookings will be cancelled on Monday, May 18. *If you still require your regular subscription booking on Monday, May 18 please call 780-496-4567 (option 2).*

- ▶ Bookings for Monday, May 18 / Tuesday, May 19 start Friday, May 15
- ▶ Bookings for Wednesday, May 20 start Saturday, May 16
- ▶ Bookings for Thursday, May 21 start Sunday, May 17

Canada Day, Wednesday July 1, 2009

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre will be closed) on Wednesday, July 1, 2009. The vehicles will be running as usual.

All subscription bookings will be cancelled on Wednesday, July 1. *If you still require your regular subscription booking on Wednesday, July 1, please call 780-496-4567 (option 2).*

- ▶ Bookings for Wednesday, July 1 start Saturday, June 27
- ▶ Bookings for Thursday, July 2 start Sunday, June 28
- ▶ Bookings for Friday, July 3 start Monday, June 29
- ▶ Bookings for Saturday, July 4 start Tuesday, June 30

Construction Season is Here!

There are major construction projects planned for Edmonton this season and the pothole patrols are already out and about. Expanding city size and other factors, such as construction, may cause increased travel times.



DATS Service Standards state that our clients may be required to spend up to a maximum of 90 minutes on the vehicle. When requesting your trips, please plan accordingly, especially if you are travelling far from your residence or have a time-sensitive appointment.

DATS Team Member Emmanuel Mutuc


Emmanuel has lived in Canada for three years and worked at DATS as an Operator for two years. He is married with a perfect wife, Lilibeth, and two children, Patricia, 16, and Matthew, 12. He arrived in Canada in October 2006 and was greeted with snow, snow, and more snow. He and his family almost returned back to the warm and sunny Philippines but his kids rebelled. Emmanuel feels working at DATS and relating to clients and fellow Operators is a treasure chest of human emotion and experience. During his spare time, Emmanuel enjoys reading a good book and drinking tea.



May 2009

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

June 2009

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

IVR Overview

IVR is an automated telephone system that gives customers an advance call to let them know that their DATS ride is on its way. This helps to reduce wait times and uncertainty for customers who are being picked up or who are already on the vehicle. DATS does not require customers to have a cell phone in order to participate.

Opting In & Out of IVR

All customers are enrolled in the IVR program upon their registration with some limited exceptions. When you are making your booking, you will be asked to confirm your IVR number. You can choose whether you would like to receive an IVR call for that particular trip or not. For example, if you don't want an IVR call for your morning pick-ups as it will wake your family, you can still use IVR for your other trips.

Return Trip IVR Calls

When you are making a booking and want an IVR call for your return trip, please provide the Customer Care Centre agent with a phone number that you can be reached at. Facility or other public numbers are not recommended as there is no guarantee that you will receive the message.

IVR Reminders

- ▶ Customers must be ready for the entire 30-minute designated pick-up window.
- ▶ The pre-recorded phone call is just a courtesy call to let customers know their ride is almost there.
- ▶ The DATS operator will proceed to the pick-up even if the call is not answered.
- ▶ DATS vehicles will still wait five minutes after arrival.
- ▶ Be ready at the first set of accessible doors. Please do NOT wait for the IVR call before getting ready for your DATS ride.

ETS and Google Collaborate

Navigating the streets of Edmonton by bus just got easier. On February 18, Edmonton officially joined the ranks of cities worldwide offering transit trip planning on Google Maps.

Over the past year, Edmonton Transit staff worked in collaboration with the City's Information Technology Branch and Google to bring this new service option to our community. Google's trip planning feature is an enhancement to the existing means of providing information to Edmonton Transit riders. It operates using the same scheduling data used by the ETS Trip Planner, but presents it in the traditional Google format that is familiar to so many people – a great advantage for visitors to our city!

Trip plan results include a Google map showing the transit trip, departure times, bus stop locations, transfer information, and walking route details. It's easy to email the Google transit trip plan too.

Transit on Google Maps is available on mobile devices (such as iPhone, Blackberry, and Windows Mobile) putting trip planning right in the palm of your hand. And, Google Maps supports multiple languages, so it's easy for international users.



Baggage and Parcels on DATS

Passengers may only take the number of bags and parcels that they themselves (or their escort) can carry, usually just a couple of bags.

Wheelchair and scooter passengers' baggage should not extend beyond the dimension of the mobility aid (i.e. if the wheelchair has handles, baggage should not extend past the handles or below the bottom of the seat).

Operators are not obliged to help with packages or baggage, so if assistance is required please travel with an escort.

Due to the limited space and safety concerns in the event of a sudden stop, bags and parcels should be stored on passengers' laps when traveling. For the safety and comfort of everyone traveling on the vehicle, storage of baggage and parcels in the aisle and on the floor is not permitted.

ETS's Mobility Choices Program

Are you scared of the mere thought of using public transit buses and LRT trains? Not sure if your mobility aid will fit or be accepted on Edmonton Transit vehicles? Worried about getting on, or off, your bus in the right place? Confused about bus schedules, trip planners, and Google Transit? Wondering how to make sense of it all?



Worry no more - we're here to help!

Edmonton Transit offers free travel training to seniors and persons with disabilities, to help you learn how to use the buses and trains comfortably, confidently, and independently. Our customized training program provides the information and instruction that YOU need, one-on-one, in a relaxed environment, and at a pace that you can feel comfortable with. Whether it's help in learning how to read route schedules and maps, information on how to navigate through the various parts of our website (including Trip Planner and Google Transit!), orientation on using our buses and trains, or more specific information on how to get to the destinations you want to travel to, our Mobility Choices Travel Training program is for you.

With a wide variety of customer tools - like the Customer Communication Cards, Bus Hailer Kits, and Mobility Cards - and training plans to suit every interest and ability, you're sure to find that using public transit is a lot easier than you might have thought. Whether it's one session or ten, we'll make sure you have the information and instruction you need to use ETS. If you've been thinking you'd like to try public transit, and increase your flexibility and independence in travel around Edmonton - give us a call!

Want to know more about public transit, have questions regarding our travel training program, ETS Accessibility, or any of our customer tools, or would like to booking a training session? Please feel free to call our Travel Training and Accessibility line at 780-496-3000. You can also contact us by email, at ETSTravelTraining@edmonton.ca.

Margaret Dorey,
Accessible Transit Coordinator

DATS NOTES

Same Day Trip "Requests"

DATS will try to accommodate same day trip requests as vehicle capacity, budget and scheduling allow. If you need a booking today for whatever reason and you can be flexible call the DATS Customer Care Centre at 780-496-4567 for a same day trip request.

There is no guarantee that a same day trip request can be accommodated.

It is your responsibility to continue to phone throughout the day to determine if the booking has been accepted. When your trip has been confirmed please remember to confirm the pick up times. The trip times may have been changed slightly in order to accommodate your trip.

Note: these trips are NOT guaranteed. We check the existing Operator schedules and if there are any cancels we try to fit these trips in. For maximum trip availability, please continue to book your trips three days in advance whenever possible.

Door to Door Service

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

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**Please direct
comments/submissions to:**

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(780) 496-4567
Fax: (780) 496-1008
Edmonton Transit System:
www.takeETS.com
E-mail: dats@edmonton.ca

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E-mail Newsletters

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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



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

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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