



DATS News

Disabled Adult Transit Service

July 2014

I-Book (on-line trip booking)

DATS is currently working on options to make online trip booking more efficient and user friendly:

- ▶ The time intervals for bookings have been changed from 15 to 10 minutes. We are committed to reducing booking time to a minimum for I-Book customers.
- ▶ I-Book is now allowing customers to cancel on-line right up to the trip time.
- ▶ We are removing the limitation of only being able to book trips during regular business hours (21 hours per day / 7 days per week access).
- ▶ We are removing restrictions for trip booking during holidays.
- ▶ We hope to reduce the threshold of trips from 2.5 hours to 2 hours* (*work in progress).

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Update

DATS is working to provide more telephone self serve options for customers. These options include the ability to:

- ▶ Check on the status of your ride within 90 minutes.
- ▶ Review scheduled trips for today or the next three days.
- ▶ Cancel trips up to and including within the cancel late window and over the next three days.

To offer these new self serve options we are updating our IVR system technology and re-working the existing Night Before Reminders and Driver Initiated Call reminders. When we tested the new technology, we found more than the expected number of issues. We are now resolving these issues so we can provide these new options to our customers.

***Note:** please do not rely on the driver initiated IVR call. All customers should be waiting at the first set of accessible doors at the start of the pickup window and not in their residence or building.*

Mark your Calendar

DATS Version 2.0

DAG's next Information Session is Tuesday, July 8 (2:00-4:00p.m.). It includes a demonstration of how operators tie down scooters - to register, call 780-496-4567 (option 3). See page 6 for more information.

Can't join us on July 8th? DAG has another session planned for Tuesday, September 10th.

DATS Open House

We are hosting our next open house on **Wednesday, September 10th**. Drop by anytime between 10:00a.m. and 2:00p.m. This is an opportunity to meet DATS staff, take a tour of our various departments, and explore ETS and DATS vehicles and information booths. Refreshments and live entertainment will be provided, so bring your friends and family.

Our address is Percy Wickman Garage, 5610-86 Street. Parking is limited so please use ETS if you can (if you need help planning your visit using ETS, check out ETS trip planner on our website or call 311). Everyone is welcome!

ETS

Message from the Director

We were fortunate to have Shirley Serviss (the City's Writer at Work) visit DATS recently to share her insights into our writing and telling the stories of staff and clients. The 'Writer at Work' program is an initiative of the Writers' Guild of Alberta and involves a site placement for a period of six months. I was fortunate to take two writing courses that Shirley taught at MacEwan a few years ago. I learned a lot and her great knowledge of how and why to write has inspired me. Why is writing important? It allows us to share more widely with others. It helps create a legacy for capturing our experience for future generations. For me, it really helps to clarify my thinking and organize my action plans. Yet, writing is a scary activity for many. I'm included in this group, although, Shirley has really helped me to overcome that. One piece of advice that really stuck with me was to just start writing, like doing a brain dump. Let the words flow onto the page or in today's world, onto the screen of your computer, laptop or mobile device. While she was here at DATS, she told us to think of it as 'talking on paper'. So, yes, it's really just a conversation in a different way.



There are so many stories to tell and yet we haven't made it a priority. Our operators know many stories of those who ride DATS and vice versa - customers get to know their drivers well. DATS is a very personal service and those who gravitate to work here are compassionate, caring people who want to serve their community in jobs that allow them to use their skills to create a better, richer society.

The insights that we have in the office are more limited and more in aggregate. Two years ago we undertook a 'Day in the Life' of DATS study to gain a better understanding about customer travel on DATS. Obviously, we know the addresses and landmarks but not what people are doing. Because we take trips on a first come, first serve basis, we don't ask riders the reason for taking trips. DATS has always operated under the premise that riders are in control of living their lives and going where they want to go to participate in their communities.

So, what does DATS know about where you go and why you go there? The 'Day in the Life' study has been done twice now, once in the winter and once in spring. We asked customers (booking trips on one Wednesday and both weekend days of one week) what the purpose of their trip was. For subscription or recurring trips, our schedulers already had good insights into the purpose of these trips. If all else failed, we called up some of you and asked. Here's what we discovered. On the two Wednesdays we checked (one in February 2012 and the second in spring 2013) we discovered some similarities so we think that these are pretty typical of weekdays. About 46 per cent of riders travel to participate in programs. These include programs (38 per cent) delivered to persons with development disabilities by organizations such as Chrysalis, Elves, Winnifred Stewart and Excel. Day programs for seniors are covered here too and they make up about eight per cent of trips. Recreation programs are the third component of this category and include trips to ACT and all the great organized activities they provide.

Medical trips, composed of dialysis treatment (7 per cent) and other medical appointments (10 per cent), make up 17 per cent on the Wednesdays we checked. Other reasons people use DATS include commuting to and from work (8 per cent), shopping (9 per cent), other recreational activities (8 per cent) to name a few more.

In closing, we're asking you to share your stories with us so we can share them with other DATS riders. Plus, we want to share the stories of the places you go so others can know more about their fellow riders. If you have a story that you're willing to share, please let us know by contacting us at DATS@edmonton.ca or by calling the Customer Care Centre.

Lorna Stewart, Director of DATS

Seniors on the Go

This is the 7th summer that *Seniors on the Go* has been offered, and there are some exciting changes! With each *Seniors on the Go* session, the participating group now receives a presentation on the senior-friendly and accessible features and services of ETS; a personalized guide to ETS to use in their own community; an opportunity to ride an ETS bus along a local route; and a visit to local sites significant for recreation, business, retail, medical, and other essential locations customized by the *Seniors on the Go* Coordinators and participants. The presentation may be conducted on or off the bus, and will include information on fares, trip planning, safety and security features, and opportunities for participants to ask questions about using ETS. This fun and educational presentation can be customized to meet the needs of each group.

After participating in a *Seniors on the Go* event, we hope participants will feel comfortable using public transit as an affordable, flexible, and fun transportation option. If you are interested in having a trip coordinated, please contact a *Seniors on the Go* Coordinator - Charlene at 780-496-4557, or Stephanie at 780-944-5593.

Bus Buddy Program

Edmonton Transit is developing a new customer training program as part of the City of Edmonton's *Vision for an Age Friendly Edmonton* initiative. The "Bus Buddy" program will provide training for seniors to provide peer mentoring sessions to other seniors to teach them how to use the public transit system. These mentors, called ETS Navigators, will be based out of major senior's recreational and residential centres, and will provide training, information, materials and demonstration trips on in-service buses, to ensure seniors have the appropriate information and instruction about the transportation options and services available through Edmonton Transit. Our goal is to ensure seniors are able to use public transit safely, confidently, and independently using our accessible, senior-friendly services!



ETS Photos

We have a file of historical photos showing Edmonton and the old ETS buses. Thought we should share some of these fantastic images when we have space!

DATS NOTES

DATS Registration Reminder

We often get last minute, urgent requests for registration but unfortunately, we are unable to "rush" any application.

Please allow enough time to have forms processed if there is a special event coming up or a new need to book trips. It can take up to two weeks to process an application.

Same Place Bookings

When you first book your trip, let the Customer Care Centre agent know if you want to travel with another DATS registrant travelling at or close to the same time and at or close to the starting address and travelling to the same destination. Ensure you have their registration number. DATS will try to accommodate your request.

Calling DATS?

Working in our busy call center can be challenging. With several agents taking calls at one time, it tends to get noisy here.

If possible, please don't use a speaker phone when calling the Customer Care Centre as it's more difficult to hear. We want to make sure we get the correct information!

DATS Notes

Summer Events and Festivals

DATS is providing service to the following 2014 events:

- ▶ Freewill Shakespeare Festival (July 9 - 27)
- ▶ Canada Day Festivities (July 1)
- ▶ International Street Performers (July 4 - 13)
- ▶ K-Days (July 18 - 27)
- ▶ K-Days Parade (July 18)
- ▶ Taste of Edmonton (July 17 - 26)
- ▶ Edmonton Heritage Days (August 2 - 4)
- ▶ Edmonton Folk Festival (August 7 - 10)
- ▶ Cari-West Caribbean Arts - Festival (August 8 - 10)
- ▶ Rockfest (August 8 - 9)
- ▶ Fringe Festival (August 14 - 24)
- ▶ Edmonton Dragon Boat Festival (August 15 - 17)
- ▶ Edmonton Blues Festival (August 15 - 17)

Want a New ID Card?

You can request a new card (the purple ones with photo) at any time. In fact, if you are using regular transit, it's probably a good idea to travel with the updated card!

Contact us at 780-496-4567 (option 3) or email us at dats@edmonton.ca

Escorts Travel Free Reminder

Registrants should carry their DATS registration ID card when travelling on ETS. If you show your ID card to the ETS operator, your companion can ride for free.

Holiday Booking Schedule

Canada Day: July 1, 2014

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre will be closed) on Canada Day, Tuesday, July 1, 2014. The vehicles will be running as usual.

***Note:** subscription bookings will be cancelled on Tuesday, July 1, 2014. If you still require your subscription booking on Tuesday, July 1, 2014, call 780-496-4567 (option 2) to book it.*

Civic Holiday: August 4, 2014

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre will be closed) on Civic Day, Monday, August 4, 2014. The DATS vehicles will be running as usual.

***Note:** subscription bookings will be cancelled on Monday, August 4, 2014. If you still require your subscription booking on Monday, August 4, 2014, call 780-496-4567 (option 2) to book it.*

Labour Day: September 1, 2014

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre will be closed) on Labour Day, Monday, September 1, 2014. The DATS vehicles will be running as usual.

***Note:** subscription bookings will be cancelled on Monday, September 1, 2014. If you still require your subscription booking on Monday, September 1, 2014, call 780-496-4567 (option 2) to book it.*



DATS Customer Care
780-496-4567

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

July 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
JUNE 29 Can book for: June 30 (till noon), July 1, July 2 July 3	JUNE 30 Can book for: July 1 (till noon), July 2 (till noon), July 3, July 4	1 HOLIDAY No Trip Booking <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	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	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	Aug 1 Can book for: Aug 2 (till noon) Aug 3, 4, 5	Aug 2 Can book for: Aug 3 (till noon) Aug 4, 5, 6

August 2014

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

DATS Team Member



Profile: Farhat Ahmed, Prestige Driver

How long have you been working at DATS?

I have been driving for DATS for almost 22 years working for the Prestige Taxi Company.

What do you like most about the job?
I like working with people. What I enjoy most about my job is helping the customers because they are lovely people and it makes my day to be there for them.

Can you tell us a little more about yourself?

I am a Muslim, born and raised in Pakistan and I was a housewife before I started working for DATS. We (my family and I) are planning a trip to Hawaii next year!

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I like spending time with my family, especially with my three grandchildren and my cat, Mimi! I also enjoy sewing clothes for myself, my daughter and granddaughters. I like to read the Pakeeza which is a monthly handbook for the ladies in my culture - the handbook shares articles about the family, short personal stories and really good recipes. I also love to read books about history.

DATS Advisory Group

DATS Version 2.0

The DATS Advisory Group (DAG) is hosting a series of information sessions called DATS Version 2.0. DAG came up with this idea as a way to help more people understand how DATS works. These information sessions are aimed at DATS registrants, agency staff, caregivers and family members.

The next session is Tuesday, July 8 at 2:00 p.m. at the DATS office (90 minutes to two hours). It includes a presentation by members of DAG as well as an opportunity to take a tour of DATS. Call Shirley at 780-496-4554 or email: dats@edmonton.ca to book your spot. Can't make the 8th? We have another session planned for Tuesday, September 10th.

Lost and Found

Lost something on a DATS vehicle? Lost and found items are handled by ETS Lost and Found (not DATS), call 780-496-1622. Take a moment at your destination to make sure you have all your belongings before getting off the vehicle.

No Show Policy

A reminder to our fellow passengers! The DATS vehicle will wait a maximum of five minutes upon arrival within your scheduled pick-up window. If you are NOT ready during this five-minute period, your trip is considered a no-show. Please be ready at the beginning of your scheduled pick up window and we can all enjoy less wait times!

DAG Report

May 13, 2014 was DATS Advisory Board's (DAG) first Information Session (DATS Version 2.0) showcasing how DATS works. After a few technical difficulties were solved, we were off! There were 12 people registered and eight came. So, pretty good. We still have to work out a couple of bugs, such as, only one member of DAG should answer a question, not all of us at once. What can I say, we all like to help. DAG members were told, that for the being the first Information Session, the session was informative, helpful and questions were cleared up. All in all, the Information Session was well received.

Thank you to all that came! Our next Information Session will be Tuesday July 8 and includes a demonstration of how operators tie down scooters.

Michelle Bissell,
DAG Representative

Newsletter Note

Did you know? This newsletter can be emailed straight to your inbox. To be added to our email list, contact: dats@edmonton.ca. For other newsletter requests, call us at 780-496-4567 (option 4).

Registration Update

Thank you to all of you who participated in the recertification process to date! DATS will continue to contact about 250 registrants each month letting them know that it is their turn to recertify. Once you are contacted, please complete the appropriate recertification documents and submit them to DATS Customer Care.

Here are some important reminders:

- ▶ Existing registrants can “self-certify” (fill out the forms themselves). In most cases, an updated Health Professional assessment is NOT required.
- ▶ If attending an in-person interview, please remember to bring any mobility aids/devices or equipment that you would typically use for mobility or at a community appointment.
- ▶ You are welcome to have someone support or assist you at any step of the DATS recertification process, including at an in-person interview.
- ▶ DATS registration is now on a five year cycle. Every five years, all registrants will be required to submit updated information.
- ▶ If you have any questions about DATS recertification or registration, please contact DATS Customer Care at 780-496-4567 (option 3).

Thank you again and have a great summer!

DATS Registration Team

DATS Community Garden

Our garden team at DATS has been busy and we now have three garden plots sowed with a variety of vegetables and herbs. From potatoes to parsley and everything in-between, we hope to increase sustainability and support the City of Edmonton “The Way We Green” initiatives. The community garden provides food for the Edmonton Food Bank as well as a bbq lunch at DATS at the end of the season. In fact, last year our team of gardeners won a City's Manager's Occupational Health and Safety Award in program Development - Wellness category. The awards are presented annually to individuals and work groups who were nominated by their peers for making significant contributions to a health and safety program in their area of work.



ETS NOTES

LRT Station Accessibility

We recently had the opportunity to invite several of our customers on a site review of the new Kingsway/ Royal Alex Transit Centre and LRT Station, as well as the new NAIT LRT Station, to obtain their input on the accessibility of the new sites.

The visit included reviews and tours of the transit centre shelter, the accessible washrooms, the bus and passenger areas, and the train platforms. It was also an opportunity to provide LRT project staff with firsthand input into the needs and challenges that are experienced by individuals with disabilities, related to transit use.

Additionally, it was an opportunity for our customers to provide input on the new features at these new stations. The group's comments and feedback were invaluable, and we are very appreciative of the time that Ken Thomas, Bob Macklon, and Karen Down shared with us. We hope to continue offering similar opportunities as future facilities are built.

Published by DATS, six times
annually Circulation 6,500.

**Please direct
comments/submissions to:**

DATS, Wickman Garage
5610-86 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6E 2X3
Phone: (780) 496-4567
Fax: (780) 496-1008
Edmonton Transit System:
www.takeETS.com
E-mail: dat@edmonton.ca

Editor

Caroline Wenzel

Contributors this Issue

Lorna Stewart, Deanna Crozier,
Jessica Noel, Juan Botero, Anita
Wright, Stuart Gerber, Margaret
Dorey, Joanne Folk, Arlene
Wicentowich, Stephanie Leaf,
Charlene Gray, Michelle Bissell.

E-mail Newsletters

Would you like to receive a copy
of the DATS Newsletter by e-
mail? Just send an e-mail to:
dat@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 Services
Suite 500, Scotia Place
10060 - Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3R8

post office indicia here