



DATS News



Dedicated Accessible Transit Service Winter 2023

Registration for Holiday Travel

Caregivers and facilities 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 in December and with the large volume of applications, registration may take a little longer to process than during the rest of the year.

DATS Holiday Reminders

Shopping?

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

Going out of town?

If you are planning a trip and need paratransit like DATS at your destination, we recommend you research your transportation options before leaving. 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 transportation service providers. Avoid disappointment and inconvenience and be sure to check out options before you go!

Winter Safety Reminder

Please dress for Edmonton weather, and wear layers for travel on buses that may be drafty as doors are opening and closing, or warm with the heat on.



Edmonton
Transit
Service

Edmonton

Manager's Message

This past September we were excited to host our first Open House since the pandemic. We welcomed over 300 visitors who seemed to appreciate the event and gave us a lot of positive feedback. It was a busy day for all staff, in terms of organization ahead of time and on the day, and for those who put in extra work to deliver our service for the day. This was by far our busiest service day since 2020. Once again, our team found it was a great opportunity to connect with our clients, friends and community.

This fall has also been busy with three operator training classes, and by the end of December, we will have a team of 23 new operators ready to provide DATS service. In addition, our contracted providers have also recently hired and trained more drivers to expand their team to assist us with service delivery. We have also completed our order of 33 brand new buses, which brings us up to 78 in the last two years. These new buses will help to replace the older buses at the end of their lifespan and ready for retirement.

Did you know that you can check on your upcoming trips by calling our automated IVR line, or get automated calls about upcoming trips? If you have a smart phone, you can also sign up for text message reminders. We have included a feature in this newsletter with details on how to make the best use of the various customer service tools available. These features are available 21 hours a day and seven days a week, and support is available to help get you started.

Finally, as the weather turns colder, we would like to remind all DATS clients to dress warmly and prepare for winter. Please 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 (page 5). You'll also find the holiday schedule and calendars for Christmas and New Years service on pages 4 and 5. Planning ahead will help us serve you better during the busy season.



Paul Schmold,
Manager Paratransit (DATS)



DATS Customer Tools

Did you know - you can check on your upcoming trips by texting DATS, calling our automated IVR line (780) 496-4567 (option 5), or get calls about upcoming trips?

To enroll in these features, you need:

- Your DATS Registration Number.
- Pass Code - This pass code (security PIN) will be the same as your pass code for I-Book. To use these features, you must change your pass code in I-Book. The pass code must be 6 to 8 digits (no letters or symbols) so it is easy to use a phone's number pad.
- Don't know your pass code, and do not use I-Book - contact DATS Community Relations.

Phone Calls - IVR

Call us at (780) 496-4567 (option 5) for Interactive Voice Response (IVR). You will be asked to enter your registration number, followed by your pass code (security PIN).

From there you can select from these options:

1. Where's My Ride - Get updated information about an upcoming ride within 90 minutes. The closer to your ride, the more accurate the estimate will be. Please note that this is an estimate, and is subject to change at any time. Rides outside of 90 minutes of your call will not be listed
2. Trip Status - Get a list of all trips booked within the next 3 days
3. Cancel a Trip

**Press 0 at any time to speak to a DATS Client Service agent during normal office hours.*

These features are available 21 hours a day and seven days a week, and will reduce call volume to our Client Service Centre. Using IVR to check on a ride or cancel a trip will reduce queue times over the phone for all DATS clients.

Text Messaging (SMS)

You can text DATS at (587) 409-4447 for:

1. Where's My Ride - Get updated information about an upcoming ride within 90 minutes. The closer to your ride, the more accurate the estimate will be. Please note that this is an estimate, and is subject to change at any time, or be inaccurate due to weather or adverse road conditions. Rides outside of 90 minutes of your text will not be listed.
2. Automated Text - Ahead Features (if you are already enrolled in automated call ahead features, this can be switched to text-ahead by opting into text messaging).

Sign up for Text Messaging - text (587) 409-4447. Use your DATS # and pass code.

d optin 23143 123456
↓ ↓ ↓
"d" for DATS DATS number pass-code

This registers your phone for messaging, and will send a confirmation message (above). Standard text rates may apply, depending on your phone plan.

*Please note that only one phone number per DATS client can be added to an IVR account for text messaging, to check on a ride using Option 5, or for call-ahead features.

Where's My Ride

Once you are signed up for text messages, to check on a trip within 90 minutes, simply text "d" or "D" for DATS to (587) 409-4447.

Both uppercase and lowercase d's are recognized by the system. If you have a trip within the next 90 minutes, you will receive an estimate message.

Holiday Booking Schedule

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

- Monday, December 25, 2023 (Christmas Day)
- Tuesday, December 26, 2023 (Boxing Day)
- Monday, January 1, 2024 (New Year's Day)

Season's Greetings &
Best Wishes for 2024
From the DATS Team!



Note: All subscription bookings are cancelled from December 25 to January 1, 2024 inclusively. If you still require your regular subscription booking during this time, call 780-496-4567 (option 2).

December 2023

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
				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, 25, 26, 27, 28 (till noon)
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Can book for: Dec 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 (till noon)	HOLIDAY No Trip Booking <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	HOLIDAY No Trip Booking <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	Can book for: Dec 28 (till noon), Dec 29, 30 <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	Can book for: Dec 29 (till noon) Dec 30, 31 <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	Can book for: Dec 30 (till noon) Dec 31, Jan 1, 2	Can book for: Dec 31, Jan 1, 2, 3 (till noon) <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>

December / January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 31	1	2	3	4	5	6
Can book for: Jan 1, 2, 3, 4 (till noon) <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	HOLIDAY No Trip Booking <i>Subscription trips cancelled</i>	<i>Regular booking schedule resumes</i>				

New Year's Eve Service:

DATS is extending our hours of service on Sunday, 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—Community Notes

Family Day: Monday February 19, 2024

DATS operates on a holiday schedule (the Customer Care Centre is closed) on Monday, February 19, 2024 (Family Day).

Note: Subscription bookings will be cancelled Monday, February 19, 2024. If you still require your subscription booking on that day, please call 780-496-4567 (option 2) to book it.

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 an agency or service to 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
- The Seniors Home Supports Program gives seniors referrals to vetted service providers (businesses, community groups and individuals) offering these types of services. Seniors are not charged for referrals but they will pay a fee to the service provider for completing the work.
<http://www.seniorshomesupports.com>

Festivals & Events Accessibility Research Project - ILC

This Independent Living Canada research project focuses on the accessibility of festivals and events for people living with various types of disabilities in Canada. It is being funded through a grant from Accessibility Standards Canada and will be:

- *Charting the accessibility experiences of people living with disabilities with Canadian events and festivals*
- *Identifying gaps in accessibility of Canadian events and festivals from the perspectives of people living with disabilities*
- *Identifying best practices and successes currently deployed in the provision of accessible Canadian events and festivals*
- *Identifying barriers to accessibility in the making of Canadian festivals and events from the perspectives of festival and event organizers*
- *Recommending needed improvements to inform future standards in the Accessible Canada Act*

Independent Living Canada's surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions are scheduled to start in January, 2024. For more information, please email: festivals.ab@ilc-vac.ca or check out their Website: <https://www.ilc-vac.ca/>

DATS Call Centre

Have you ever wondered about the DATS call centre and the agents you talk with to book your DATS service? Our call centre has a team of about 25 staff members, including booking agents, team leads, and those in Registration and in Community Relations. Our team works a variety of shifts, full and part time, to provide service 7 days a week.

Each member has been trained to provide the best customer service we can within such a busy environment. We also monitor our phone lines to ensure we are meeting our service standards where possible, and review recorded calls to ensure accuracy and to follow up on any concerns. In 2022, our busy phone lines handled over 350,000 calls, with the DATS Booking line handling an average of over 700 calls per day.

Booking Tips

Our booking agents have come up with some tips for customers that will help you to get the best service and help us to serve you better!

Call over the weekend

- Avoid the busy Monday morning rush and call to book your trips for Tuesday and Wednesday on the weekend instead!
- The call centre is open (7:30 am - 12:00 noon) on weekends and the call lines may be quieter.
- This could help to decrease your on-hold times, especially on Monday mornings.

Group trips tips

- Set up subscriptions wherever possible.
- Call over the weekend, when our call lines are less busy, especially when booking multiple trips for multiple clients.

Listen and confirm your trip

- Booking agents should read back the details of your bookings to you at the end of each booking call.
- Listen carefully to ensure they have the correct information.

Trip cancellations

- Cancel trips with at least two hours' notice so that DATS can redistribute trips to other clients. For all cancellations, call 780-496- 4567 (option 1). Thank you for doing your part!



Mary - Call Centre Team

DATS Advisory Group

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

Let's all work together to make the best use of DATS:

- Try the customer tools available - see page 3. If you need help getting signed up, call or email DATS.
- Stay safe - wait at your door until the DATS operator comes to assist you, especially if it is icy.
- Leave outdoor lights on during dark hours.
- Stay Warm - Dress warmly. Vehicles are heated, but there may be drafts when the doors are open.
- Pick-up window - be there at the start of the pick-up window and wait for the full 30 minutes. This helps to keep our service on time!

If you have a question or comment for DAG, please email us: DAG@edmonton.ca

Edmonton Transit Service

On Demand Transit - Accessible ETS

On Demand Transit connects select neighbourhoods, large seniors' residences and attractions to the Edmonton transit bus and LRT network seven days a week. Simply book a trip and a shuttle will be scheduled to pick you and other riders up between designated transit hubs and pick-up spots in your community.

All On Demand Transit shuttles are fully accessible and are equipped with two built-in child safety seats. Please identify at the time of booking if you require space for a wheelchair, mobility scooter, walker or stroller.

Detailed information about how to use On Demand Transit is available at edmonton.ca/OnDemandTransit or by calling 780-496-2400. TTY Service: call 780-944-5505 to contact the On Demand Transit call centre to book a trip. Note: if you need more help before trying On Demand - training is available - see the Mobility Choices article below!



Expand your options! Try Mobility Choices Travel Training

Mobility Choices in-person travel training 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 transit services including ETS bus, LRT, and On Demand services. The program is open to people with disabilities, seniors, newcomers, and agency staff serving these audiences.

Mobility Choices program participants will learn about ETS services and programs, including trip planning options, fares and fare programs, and important accessibility and safety features. The program offers one-on-one training for participants who need more individualized attention and guided practice. Other hands-on learning opportunities include guided trial and practice of mobility aids on not-in-service transit buses as well as sessions focused on trip planning and using electronic information tools.

For more information about customer travel training, contact Vicki Gudelj, Accessibility Coordinator at (780) 496-3000.

International Day of Disabled Persons December 3, 2023

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Sunday, December 3. First launched in 1992, the event is in its 31st year of celebration.

IDDP recognises visible and invisible disabilities, to promote the importance of inclusion in life and the workplace. In 2023, the theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is: Access ignites: it's good business, highlights the benefits and opportunities available to employers willing to embrace workforce diversity.



Visit:
idpwd.org

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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, other inquiry: Press 4
- ▶ Use automated IVR: Press 5 (see page 3)
- ▶ For subscription trips: Press 6 (open after 12:30pm)

Telus Relay Service

- ▶ Dial 711 and ask for DATS

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