



# DATS News



**Disabled Adult Transit Service**  
Spring 2021

## Agency Reps Wanted Help Shape DATS

Do you work at an agency, program or facility that uses DATS for your clients' travel needs?

DAG (DATS Advisory Group) is looking for two new Agency Representatives to join the committee. Agency Reps are required to provide input, on behalf of their agency, based on their staff and customer experiences with DATS service. Meetings are held virtually during Covid, quarterly at this point.

DAG is a voluntary advisory committee that provides 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.

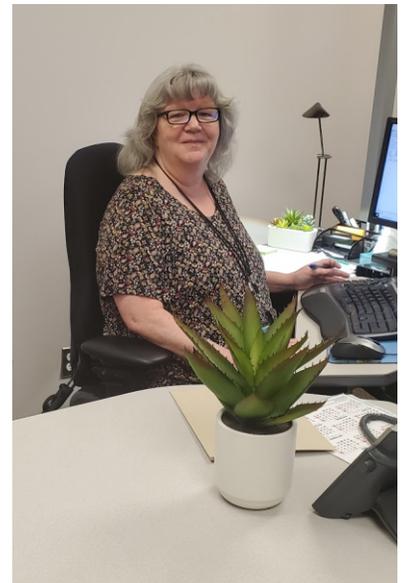
To find out more about this volunteer opportunity with DAG please send an email to: [DATS@edmonton.ca](mailto:DATS@edmonton.ca) and a member of DAG will get back to you.

## DATS Team Member Profile Donna Garner - Team Lead Dispatch

### How long have you worked at DATS? Where did you last work? Previous careers?

I started working for DATS in 2012 as a Booking Agent in the Call Centre and the following year went into the Dispatch Center to work as a Dispatcher.

Before DATS, I had a manufacturing background and held positions of office administrator, Disability Management, several roles within the union including union president and most recently, working at National Oilwell Varco as a human resources ssistant.



### What is your role at DATS?

In 2016, I took on the role as Team Lead of the Dispatch with a team of 11 Dispatchers. The Dispatch team is the link between DATS operations and the operators out on the road. Dispatchers assist Operators with on-road service delivery support - staying on schedule, helping with vehicle breakdowns and accidents, managing customer trip changes and delays, and navigating inclement weather and major traffic disruptions.  
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# Manager's Message

As demand for DATS increases, we remain committed to your safety. COVID-19 protocols and procedures remain as important as ever for everyone on board DATS vehicles. We continue to thoroughly sanitize our vehicles, screen our team members as they come to work and follow any changes made by our local, provincial and federal governments. We ask that you continue to wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, maintain social distancing, and answer screening questions before booking a trip. Thank you for your continued patience.

We have some good news to share with you. In this issue, you will find a summary of the customer satisfaction survey. Your suggestions for improving customer service have been heard. We will use this feedback to inform changes to the DATS Customer Improvement Plan. While the past year has been a challenge for all of us, we are grateful for the positive feedback, and the suggestions for improvements. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete this survey.

You may have seen or taken a trip on one of our new buses. We've been slowly rolling out these new models over the past few months, replacing some of the older models in our fleet. There are currently 8 new buses on the roads, as of this writing, and another 37 on their way, getting navigation equipment and cameras installed. So far, Operators have given positive feedback on the new vehicles: they have a better turning radius, larger windows and smaller blind-spots, and the mid-vehicle lift is easier to line-up. Riders have said that they feel fewer bumps and the seats are more comfortable than on our older models.

Later this year, IVR functions will be relaunched, improving how we communicate with our clients before their trip, and we look forward to easing COVID restrictions when it is safe to do so. Until then, thank you again for using DATS.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Schmold'.

Paul Schmold - Manager Paratransit

# Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

As a part of the larger Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) customer researcher satisfaction program, Pivotal Research Inc. conducted a survey with DATS clients and their parents, caregivers and guardians towards the end of 2020.

In total, 214 respondents participated; 163 were DATS clients, and 51 were parents, caregivers and/or guardians. Messaging about survey participation was provided months in advance via the DATS newsletter, the City of Edmonton website and on-hold messaging. Thanks to everyone who participated in the survey.

The survey focused on client satisfaction throughout the DATS journey, as well as the changes to the service due to COVID-19. Findings from this survey will be used to explore potential customer service improvements. Highlights from the survey are listed below.

Satisfaction with the overall DATS experience stands at 81%.

Satisfaction scores ranged from a low of 59% for the wait time to make a booking to 90% with the courteousness of the booking agent. One of the top service improvements requested by participants were improvements to the booking process. Specifically, respondents requested decreased wait times on the phone, bringing back online booking (which has been unavailable due to the requirement of COVID-19 screening questions that could not be accommodated digitally), and improvements to the availability of booking time slots.

Satisfaction with the pickup and drop off experience ranged from 61% to 69% (timeliness with on-time pick-ups, pick-ups within the 30 minute window, and on-time arrival). Satisfaction with the total travel time was 73%. When asked to share potential service improvements, the number one request was for improvements to the overall travel time (including on time-arrival and pick ups) and decreased waiting time for clients.

Regarding COVID-19 protocols on board, adherence to mask and face coverings (85%) received the highest level of satisfaction whereas the seating arrangement (73%), sanitization protocols (70%), and physical distancing onboard (69%) received lower satisfaction. It is important to note that only those who had taken DATS during the pandemic were asked to provide satisfaction among these items. Although, for the most part, participants did not identify hesitations specific to COVID-19 when riding DATS, COVID-19 protocols regarding seating, sanitization, and physical distancing onboard clearly impact on-board satisfaction.

When considering non-COVID 19 related aspects of the on-board experience, safety received the highest score at 82%, closely followed by cleanliness of DATS vehicles at 78% and on-board comfort at 71%.

ETS and DATS plan to launch another survey later in 2021 to track progress in these areas of improvement, and to gather additional information from our customers.

## DATS Notes

### **Parcels and Baggage**

Please note that DATS operators are not required to help with any parcels or baggage that a client brings onto a bus.

For the safety of everyone on DATS, passengers must limit their possessions to what they can safely carry and hold on their lap. Parcels and baggage cannot block aisles or be placed on the floor of the vehicle.

### **Attendants Ride Free**

On regular ETS, any attendant with a fare paying DATS registrant can travel free. A DATS registrant must show their DATS registrant card for the attendant to travel free. On DATS, a designated mandatory attendant travels free while accompanying a fare paying DATS registrant. Children, aged twelve years and younger, of a registered user ride free of charge.

### **DATS Client File Updates**

Please let DATS know if there are any changes to your records on file, including change of address, change of phone number, change of other contact information (e-mail, emergency contacts), how you'd prefer us to contact you (mail, e-mail, phone), any other changes that might affect your service (new equipment).

Contact DATS at (780) 496-4567 (Option 2) to let us know of any changes.

# Holiday Booking Schedule

## **EASTER 2021**

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Client Services Centre will be closed) on:

- Good Friday, April 2, 2021
- Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021

Note: Subscription bookings will be cancelled Friday, April 2 and Monday, April 5. If you still require your subscription booking call 780-496-4567 (option 2) to book it.

## **VICTORIA DAY 2021**

DATS will operate on a holiday schedule (the Client Services Centre will be closed) on:

- Monday, May 24, 2021

Note: Subscription bookings will be cancelled Monday, May 24. If you still require your subscription booking call 780-496-4567 (option 2) to book it.

# Bus Network Redesign and On Demand Transit

For DATS clients who use conventional transit as well, please note that the ETS Bus Network Redesign launches Sunday, April 25. This includes new On Demand Transit in various parts of the city.

The Bus Network Redesign includes new bus stops, new route maps and new schedules. These are all available online at [edmonton.ca/newbusroutes](http://edmonton.ca/newbusroutes), where you can also read guides and watch videos about the newly redesigned network, and how it will serve Edmonton as the city continues to grow.

Since some new developments and other areas of the city are not yet served by conventional bus routes, On Demand Transit is being introduced to these areas. For more information about the new ETS On Demand Transit, and to see if your neighbourhood is included, visit [edmonton.ca/ondemanttransit](http://edmonton.ca/ondemanttransit).

## April 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31 Can book for: Apr 1 (till noon) Apr 2, 3, 4	1 Can book for: Apr 2 (till noon) Apr 3, 4, 5	2 HOLIDAY Client Services CLOSED Subscription trips cancelled	3 Can book for: Apr 4, 5, 6, 7 (till noon)
4 HOLIDAY Client Services CLOSED	5 Regular booking schedule resumes  Subscription Trips Cancelled	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	1

## May 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Can book for: May 21 (till noon) May 22, 23, 24	22 Can book for: May 22, 23, 24, 25 (till noon)
23 Can book for: May 24, 25, 26, 27 (till noon)	24 HOLIDAY Client Services CLOSED Subscription Trips Cancelled	25 Regular booking schedule resumes	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Pictured here is one of forty-five new DATS vehicles to be added to the fleet throughout 2021.

### **Team Member Profile - Donna Garner (continued)**

#### **What do you enjoy the most in your work at DATS?**

I love the variety each day presents and being able to help our team to deliver service to the City's paratransit clients.

#### **What are some of the challenges your team faces every day?**

We work hard to maintain on-time delivery of trips and keep up with the demand for service. The City has grown so much in every direction with all the new subdivisions and trips are increasingly getting longer in distance.

#### **COVID-19 has caused disruptions in everyone's lives, how does it affect your work at DATS?**

We have had to change the way we do business. There has been a drastic reduction in general ridership on DATS, but we have been busier than ever. We had to adapt to new specialized cleaning processes, changing social distancing restrictions and capacity challenges in order to keep Operators and Clients safe while riding together. We also had to figure out a way of safely getting our clients that are directly affected by COVID. Whether it's one client, or an entire facility as an outbreak location, clients still need to travel to and from critical medical appointments. It has been a huge learning curve and very rewarding to know we are still providing a safe service.

#### **Outside of DATS, what are you looking forward to this Spring?**

I got myself a new puppy this past fall, her name is Frankie and she is a miniature long-haired dachshund. I look forward to getting her out into the City's wonderful parks and trails when the weather warms up. We are taking a trip to Jasper this spring and can imagine how excited she will be with all the new smells. I am fortunate enough to live in a condo complex that has a pool and enjoy spending a few days a week swimming.

# DATS Cancellation Policy

DATS has a new cancellation policy. We are keeping track of no-shows, cancellations at the door and late cancellations (when clients cancel 2 hours before pickup or less). We are also keeping track of subscription trip cancellations.

We know that sometimes you have to cancel a trip. Everyone has points that they can use to cancel trips without penalty. Each month, you can use 8 cancellation points without getting a warning or penalty.

No shows or cancellations at the door are worth 2 points. Late cancellations are worth 1 point.

We are doing this to help make DATS fair for everyone. It takes a lot of time and hard work to set up trips and subscriptions that some people don't use.

If you use more than 8 of your cancellation points in a month, you will receive a warning. If you use more than 8 again in the next six months, you will be suspended from DATS for 7 days. If you use more than 8 points a third time in six months, you will be suspended from DATS for 14 days. If you use more than 8 points a fourth time in six months, you will be suspended from DATS for 30 days.

If you cancel more than 40% of one or more of your subscription trips in a month, you will receive a warning. If you cancel more than 40% of one or more of your subscriptions again in a month, you will lose that subscription, and have to book it again after a month.

We are here to help. If you have to cancel a trip, please let us know at least two hours before that trip. Call our cancellation line at (780) 496-4567 (Option 1). If you let us know in advance, we can set up a trip for someone else, and it can help us plan our service better.

If you have to cancel a subscription a lot, think about making a new subscription at a different time, or switch to regular reservation trips.

If you have any questions about cancellations, please call DATS Community Relations (780) 496-4567 (Option 4).

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www.takeETS.com  
E-mail: [dats@edmonton.ca](mailto:dats@edmonton.ca)

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"DATS Newsletter" in the subject line.  
Or call us at (780) 496-4567.

# Contact DATS

DATS Client Service 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
- ▶ For IVR : Press 5
- ▶ To request a subscription: Press 6 (daily from 12:30pm - 5pm)

Nextalk  
(780) 944-5555

Lost & Found  
(780) 496-1622

E-mail / Website  
[DATS@edmonton.ca](mailto:DATS@edmonton.ca)  
[takeETS.com/DATS](http://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.

DATS Client Service 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.

**Edmonton  
Transit  
Service**



Return undeliverable Canadian address to:

**DATS  
Percy Wickman Garage  
5610 86 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T6E 2X3**

post office indicia here