



# DATS News



Disabled Adult Transit Service  
Summer 2021

## Agency Reps Wanted Help Shape DATS

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

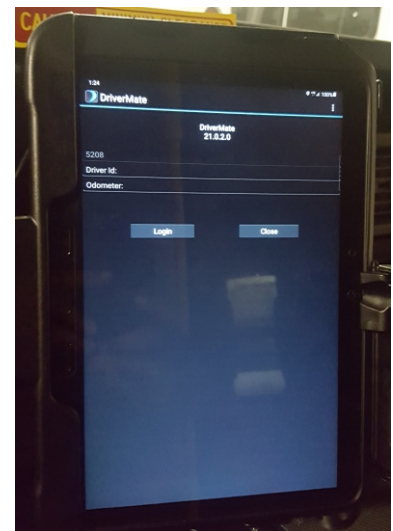
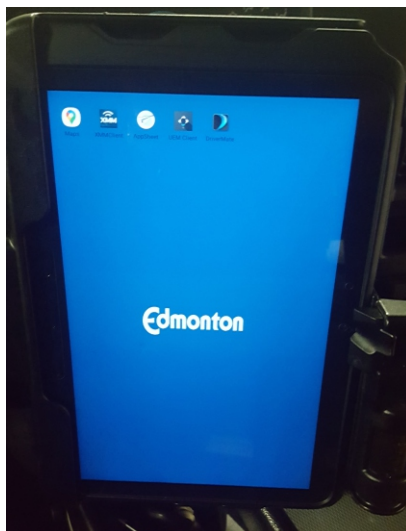
DAG (DATS Advisory Group) is looking for two new Agency Representatives to join the committee. Agency Reps are required to provide input, on behalf of their agency, based on their staff and customer experiences with DATS service. Meetings are held virtually during COVID, but this may change in the coming months.

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.

## New Tablets

DATS is testing new tablets on some of our vehicles. These will eventually replace the larger, older data terminals on our fleet. You may notice some of our Operators using them throughout the summer, testing their capabilities.



Edmonton  
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# Manager's Message

Summer is often a time for vacations, festivals and other community events. While again this year a number of events have been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, we look forward to making sure you can enjoy your community safely.

As Alberta Health Services and the City of Edmonton begin to ease COVID-19 restrictions into the summer and autumn months this year, we want to assure all of our clients and caregivers that safety remains the highest priority at DATS.

Masks and face coverings will continue to be mandatory on DATS, and all public transit until further notice, as announced by the provincial government in late June.

As of July 1, we will no longer be asking screening questions, and will reinstate our online booking tool. We will continue to reinforce the importance of self-assessment, and urge clients who are feeling ill to consider postponing unnecessary travel, and contact 811 to arrange for COVID testing if necessary. We will continue to be extra-cautious and follow instructions from health authorities, so that we can all enjoy the summer together.

At DATS, we are all looking forward to returning to higher levels of service, and we will be implementing some new customer self-service tools in the fall. We have some new buses in our fleet, and new tablets are being piloted on some of our vehicles at time of publication. We're all excited about working towards a new normal.

Enjoy the summer!



Paul Schmold - Manager Paratransit



# Summer Travel Tips

Summer in Edmonton means being prepared for the unexpected. We can experience 30+ degree temperatures and extreme thunderstorms all in one afternoon.

Here are some tips to help you plan your day in Edmonton's summer months:

- Dress for the weather. Some days can be scorching hot during the day, and then cool down at night, with rain in between. Bring a rain jacket and a sweater. Watch the weather before you leave, if you're planning a long day in the community.
- Wear sunscreen or sunblock. You can get a sunburn even on cloudy days.
- Drink lots of water. Staying hydrated is especially important on hot and humid days.
- Plan ahead. When booking in advance, keep the weather in mind. If the weather changes, and you must cancel a trip, please let us know as soon as possible.

## Grandin Station Rename

Based on feedback from the community and working with the Grandin Working Circle, city crews began work in June to rename the Grandin LRT Station. Crews covered the original murals commissioned in 1989 depicting Bishop Grandin and removed reference to the Grandin name on transit. Bishop Grandin was a proponent of the residential school systems and missionary in Edmonton.

The mural was replaced with orange, the colour of reconciliation. The interim name of the LRT station will be 'Government Centre.'

## Notes from DAG

### Mobility Aids on DATS

All wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters must meet the specific size, weight, and safety guidelines for DATS travel.

- The combined weight of the mobility aid and client cannot exceed 750 lbs (340 kg)
- Maximum base dimensions for equipment is: 30 inches x 50 inches (76 centimetres x 127 centimetres) - larger equipment cannot be accommodated
- Wheelchairs must have escort handles
- Wheelchairs and scooters must have functioning brakes
- No flags or other projections are permitted
- Operators must be able to securely fasten the tie-downs to the frame of the mobility aid, or mobility aids may need attachments so they can be safely secured to the vehicle
- If you are using a scooter, you must transfer to a seat.
- Wheelchairs and scooters must be in good condition (no sharp edges or pieces coming off) and clean at all times

**Call before you buy!** If you are considering new equipment for travel use on DATS, please contact Community Relations (780-496-4567 option 4) to discuss if it can be safely secured on our DATS vehicles and contracted vehicles.

### DATS Escorts Ride Free on Regular ETS

On regular ETS services, including LRT, a fare paying DATS registrant can take along an attendant or escort for free. DATS registrants must show their DATS registrant card if asked by an operator.

# Holiday Booking Schedule

## CANADA DAY

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

- Canada Day, Thursday, July 1, 2021

## CIVIC HOLIDAY

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

- Monday, August 2, 2021

## LABOUR DAY

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

- Monday, September 6, 2021

Subscription bookings will be cancelled for these three holidays: Thursday, July 1, Monday, August 2 and Monday, September 6. If you still require your subscription booking call 780-496-4567 (option 2) to book it.

## Summer Events

Some summer events have been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, and some are planning reduced capacity or safely distanced events.

Please check online for any safety concerns before booking, and follow Alberta Health Service recommendations. Here are some events that have been confirmed at publication:

- Canada Day Fireworks (July 1)
- Van Gogh Exhibit (Edmonton Expo - July 6 - September 5)
- A Taste of Edmonton (July 22 - August 1)
- Heritage Days (July 31 - August 2)
- Rock Fest (August 14)

## June/July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 Can book for: Jun 28, 29, 30 July 1 (till noon)	28 Can book for: Jun 29 (till noon) Jun 30 July 1, 2	29 Can book for: Jun 30 (till noon) Jul 1, 2, 3	30 Can book for: July 1, 2 (till noon) Jul 3, 4	1 HOLIDAY Client Services CLOSED Subscription trips cancelled	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 Can book for: July 30 (till noon), July 31, August 1, 2	30 Can book for: July 31 (till noon), August 1, 2, 3	31 Can book for: August 1, 2, 3, 4 (till noon)

# August 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Can book for: August 2, 3, 4, 5 (till noon)	2 HOLIDAY Client Services CLOSED Subscription trips cancelled	3 Regular booking schedule resumes	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				

# September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Can book for: Sept 3 (till noon) Sept 4, 5, 6	3 Can book for: Sept 4 (till noon) Sept 5, 6, 7	4 Can book for: Sept 5, 6, 7, 8 (till noon)
5 Can book for: Sept 6, 7, 8, 9 (till noon)	6 HOLIDAY Client Services CLOSED Subscription Trips Cancelled	7 Regular booking schedule resumes	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## DATS Notes

### **DATS Pickup Window**

When will your ride come?  
When you book a trip, your booking agent will give you a 30 minute pick-up window. Please be ready at the first set of exterior accessible doors at the beginning of your pick-up window. Your trip may arrive any time within the pick-up window.

Please be courteous to fellow passengers. DATS Operators can stay on schedule when clients are ready to go when the vehicle arrives.

### **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.

# Letter of Appreciation from Rosemarie Randall

### **Background**

Months ago, I read this letter over the telephone on different occasions to two DATS Community Relations staff. They approved it, when I asked if I could try to get it published in the Edmonton Journal newspaper.

As a frequent DATS client, I talked with many receptive drivers because I wanted to learn about their important work. The occupational challenges I observed and heard about and the capabilities and caring of drivers were impressive. When I shared my thoughts with driver Sereba (Sarah, to her clients), she mentioned the commendations option as a way of expressing appreciation. I began commending drivers, but Sereba's comment planted the seed that resulted in this letter of appreciation. Thank you, Sarah.

I often saw disrespect towards DATS drivers from drivers of other vehicles, likely caused by a lack of understanding. Hopefully, this letter will change some viewpoints.

Contacts included the Edmonton Journal, the mayor's office (on the advice of a friend), and councillor Scott McKeen's office. I also telephoned Global news. I decided that the letter could go to a wider audience so that Edmontonians and people in other cities with similar services realize the importance of this work and the challenges and capabilities of the drivers. I contacted the office of David Shepherd, MLA for Edmonton City Centre. The letter was posted on David Shepherd's Facebook. Janis Irwin, MLA for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood also posted about this issue.

After this event, I contacted DATS again to ask if my letter could be included in the DATS newsletter.

Thank you, Community Relations staff, for agreeing to publish this letter in the June newsletter, so that drivers and booking agents will become aware of my gratitude and appreciation and other clients may get some additional insight into driver challenges and strengths.

## **The Letter**

I became a DATS client briefly in 2010 and again in 2019. Most trips were to and from work every weekday. I thank DATS for all the assistance I received.

The DATS drivers I have met are diverse. They come from so many different countries and circumstances; e.g.: Somalia, Czechoslovakia, the Philippines, people who have lived in Edmonton their whole lives, First Nations, Métis, people in their early 20s, seniors and most ages in between, with great variation in life experiences.

One theory states that it's only possible for a person to focus on one cognitive task at a time. DATS drivers must consider:

- the conditions of the road, sidewalk, stairs and ramps;
- the traffic;
- information on the computer and audio instructions from booking agents;
- time constraints, attempting to pick up every passenger within a half hour of their requested time;
- following DATS rules and regulations — contribution of a driver —; and
- meeting the needs of each client; such as: pushing a wheelchair, providing a step stool, making sure a service dog has sufficient space in the vehicle, and helping a person with arthritis unlock the lobby door of an apartment building.

COVID-19 greatly increases the challenges DATS drivers face. They must help clients get in and out of wheelchairs, hold others by the arm and lean across some to fasten seat belts. Hearing and being heard is often problematic when everyone wears a mask. At one point, drivers were required to wipe some parts of the vehicle down after each passenger leaves. For many weeks, only one client per vehicle was allowed. Cancellations are frequent. Many clients stayed at home from April to the end of June or July. Some days drivers who worked could not earn nearly enough to survive.

Physical fitness and flexibility benefit drivers. Walkers and wheelchairs are taken in and out of vehicles. Attaching the belts that keep wheelchairs in place requires much bending. During their shift, drivers help clients get from the building's inner door to and from the vehicle, walking in all kinds of weather conditions.

I experience drivers amazing in offering gifts such as: efficiency, effectiveness, outstanding driving skills, appreciation, fostering positive interaction among passengers, ability to teach clients ways of working with the driver as a team, patience, humour, spirituality, acceptance, philosophical insights, interesting life stories, musical talents, listening skills, understanding, caring, and empathy.

I think being a DATS driver is one of the most challenging occupations; for some, it is a vocation. As I reflect on this work, my appreciation grows. I wrote this letter so that other people can better understand the difficulties DATS drivers face and ways they may brighten a client's day, and to express my gratitude. Thank you.

I've also had great experiences with brief telephone interactions from DATS booking agents.

Thank you to the City of Edmonton's ETS DATS organization and the many people there who have enriched my life in various ways.

Wishing you all Wellness, Abundance and Joy,

Rosemarie Randall

## DATS News, Summer 2021

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Please direct comments/submissions to:  
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www.takeETS.com  
E-mail: [dats@edmonton.ca](mailto:dats@edmonton.ca)

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E-mail Newsletters  
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[dats@edmonton.ca](mailto:dats@edmonton.ca) - please put "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