



# Service Guidelines

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CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE



# YATS Paratransit Service Guidelines

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CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

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## 1 ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

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YATS is a component of Yellowknife Transit that provides accessible door-to-accessible door service for persons who are unable to board, ride or disembark the fixed route transit system with safety and dignity due to a temporary or permanent physical or functional disability. Age shall not be a factor in determining an applicant's eligibility.

Eligibility may be established on a seasonal basis, if the nature of the applicant's physical or functional disability is such that winter conditions create or worsen an applicant's inability to use fixed route transit.

Verification of a user's eligibility shall be done with sensitivity, confidentiality and in a manner that protects the dignity of the individual.

All users are required to pre-register by submitting an application form signed by a health care professional. The application form may change from time to time, but shall include identification of the user, type of mobility aid used, whether an attendant is required, and whether the disability is temporary or permanent.

All applicants will be required to reapply for YATS service every five (5) years. Seasonal or temporary applicants will be required to reapply at the end of their current approval period. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the information on file with YATS is current. In the event that YATS Staff notice changes in the applicant's abilities that void the information on their current application, the applicant will be asked to resubmit their application with up-to-date information.

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## **2 SERVICE GUIDELINES**

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### **2.1 YATS/City of Yellowknife Responsibilities**

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In the management and operation of YATS, the City of Yellowknife shall ensure that:

- all services are operated in accordance with the approved policies;
- all staff treat customers and passengers with courtesy and respect;
- vehicles are operated by trained, professional drivers; and
- vehicles are accessible, safe and clean.

The City of Yellowknife and YATS retain the right to apply the sanctions and suspensions noted in these guidelines for a passenger's failure to abide by the guidelines. In the interests of all eligible passengers, the City and YATS also retain the right to review passengers' registration information and medical certification to ensure its validity and conformance with guidelines.

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### **2.2 When and Where Does the Service Operate?**

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#### **2.2.1 Service Area and Hours**

Service will be provided within the same hours as the conventional transit service, subject to demonstrated demand.

The service area is generally defined as an 800-metre zone around the existing fixed-route transit routes.

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### **2.3 Planning A Trip**

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#### **2.3.1 Trip Reservation Period**

Trip reservations will be accepted from or on behalf of registered YATS users from 7 days prior to the travel date, up to 3:00 pm the day before the travel date.

All trip requests are subject to availability. At the time of the request, YATS reservation agents may offer alternative travel times to accommodate passenger travel.

### 2.3.2 Trip Reservation Types

YATS offers three types of trip reservations.

A **reserved trip** is one where travel arrangements are made in advance by calling the YATS scheduling line, within the prescribed booking period. Once made, this reservation is guaranteed, subject to normal service delivery guidelines (for example, suspension of service due to inclement weather).

A **subscription trip** is one that occurs on a regular basis (same days of the week and same time of day). Only one call is needed to create a subscription reservation that will continue until you request a change. You may make a change to this type of reservation once in a three-month period. If you need frequent changes, your needs will not be met by the subscription service.

A **demand trip** is one where the trip request is made on the day of travel by calling the YATS scheduling line. YATS has a limited capacity to accommodate these trips, usually governed by trip cancellations. Where possible, YATS will attempt to meet these requests.

### 2.3.3 Subscription Trip Availability

To ensure that all individuals have equal access to our service, YATS places a limit on the number of subscriptions available in the service. Once this limit has been reached, clients requesting a trip subscription will be placed on a first-come first-served waiting list. Upon the opening of a subscription slot, clients will be contacted, starting at the top of the list, until the slot has been filled.

### 2.3.4 Open Return

Open return trips (a return-ride reservation without a fixed time) will be accommodated when required for medical appointments and other exceptional circumstances. No specific commitments to wait time can be made for open returns.

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## 2.4 Getting Ready to Travel

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### 2.4.1 Attendants

(For definition of attendant see Definitions, Section 6)

One attendant may accompany a rider free of charge, when the rider's eligibility and registration requires an attendant. The attendant must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as the rider.

To be eligible for attended transportation, riders must include this information in the initial eligibility application, and inform the YATS staff at time of trip booking.

Attendants cannot be registered YATS users.

**If a rider's registration information indicates the requirement for an attendant, travel will not be permitted without an attendant.**

### 2.4.2 Guests

(For definition of guest see Definitions, Section 6)

Guests are limited to immediate family members or one other person. Guests pay the regular fare. Guests must be picked up and dropped off at the same location as the rider.

YATS staff must be informed of guests travelling at time of booking. Alternative travel times may be necessary to accommodate accompanied travel, depending on availability.

### 2.4.3 On-Time Performance

To maintain flexibility to accommodate as many passengers as possible, YATS vehicles may be scheduled to arrive a little before or after your designated pick-up time. The YATS vehicle may arrive 15 minutes before or up to 15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up time. Customers are requested to be ready 15 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time.

No vehicle will be authorized to leave the pick-up point before a minimum of 5 minutes after arrival.

- Example: Scheduled pick up time is 9:00 am. YATS vehicle arrives at 8:50 am and passenger is not ready. Driver will not be authorized to leave until at least 8:55 am.
- Example: Scheduled pick up time is 9:00 am. YATS vehicle arrives at 9:15 am and passenger is not ready. Driver will not be authorized to leave until 9:20 am, 5 minutes after arrival

#### **2.4.4 Accommodating Mobility Aids**

Wheelchairs should be in good working order with functional brakes. Lap belts are recommended for all wheelchair users.

If there is a question about whether a mobility device can be accommodated, passengers must call YATS prior to booking a ride.

Due to limitations on the capacity of lift devices, the combined weight of passenger and mobility aid cannot exceed 275 kilograms (600 pounds).

Canes, walkers and other portable mobility aids are always accepted.

#### **2.4.5 Service Animals**

Riders who require the use of a service animal must include this information in their initial or updated eligibility application. These riders may bring their animals on board any YATS vehicle free of charge.

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## **2.5 On-Board the Vehicle**

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### **2.5.1 One Drop-off per Ride Request**

YATS drivers cannot wait while an eligible rider conducts business at a drop-off place. A separate return trip is needed.

### **2.5.2 Securing Devices**

If a mobility device is equipped with a lap belt or other safety device, YATS encourages their use by passengers.

Wheelchairs and other mobility devices must be secured. YATS vehicles are equipped with appropriate securing devices and these must be used at all times.



### **2.5.3 Packages and Parcels**

Passengers may use YATS to pick up groceries and other parcels. However, drivers are not obligated to assist with carrying groceries or similar packages. Passengers must arrange for an attendant or guest to assist with packages if required. Parcels must be limited to a number and size that can be safely stowed and that do not restrict movement inside the vehicle.

### **2.5.4 Smoking**

No smoking in the vehicle is permitted by riders, drivers, attendants or guests.

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## **2.6 What If My Plans Change?**

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### **2.6.1 Cancellations, Late Cancellations and No-Shows**

(For definition of term see Definitions, Section 6)

Passengers are requested to cancel unwanted trips as far in advance as possible, to permit the schedule to be adjusted to give others a ride. Trips must be cancelled by 3:00 pm the day before a scheduled ride by calling the YATS scheduling line.

Trips cancelled after 3:00 pm the day before the scheduled trip will be classified a late cancellation. YATS may impose sanctions for consistent late cancellations.

Trips cancelled within two hours of the scheduled pick-up time, or cancelled at the door shall be classified a no-show. YATS may impose sanctions for consistent no-shows.

### **2.6.2 Trip Changes**

Drivers cannot make trip changes or other requests at the time of your trip. Changes must be made by calling the YATS scheduling line.

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## **3 PASSENGER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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Passengers have the right to:

- a safe, comfortable ride.
- be treated with courtesy and respect.
- be picked up on time, subject to the limits of safety and road conditions.

Passengers have the responsibility to:

- treat schedulers, drivers and other passengers courteously and respectfully.
- ensure that their mobility aid is in proper working order, capable of being transported safely.
- ensure that the combined weight of the mobility device and the passenger does not exceed the standard lift capacity of 275 kilograms (600 pounds).
- act in a way that does not jeopardize the safety or dignity of other passengers or YATS staff.
- pay the appropriate fare or present their transit punch pass when boarding the YATS vehicles. Riders may be denied service if they do not have their pass or appropriate fare.
- provide timely explanations of late cancellations and no-shows to YATS staff.
- plan and prepare for their travel so as not to inconvenience other riders, so that the number of trips provided by YATS can be maximized. This means:
  - having the addresses of their destinations, their appointment times and other necessary information available when making ride reservations.
  - providing reasonable access to the external accessible door of their locations. This includes arranging for such things as snow removal on steps, walks and such.
  - cancelling unwanted trips in accordance with the trip cancellation policy.
  - being prepared to leave 15 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time. If assistance is required to prepare for a trip, an individual other than the driver must provide assistance.
- refrain from smoking, eating, or drinking while on YATS vehicles.
- refrain from the use of radios, cassette or disc players, or any other electronic musical device played aloud when onboard YATS vehicles.
- secure any door or lock, as necessary, prior to departing on their trip. If a YATS employee is asked by the passenger to lock or unlock doors or entrances, the City of Yellowknife, Yellowknife Transit and Yellowknife city staff, contractors, or contractors' employees will not be held responsible for any consequences.

- supply a child's car seat, if required by a child accompanying the passenger. Passengers or their attendants are responsible for securing it in the vehicle and for its removal.
- not to transport hazardous materials (i.e.: corrosives, flammable liquids, explosives, etc.). Riders who must travel with a portable oxygen unit or service animal should inform the dispatcher at the time the reservation is made.

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## 4 DRIVER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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YATS Drivers have the right to:

- be treated by passengers and other staff with courtesy and respect.
- decline to assist a passenger by lifting the passenger, the mobility aid, or heavy parcels.
- park at a pick-up or drop-off point other than the designated location, if the driver feels that access to that point would be dangerous.
- deny service to any passenger who:
  - refuses to pay the appropriate fare or show a valid pass;
  - the driver feels may be a danger or unduly disruptive to passengers or the driver (see definitions in Section 6)

YATS Drivers have the responsibility to:

- provide a safe and comfortable ride.
- treat passengers and other staff courteously and respectfully.
- adhere to the established schedule, within the limits of safety and road conditions.
- wait at the designated stop until 5 minutes past the actual arrival time (see section 2.4.3 for examples).
- Keep control of their vehicle at all times. This means:
  - parking the vehicle in safe locations; and
  - keeping the vehicle in sight at all times.

For the safety of both passengers and drivers, the following are in place:

- Drivers are not obligated to go beyond the external accessible door and are prohibited from entering a customer's residence for any reason.
- Drivers are responsible for all passengers while boarding or leaving the vehicle. Only drivers may operate any of the vehicle equipment, including lifts, or wheelchair tie-downs.
- Drivers will, upon request, escort riders to and from the nearest visible accessible door (see definitions). Drivers must remain within sight of their vehicle at all times. If no accessible door is available, or its location requires the driver to lose sight of the vehicle, then the driver is not obligated to escort the rider to the door, and the rider must arrange for assistance, if required.

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## 5 WARNINGS, SUSPENSIONS AND APPEALS

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### 5.1 Warnings and Penalties

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A record will be kept of all incidents of no-shows and late cancellations, with a client's explanations. It will be reviewed on a regular basis by YATS staff to determine if any policies are being abused. **Yellowknife Transit recognizes that YATS passengers' schedules or ability to travel may change, beyond their control, with little or no notice. Incidents with valid explanations will not be considered violations of the policies.**

If passengers have unsatisfactory explanations for more than three (3) No-Show reports or more than six (6) Late Cancellation reports in one calendar month, a warning letter will be issued.

Letters shall inform the customer of the late cancellation and no-show policy, warn of possible suspension of service, and request the passenger to discuss their situation with YATS staff. The letter will also state an appeal period during which the customer may appeal the sanctions against them.

Any additional incident within a one-month period will result in a second warning.

A second letter within a six-month period will result in a two-day service suspension, and cancellation of subscription trip arrangements.

A third letter within a twelve-month period will result in a seven-day service suspension.

A fourth and each subsequent letter within twelve months will result in a suspension of service, and require the passenger to meet with YATS staff to discuss their situation prior to the resumption of service.

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## **5.2 Violent, Disruptive, Illegal Behaviour**

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(For definition of term see Definitions, Section 6)

Yellowknife Transit will not tolerate behavior that endangers the safety of the driver or other passengers, bystanders or pedestrians or results in damage to City or personal property. Any of these types of behavior will result in the issuance of a written warning stating the offense and potential for suspension of service, if repeated. In the case of a rider with a cognitive disability, YATS may require that an attendant accompany the rider on future trips.

If the offense is repeated the YATS' response will be:

- Second Incident: 30-day Suspension
- A third and each subsequent incident within twelve months will result in a suspension of service, and require the passenger to meet with YATS staff to discuss their situation prior to the resumption of service.

For serious offenses, YATS reserves the right to suspend service immediately and indefinitely until such time as the rider can prove he/she is not a danger to other passengers or the driver.

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## **5.3 Appeals**

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Appeals are available to people who want reconsideration of a decision with respect to service eligibility, or service suspensions or warnings. All Warning Letters will state the period available for appeals.

Appeals must provide new information, or be based on a claim of misinterpreted information. Appeals based simply on compassionate grounds should not be considered through this appeals process.

Prospective customers may appeal a decision where:

- eligibility for transportation is denied;
- no-show or late cancellations are assessed; or
- transportation service is suspended.

For eligibility decisions and service suspension or warnings, customers will be notified in writing, with a full description explaining the reason for the decisions. For no-show and late cancellations, customers will be informed that a no-show or late cancellation has been assessed at the time of their next booking, or by telephone in the case of a subscription trip.

For no-show and late cancellation assessments, customers may provide justification to YATS staff by phone or in person. Written support may be requested by YATS staff following the initial discussion.

For first and second warning letters, customers may provide justification to YATS staff by phone or in person. Written support may be requested by YATS staff following the initial discussion.

For third and subsequent letters and eligibility decisions, the customer must appeal in writing to the YATS Manager.

### **5.3.1 Appeals Panel**

In cases where a resolution of eligibility or service suspension cannot be achieved to the satisfactions of both parties, an appeal can be referred to an appeals panel consisting of City of Yellowknife representatives and a member of the YATS Appeals Committee. Appeals of no-show or late cancellation assessments, or warning letters without service suspensions will not be heard, but the customer's initial responses in these matters will be documented for future reference.

The panel will convene as required to resolve outstanding appeals. The appeal will consist of a meeting with the panel and the customer to discuss the situation and its resolution.

The customer's appeal documentation shall include the customer's name, address, telephone number, reason for the appeal, and a statement of the remedy sought.

From the time an appeal letter is received until the decision of the appeals panel is issued, the customer will not have access to the YATS service.

Appeals must provide new information, or be based on a claim of misinterpreted information. Appeals based simply on compassionate grounds should not be considered through this appeals process.

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## 6 DEFINITIONS

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### 6.1 General Definitions

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Accessible Door:	An accessible door is any building entrance designed or capable of accommodating persons with physical disabilities, and that provides access to the accessible features of the building. This includes any entrance with level or ramp access, or that the passenger feels they can negotiate with minimal assistance from the driver. Accessible doors must be within site of a safe, reasonable parking position for the YATS vehicle.
Subscription trip:	A subscription ride is one that occurs on a regular basis (same days of the week and same time of day). Only one call is needed to create a subscription reservation that will continue until you request a change. You may make a change to this type of reservation once in a three-month period. If you need frequent changes, your needs will not be met by the subscription service.
Demand Service Trip:	Trips that are requested for travel on the same day as the reservation. These trips are not guaranteed as YATS has a limited capacity to accommodate these trips.
Reserved Trip:	A ride that is arranged in advance by calling the YATS scheduling line within the prescribed booking period.
Open Return trip:	A return-ride reservation without a fixed time.
Attendant:	A person who helps an eligible rider meets his or her personal needs throughout the trip.

Guest:	A person, other than an Attendant, traveling with a registered customer and having the same origin (pick-up) and destination (drop-off) as the eligible individual. For example, someone to aid with carrying packages.
Cancellation:	A trip cancelled by the passenger within the cancellation period (before 3 pm on the day before travel).
Late Cancellation:	A trip cancelled by a passenger, <b>without a valid reason</b> , after the approved cancellation period.
No-Show:	Passenger's failure to be at the agreed pick up point, <b>without a valid reason</b> , within 15 minutes of the scheduled pick up time, or a trip cancelled by the passenger within two hours of the scheduled pick-up time.
Valid Reason	Sudden changes in a passenger's situation, beyond their control, that precludes the passenger from traveling. This can include, but is not limited to changes in weather, changes in health status, and verified cancellation of a medical appointment.

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## 6.2 Disruptive Behavior

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YATS service **may** be denied to customers who engage in violent, illegal or seriously disruptive behavior. Seriously disruptive behavior can include the following:

- Getting out of a seat while the YATS vehicle is in motion.
- Leaving the YATS vehicle while it is parked to pick-up or drop-off another passenger.
- Disturbing the YATS operator while the operator is driving.
- Disturbing other passengers.
- Refusing to exit a vehicle.
- Violent behavior.
- Physically or verbally threatening vehicle operator or other passengers.
- Engaging in conduct or activity that is a danger to him or her, other passengers, or the driver.



- Smoking while onboard a YATS vehicle.
- Damaging or destroying vehicle equipment.