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Reservations Made Faster, Easier

DART's New Automated Booking System Puts Paratransit Customers In The X-Press Lane

Dallas Area Rapid Transit's (DART) Paratransit Services has customers on the fast track on with the new X-Press-Booking (XPB), a totally automated telephone system that allows persons with disabilities to schedule trips.

With XPB, any of DART's 17,000 paratransit customers can create a personalized trip list with their 10 most frequent destinations, or choose to repeat previously scheduled trips. Once a personal trip list is registered, the customer can schedule trips up to three days in advance using a telephone to activate DART's Interactive Voice Response system (IVR) at any time, without having to speak to a scheduler.

"To my knowledge, the fully automated aspect of this process is a first for the transit industry," said Doug Douglas, DART vice president for paratransit. "I credit paratransit staff for their expertise in working with our software vendor, and developing marketing tools to make this a reality. It will really ease the stress of trip booking for our clients with disabilities."

To create a personalized trip list, customers simply return a completed postage paid registration form, providing the destination address, city, zip code, and telephone number of up to 10 of their most frequent trips. The customer then receives a confirmation letter telling them that their personal trip listing has been activated.

The customer can then call the DART Paratransit IVR number and select the automated booking option from the main menu. The customer's birthdate and paratransit identification number are required for security purposes to access XPB.

XPB then gives the customer their personal trip list, from which a destination may be selected. The final step is to indicate the day and time of the requested trip. All of this can be accomplished with no wait for a scheduler and at a fraction of the time previously required.

X-Press-Booking also offers callers the option to select destinations from previously scheduled trips taken within the past three days. XPB will list the trips booked in the past three days, and when the customer hears the trip he or she wants to repeat, that trip can be selected and a new date entered.

The system will search for availability to schedule the requested trip, and if it is available, the trip will be scheduled and confirmed. If the request is not available, the caller will be prompted to select another day and/or time for the trip.

The XPB system will have advantages other than speed and reduction of waiting time, according to paratransit specialist Minna Edwards, who has been working with the software vendor, Ontira Communications, on DART's behalf. "Our customers will be able to schedule trips 22 hours a day rather than only during business hours," she said. "Plus, this will allow schedulers more time to assist callers who are unable to use XPB."

[Click here to go to the online guide for Paratransit Services.](#)