



An Assessment of University Infrastructure Impact on the Safety of Individuals with Physical Disabilities at the University of Texas at Austin

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What is a Physical Disability?

A “physical impairment which **substantially limits** one or more **major life activit[ies]**”^[1]

- Either **permanent** or **temporary** (e.g. **broken bone**)
- 39.6 million, or **16.3%** of adults in the US have “physical functioning difficulty”^[2]

Objective: Assess the UT community’s **knowledge**, **perceptions**, **attitudes**, and **awareness** of select safety resources in the context of **accessibility**

Stakeholders:

- UT students, faculty, and administration (**decision makers**)
- Campus visitors; prospective students, alumni, donors,

Methodology:

- Development: Semi-structured **interviews**, literature review
- Validation: Underwent **content** and **internal** validation
- Deployment: Online, distributed to UT affiliated individuals

Interviews: “What does the university **do well** for physically-disabled people?”

Physically Disabled Students

- Documented personal experiences on campus
- Confirmed and added to list of suspected obstacles
- Asked for suggestions to improve UT accommodations
- Assessed University support for those with disabilities

Services for Students with Disabilities

- Discussed current academic accommodations available
- Processes required to receive accommodations
- Learned of greatest need and affects of budget restraints

Project Management and Construction Services

- Discussed projects involving areas of campus requiring accessibility updates

Survey Respondents:

- **1,002** Total Responses
- **39.7%** Students
- **53.9%** UT Employees
- **84%** Have access to a car
- **93.3%** Have (had) a permanent or temporary physical disability
- **69%** Female
- **9** Hours per day (avg.) spent on campus
- **2.5** Hours per day (avg.) spent on campus outside 8 AM – 5 PM

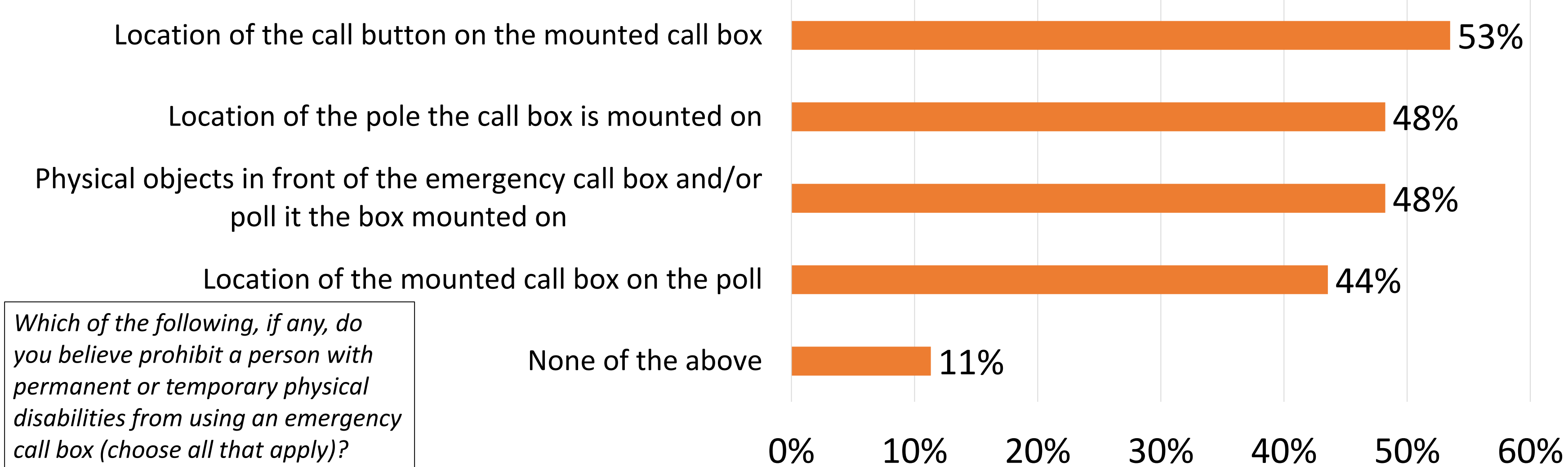
Sources:

[1] “ADA.Gov Homepage”. *Ada.Gov*, 2017, <https://www.ada.gov/>.
 [2] “Disability And Functioning (Noninstitutionalized Adults 18 Years And Over)”. *Cdc.Gov*, 2017, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/disability.htm>.
 [3] “Register With SSD”. *Diversity.Utexas.Edu*, 2017, <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/how-to-register-with-ssd/>.
 [4] About Texas Parents | Texas Parents | | The University Of Texas At Austin”. *Texasparents.Org*, 2017, <https://texasparents.org/about-texas-parents>.
 [5] “Building Information | Facilities Services”. *Facilitieservices.Utexas.Edu*, 2017, <https://facilitieservices.utexas.edu/buildings/UTM/0227>.

Survey Results: Resources

Emergency Call Boxes:

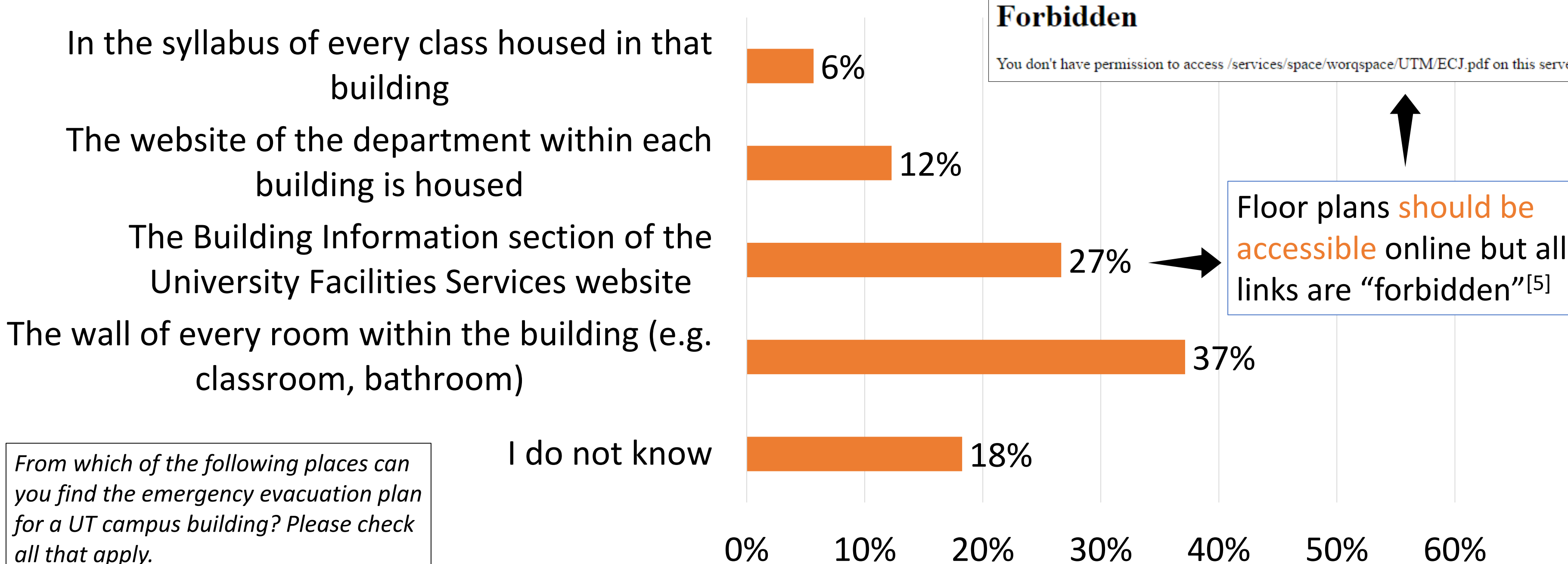
- **90%** underestimated # of call boxes
- **79%** underestimated use call boxes
- Perceived as an **important** safety resource



Which of the following, if any, do you believe prohibit a person with permanent or temporary physical disabilities from using an emergency call box (choose all that apply)?

Emergency Evacuation Plans:

- **69%** did not know if routes on plans are accessible to those with physical disabilities
- “[F]aculty members are responsible for pointing out their classrooms’ building emergency evacuation routes ... at the beginning of each semester.” and providing information about students with physical disabilities who would require assistance during emergency evacuation “to the Fire Prevention Services office **by fax**”
- **63%** have had **no** professors discuss evacuation plans

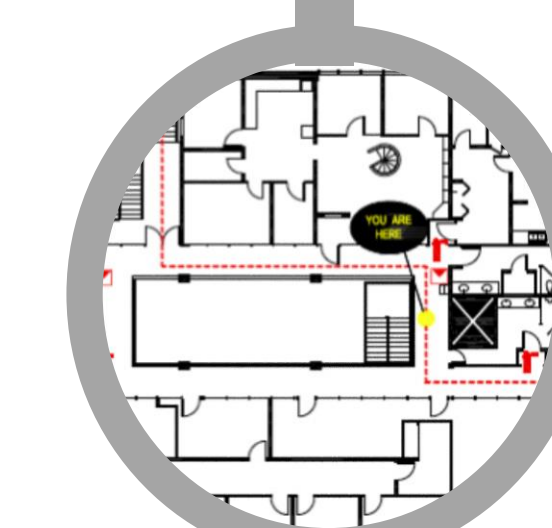


From which of the following places can you find the emergency evacuation plan for a UT campus building? Please check all that apply.

Construction Reroutes:

- Faculty/staff focused on construction **within their buildings**
- Students focused on getting **from building to building**
- Average thought **18%** of construction projects had signage indicating alternative accessible routes

Question	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. D.
On average, how many times per day do you have to walk through or near a construction project?	0	28	3.43	3.06
What percent of construction projects have caused you to find alternative routes to your destinations?	0%	100%	44.18%	31.14%
What percent of construction projects have signage indicating alternative routes accessible to those with permanent or temporary (e.g. broken bone, concussion) physical disabilities?	0%	100%	17.92%	25.95%



Survey Results: Respondent Input

Pre-Existing Knowledge:

- **43%** slightly to extremely familiar with Services for Students with Disabilities
- **79%** could not think of “**other issues or challenges**” faced by those with physical disabilities

What percentage of University of Texas students do you think have a permanent physical disability?

Min	1%
Max	80%
Mean	13.9%
Std. D	9.6%

Challenges:

Respondent-written challenges:

- *navigating lab space*
- *psychological health*
- *bathroom stall doors and sinks*
- *lack of knowledge among professors*
- *feel[ing] like the university at large doesn't really care about our needs*

Respondent-ranked challenges:

Which of the following is the **most prevalent obstacle** faced by students with physical disabilities? *

Challenge	User Choice (%)
Inaccessibility of safety resources	9.5
Lack of personal knowledge of University resources	19.9
Lack of public information regarding inaccessible areas of campus	13
Lack of public knowledge about Physical Disabilities	9
Limited housing options	12.4
Physically navigating campus infrastructure	12
Reliance on others for daily tasks	23.1