



# The Earthquake in Sexual Assault Response Implementing VAWA Forensic Compliance

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July 2017

## Course Description

The purpose of this module is to increase understanding of the forensic compliance provisions in the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). This module is primarily directed at criminal justice and allied professionals who address sexual assault within their community, region or state. This module will address the following questions:

- What is VAWA and why does it matter?
- What are the forensic compliance provisions of VAWA? What is the *letter of the law* vs. the *spirit of the law*?
- Who must adhere to the forensic compliance provisions?
- What was the intent of the forensic compliance provisions? How does this aid the criminal justice system? How does it benefit victims?
- What are the practical implications for:
  - Paying for the medical forensic exam
  - Coordinated collaborative response
  - Components of the exam
  - Evidence collection and storage, including photographs
  - Evidence analysis and the crime lab
  - Medical mandated reporting
  - Alternative reporting methods
  - Information for victims and follow-up contact
  - Case numbers and tracking systems
  - Evidence destruction and victim notification
  - Policy development
  - Data collection and evaluation
  - Public education
- Where do we go from here?

**Estimated time for completion:** 7 hours

## OVW Grant Funding

The OLTI was created and continues to be supported with funding from the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. However, the opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women

## Expert Contributions

OLTI training content is created and updated with input from professionals in a variety of disciplines, including law enforcement, prosecution, health care, victim advocacy, and related fields. Please see the acknowledgements page of each module, for a list of the individuals who served as contributing authors or expert reviewers.

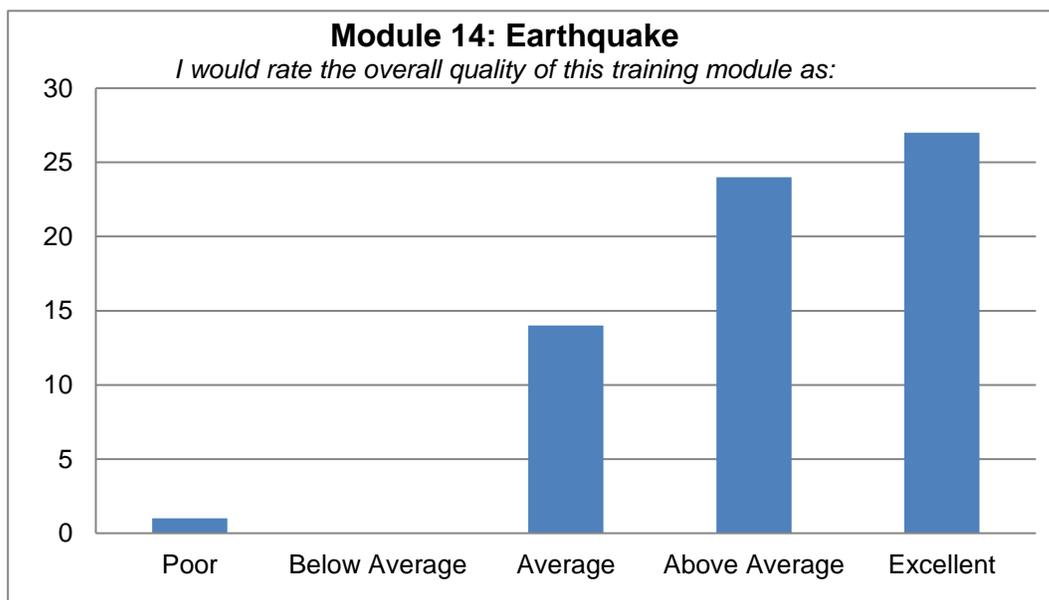
## Course Evaluations

At the end of each module participants are asked a number of questions, including the overall quality of the module, as well as its difficulty. They are also asked to indicate how likely they are to apply the information they learned on the job. Their responses are summarized in the following charts, and illustrated with the quotes.

### ***What did you find most helpful in this module?***

This training had very well organized sections. The examples given were very good.

I enjoyed how things are easy to follow and understand. Everything was broken down in a way that I can understand.

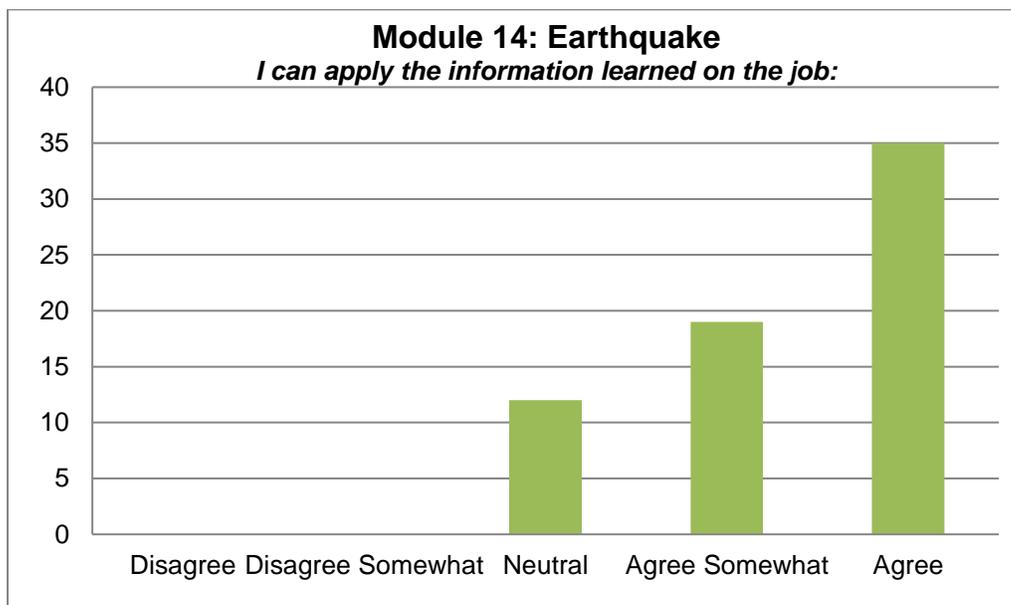
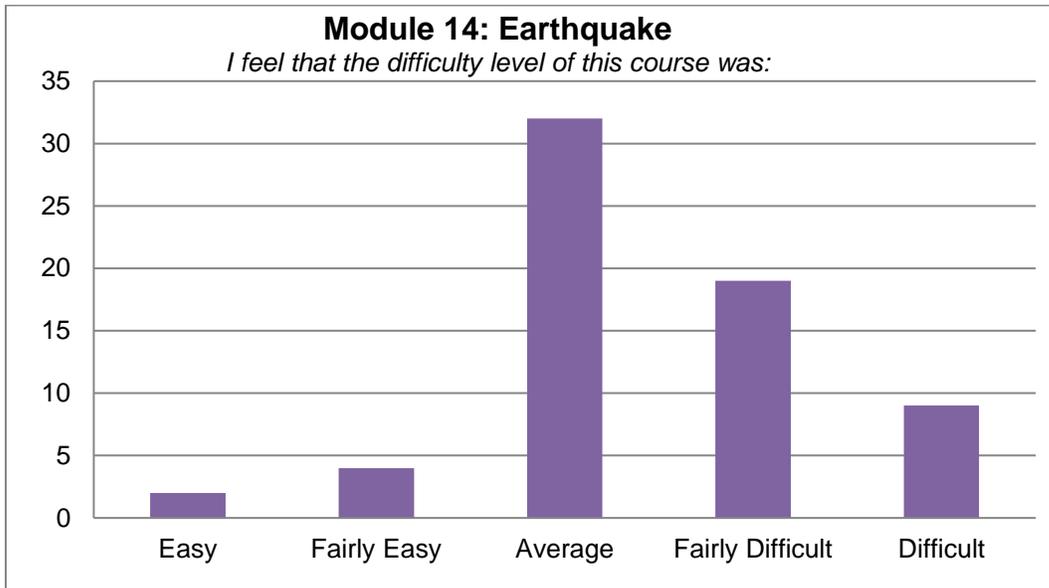


***77% rated the module “excellent” or “above average.”***

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**82% “agree” and “somewhat agree” that they can apply what they learned on the job.**

## Course Objectives

At the end of this training module, the learner will be able to:

1. Understand the forensic compliance provisions in the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).
2. Understand the intent of the forensic compliance provisions of VAWA.
3. Recognize the benefits of the forensic compliance provisions of VAWA.

## **Course Outline**

- I. Introduction
  - a. Letter of the law vs. the spirit of the law
  - b. Best practices and successful variation
  - c. Resources and examples
  - d. Involved professionals
- II. What is VAWA and why does it matter?
- III. What are the forensic compliance provisions?
- IV. Who must adhere to the forensic compliance provisions of VAWA?
- V. What was the intent of the forensic compliance provisions?
  - a. How does forensic compliance benefit victims?
    - i. Improve access to medical and social services
    - ii. Offer time to make an informed decision
    - iii. Help overcome barriers to reporting
    - iv. Encourage criminal justice participation
    - v. Improve criminal justice outcomes
    - vi. Eliminate financial barriers
  - b. How does forensic compliance benefit the criminal justice system?
    - i. Collect and document evidence
    - ii. Increase victim participation
    - iii. Enhance community safety
- VI. What are the practical implications of forensic compliance?
  - a. Paying for the medical forensic exam
    - i. Crime Victim Compensation
    - ii. Private insurance
    - iii. Law enforcement agencies
    - iv. Medical testing and treatment
    - v. Individual counties
  - b. Coordinated collaborative response
  - c. Initiating or authorizing the exam
  - d. What does a medical forensic exam include?
  - e. Evidence collection time frame
  - f. Evidence tracking and storage
  - g. Evidence storage duration
  - h. Photographic evidence
  - i. Evidence analysis – the crime lab
  - j. Medical mandated reporting
  - k. Alternative forms of reporting
  - l. Case conversion: reporting directly to law enforcement
  - m. Information for victims
  - n. Follow-up contact
  - o. Evidence destruction
  - p. Victim notification
  - q. Policy development
  - r. Need for evaluation: data collection

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VII. Conclusion: Leading the Way in Ashland, Oregon