FIRE TRAINING

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TRUCK COMPANY OPERATIONS

FORCIBLE ENTRY BASICS

Forcible entry, as with any fireground skill, is as difficult as you are competent. That's right, it's your ability to perform the right skill at the right time that really determines the difficulty of the entry situation. Let's face it, you could be the best irons guy around but if the situation calls for the rotary saw (and all you have is a set of Irons) then you're probably not going to get the job done.

Successful forcible entry on the fireground includes forcible entry size-up, the right tools, and solid forcible entry skills — along with an ability to use common sense!

Forcible Entry Size-Up

One of the most important skills involved in forcible entry is the ability to size-up the possible (and actual) entry challenges and arrive at the entry location with the appropriate tools for the job. Size-up for forcible entry, like overall fireground size-up, begins by knowing your response district and listening to the initial dispatch to determine where you're going. Knowing where you're headed (residential neighborhood, commercial complex) and the entry challenges that are likely to be faced is the first step in successful forcible entry. It's sets your mind in motion, confirming the tools you should be bringing and reviewing the basics of how to use the tools to get the job

done. You should also quickly review the potential problems that might come up while performing the type of forcible entry challenges at the target location. Let's face it, residential forcible entry is usually different than commercial building forcible entry, and each type requires different skill sets (and possibly tools) and presents different challenges.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FORCIBLE ENTRY BASICS...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It's too late to learn entry techniques once the alarm goes off, there's usually only enough time to determine which technique will be needed and to ensure the appropriate tools arrive at the entry location — it's the amount of training you do ahead of time that determines the difficulty of the actual skill performed on the fireground.

The Right Tools

Forcible entry doesn't take a lot of different tools but it does require having the right tools for the job at hand. While today's society is much more security conscious than earlier generations use to be it's still the same basic forcible entry tools that get the job done. Don't overcomplicate forcible entry! Remember the basic forcible entry tools and learn how to use them.

The Irons are still the number one choice on most inward swinging, and many outward-swinging, doors. Sure, some doors may be tougher to force and some may require additional tools but a set of Irons in the hands of a skilled forcible entry team will get you through most doors. Train for what you're likely to encounter, locked entry doors. That means, train so you are proficient at forcing both inward- and outward-swinging doors with a set of Irons. Once you're proficient, train some more. When you get to the door using the tools should simply be a matter of instinct.

Don't forget to learn how to use a hydraulic forcible entry tool (it's pretty simple) and more importantly WHEN to use it. You may be the greatest forcible entry team there is but when faced with 30 doors to force, in a smoke-filled hallway, you'll probably hit the wall. That's when knowing there's a better tool, for the number of doors you're faced with, determines success.

Through the lock techniques will require a K-tool (or similar). The tool is only as good as the knowledge you have when using it. So, learn how the K-tool works and when it's the right tool for the job. Where would you use a K-tool? Is there another tool that would work? When would you use the K-tool? Answer these questions before the response so during the response it's simply a matter of grabbing the tool and reviewing the basics before hitting the entryway.

What about rotary saws? Commercial garage doors, security gates, and window bars may all require the use of the rotary saw. You may not have security gates and you may not have window bars but just about every response district has commercial garage doors.

Let's not forget the most important forcible entry tool there is, YOU. Your ability to know which tools are required and HOW to use those tools in as many variations as possible will ultimately determine the difficulty involved in forcible entry.

Here's the real deal when it comes to forcible entry tools — don't over-engineer the forcible entry challenge! That's right, the basic forcible entry tools that exist will still get you through almost all of the forcible entry challenges you're faced with on the fireground.

Forcible Entry Skills

An article really isn't the place to develop forcible entry skills so here's a few things you can do to get you headed in the right direction.

Irons

Build, buy or acquire a forcible entry simulator that lets you learn and develop your skills using the Irons. There's only one way to become proficient forcing doors and

that's forcing doors! Training should allow you to hone your skills first and then allow you to practice using the Irons under increasingly realistic conditions. Start with just the axe and halligan and a door (or prop) and learn how to force the door in as many variations as possible. Once you've developed that skill set start to add restricted areas and smoke conditions. If you're able to add heat that will help as well. Don't forget to perform these skills with all of your gear on, including breathing off of your SCBA. ***Training under real conditions produces real results.***

Through-the-Lock

Train the same way for through-the-lock techniques using the K-tool (and other variations that you may have). That means build, buy or acquire a prop to learn and practice using the tool. Once you've repeated it and become proficient, ramp up the training environment so it's as realistic as possible.

Rotary Saws

Nothing new here, use real doors (if possible) or props if necessary, and develop your skills using the rotary saw under realistic conditions. Practice cutting with the saw upright, horizontal, and at angles. Practice cutting with the saw supported on the object and cutting while you have to support the entire weight of the saw. Practice until you are proficient using the saw. Once you're comfortable add some smoke behind the cut. That's right, smoke coming through the cut will have an affect on your operation. It's better to figure out what kind of affect it will have during training!

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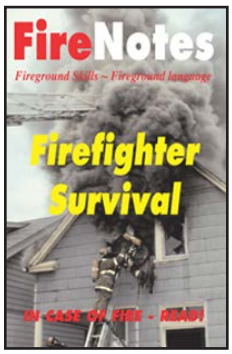

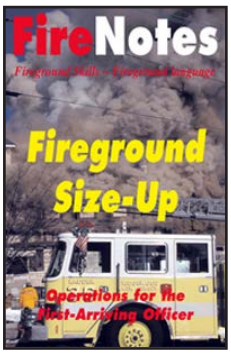

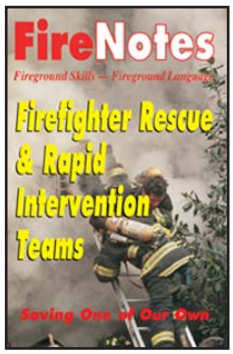

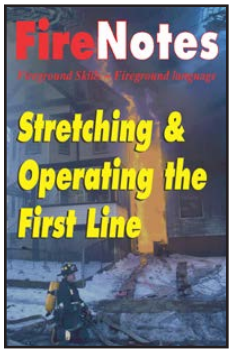

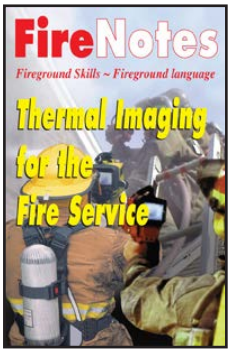

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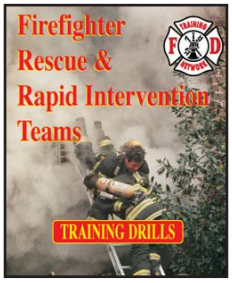

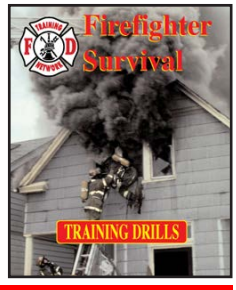

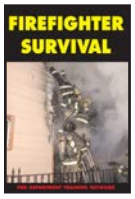

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