

# FIREHOUSE®

## Weekly Drill

### DRILL #66: FORCIBLE ENTRY PART II

#### Introduction

In Part I of this three-part series, we emphasized our training and keeping with the basics of size-up. In Part II, we are going to get into some of the different types of forcible entry that can be encountered on a fireground.

For many firefighters, when we think of forcible entry we think of the standard method of brute strength using a set of irons (flat head axe and a Halligan bar). One key element we try to keep in mind when using these tools is to let the tools do the work. What do I mean by this statement? I have seen firefighters struggle when using these tools to a point that they become more beat up than the object being forced.

Once the tool is set and secure, use it to your advantage. Leverage, that's right, leverage. Using the fulcrum point, along with the length of the handles on our tools, we will be able to apply the much needed pressure to move the object.

#### The Lock Side

On an inward swinging door, we will use the fork end of the Halligan bar to force entry. Keep in mind that this is a two-person job. We start by driving the fork between the door and the jamb, using the flat head axe. In general, we want to position the bar just above or below the lock. While one firefighter strikes the Halligan (and only on the order of the firefighter holding it), the other firefighter (holding the bar) should start to pull the bar away from the door. This allows the tool to move the door away from the jamb and the lock assembly to clear the keeper.

Once this is accomplished, one or two more strikes will position the Halligan just past the other side of the door. At this time we will begin to push back in the direction of the door using the inside jamb as our new fulcrum point. With any luck, the door will pop open. Keep in mind, however, that we need to have a way of controlling the door before we pop it all the way open.

There are a number of tricks firefighters use to control the door. Some use simple items such as a piece of rope or a hose strap, while others have small pieces of



chains welded to a pair of vice grips.

#### The Hinged Side

Sometimes, going at the door from the hinged side may work best. In this case we will place the claw next to the hinge at the top of the door first. We want to work from the top down, because once the door is popped, heat and smoke are going to vent out into the area we are working in. By taking the top hinge first it will allow us time to work on the bottom hinge without heat and smoke becoming a factor, (which would happen if we have taken the bottom hinge first). The objective here is to pull the screws out of the hinge or door.

As with anything we do in the fire service, training becomes a must. These procedure need to be practiced as often as possible. Being a two-person task requires a great deal of communications and a hot, dark smoke environment is not the time to practice. If you have any vacant structure in your districts that you are allowed to practice on, it makes the training that much more effective. Remember to practice both methods; the lock side of the door and the hinged side.

—Prepared by Russell Merrick