

# Tools News Techniques

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## Breakin' In

The Inforcer forcible entry training simulator provides cost-effective, repeatable training

By Homer Robertson

I've been teaching forcible entry for many years to both recruits and frontline firefighters. It's one of the hardest fire service skills to teach, especially to larger groups, because there never seem to be enough hands-on tools to aid in training. Sound forcible entry skills are learned and maintained by repetition; this requires that you train hard and/or go to fires on a regular basis.

There are a few good forcible-entry training products available, but most of us have had to rely on

homemade props or actual doors in acquired structures. If you're fortunate enough to find an acquired structure, there are normally only a few doors to work on. Although many of the homemade units are great, the problem with forcible entry training is that stuff gets broken in the process and can't be used again.

A couple of years ago, I met a group of Austin (Texas) firefighters promoting a product called the Inforcer—a forcible entry training simulator. The first two things you notice about this product are 1) how solid the unit is during demonstrations; and 2) the passion exhibited by the guys showing you how to use the product correctly.

When you first get a set of irons in your hand in front of the Inforcer, don't expect to just go through the motions of forcing a door. This prop requires you to use sound forcible entry techniques to force the inward and outward portions of the door. And what's great: It really gives you the feel of forcing a door at a fire.

In addition to forcing inward and outward doors, the Inforcer allows you to practice cutting padlocks, door hinges, deadbolts and the bolts used to secure drop bars. Each of the simulations has been well thought out, which is very easy to see in the design.

There are three rotary saw cutting operations, including one that incorporates a standard metal door hinge that can be purchased at any local hardware store. Each hinge offers two opportunities to cut before resetting the prop.

The drop bar station lets the instructor point out how to recognize when drop bars are present on doors and how to defeat them by cutting off the bolt heads, allowing the drop bar system to be forced off the back of the door. This station is very inexpensive to use; it costs about 25 cents per bolt at most hardware stores.

I also like the padlock station where you

### The Inforcer Pros

- + Feels like forcing a real door;
- + Resets quickly for next person;
- + Inexpensive cost per student;
- + Very durable; and
- + Consumable parts easily reproduced.

### Cons

- Can't use hydraulic-style entry tools like Rabbit tool or Hydrant.

### The Inforcer

Tel: 512/964-5400;  
888-49FORCE  
E-mail: info@  
theinforcer.com  
Web: www.the  
inforcer.com



The Inforcer's drop bar station helps you recognize and defeat drop bars on commercial building doors.

PHOTOS: GLEN ELLMAN

# The Future of Fire

Symposium offers look at upcoming challenges for fire safety

By Jane Jerrard

Leaders from the research, engineering, fire service, facility fire protection and manufacturing fields gathered Nov. 17 and 18 in Washington, D.C., for the Fire Protection Research Foundation Symposium. The event offered a unique glimpse into the future of fire safety in the United States—specifically, what challenges the fire service will face.

“This was their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary; in some ways, the symposium was a celebration,” says Phoenix Fire Department Chief Bob Khan. “The bonus was that we were able to see where we’re heading. For instance, we looked at things that the armed services are doing to see what we can apply.”

## STELLAR SPEAKERS

James Shannon, president of the National Fire Protection Association, began the symposium with a look at past accomplishments of the Foundation. A series of keynote speakers from outside the fire protection community then set the stage by discussing major changes anticipated in the societal, technological and environmental contexts, followed by panels of industry leaders who presented their views on the impact of these changes on fire safety. Broad topics included sustainability challenges and materials/technology within a social and demographic context of fire protection for the next 25 years.

“Hands-down, it was an impressive group of individuals in the fire behavior arena,” says Chief Khan, who participated in a panel. “There were experts who looked at the future, present, firefighter safety, line-of-duty deaths. It was an all-star team.”

Azarang “Ozzie” Mirkhah, fire protection engineer for the Las Vegas Fire & Rescue Department, agrees, saying, “The board of directors of the Foundation was there, and that board is very balanced; they’re from every field. The caliber of presenters was very high. It was a good mix of industry and fire service.”

## THE VIEW FROM 10,000 FEET

The speakers covered high-level topics, Chief Khan says. “I’d say the symposium was at 10,000 feet. You could take any piece of what any speaker said and take it back to your fire department and create a beachhead for doing things differently. For example, I’d take back ideas to my executive team here and talk about work that’s going on in fire prevention and in fire emergency response.”

He was particularly impressed with discussion of

can teach forcing or cutting padlocks—one of the lock types most commonly encountered by firefighters attempting to gain entry into doors or gates. There are lots of old padlocks around without matching keys; these are great locks to use with either a rotary saw or the irons set. This station also reinforces the use of tools, like the duck-billed lock breaker or the Halligan bar, to bust the padlocks.

The Inforcer’s design allows firefighters to observe these operations as well as get great hands-on experience. And it can be reset quickly so large groups of firefighters can use it with little delay.

The pieces of metal and pins that are bent during use of the Inforcer are provided in the initial purchase.



Above: The Inforcer lets you practice sound forcible entry techniques before you need to use them on an inward-swinging door on the fireground.

Left: Having to actually bend metal to force the door is what gives the Inforcer its real-life feel. Replacement inserts can be purchased from the manufacturer or made locally.

When you need more, they can be purchased from the Inforcer group, bought at a local hardware store or made locally.

Each Inforcer unit comes with a training session, geared to your department’s needs, either in a group or a train-the-trainer setting. Also included is a PowerPoint presentation to view before the hands-on sessions.

*The bottom line:* The Inforcer forcible entry simulator is a great product that allows your firefighters to practice six different techniques on one simulator. County associations and fire training academies would also find the Inforcer a good investment, as the cost to run a student through all of the stations with several turns at the inward and outward doors is less than \$10 per student.

Captain Homer Robertson has been involved in the fire service since 1978, starting as a volunteer with the Granbury (Texas) Fire Department, of which he is a life member. He has served the Fort Worth Fire Department since 1985 and is currently in charge of the fire equipment division, which includes the apparatus fleet.