

BY RICHARD A. FRITZ

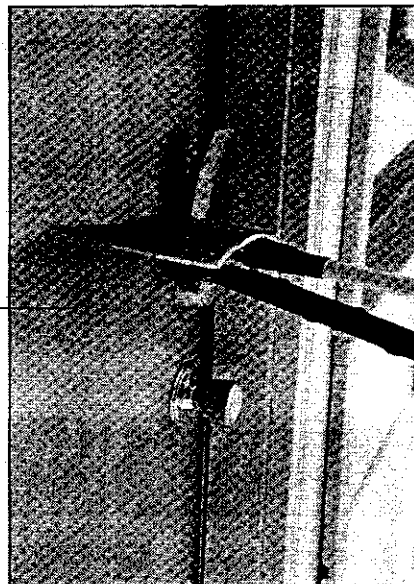
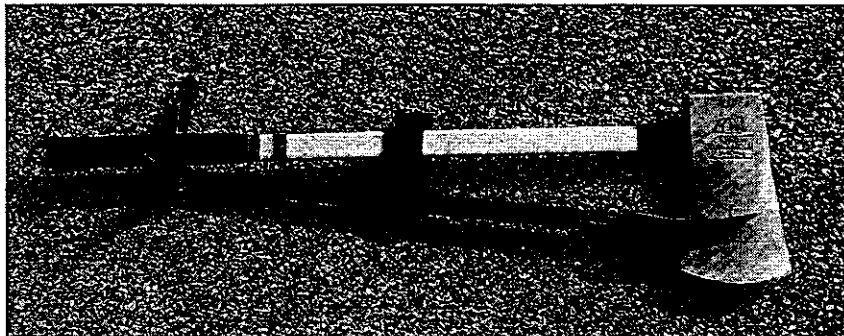
Let's try an experiment. Put a firefighter in a round room that has no doors or windows. He can't reach the ceiling, and the floor is rock solid. The task for the firefighter is to escape from the room.

If we were to come back in about three hours, we would find the firefighter still in the room. But, give the firefighter a set of irons and in no time he would have the place dismantled and probably would be halfway through building a barbecue with the rubble.

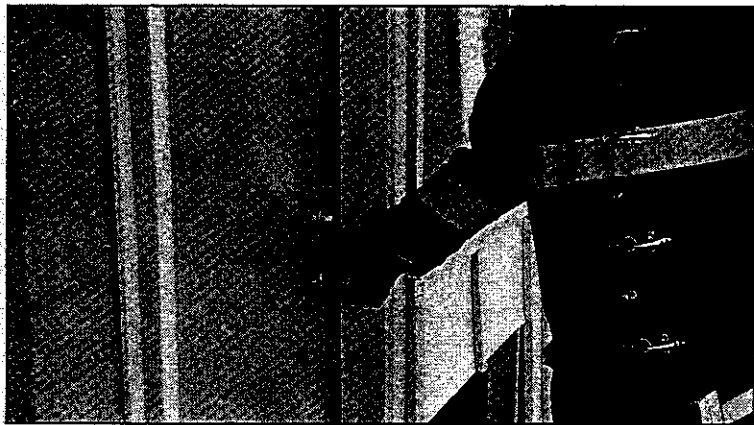
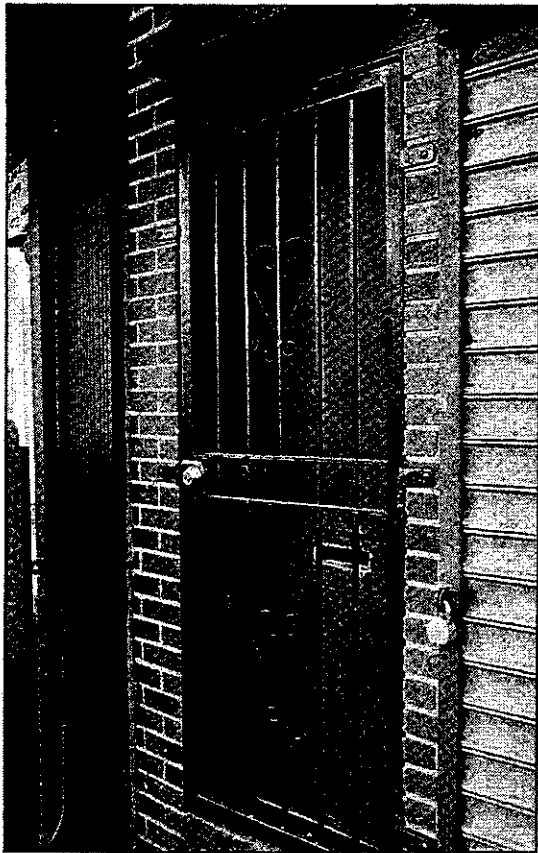
The point is that a well-trained firefighter armed with a complementary set of tools, such as irons, would be unstoppable at almost any task given him.

Firefighters must rely on two things: training and tools. To be effective, we need to train with and learn all the possible applications of the tools we carry on the apparatus. Having a set or, better yet, several sets of irons on the apparatus gives us a combination set of tools

■ **RICHARD A. FRITZ** is a full-time staff member with the Illinois Fire Service Institute. A retired career firefighter, he has served with the Muscatine and Davenport (IA) fire departments. He is the author of *Tools of the Trade: Firefighting Hand Tools and Their Use* (Fire Engineering, 1997).



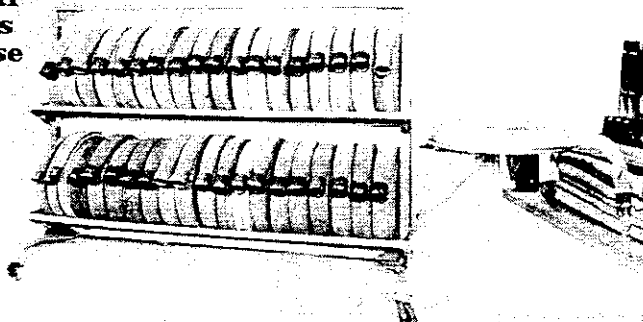
(Left) When used properly, the irons, a married and carried set of tools, can be used for 90 percent of the work needed on the fireground. (Photos by author.) (Right) Force and leverage are the key elements when using the irons.



PORTO-RAK mobile hose storage unit, the ultimate in convenience by Circul-Air

Porto-Rak effectively eliminates the need to carry heavy firehose

The universal appeal of this multi-purpose hose carrier lies in its compactness, flexibility, capacity, and great eye appeal.



Roll it where needed – store it where convenient

1-800-795-1150
1-847-480-9900 FAX

CIRCUL-AIR CORP.

350 Phingsten Rd.
Suite 105
Northbrook, IL. 60062

**CALL FOR A DEALER NEAR YOU.*

For More Facts Circle 158 on Reply Card

(Left) A set of irons is especially suited to meeting forcible entry needs, which have become the rule instead of the exception today. (Top right) Always try the lock first. Note that the firefighter is carrying the set of irons. (Bottom right) A two-person team of a "hammer man" and an "irons man" will make short work of most forcible entry situations.

that can perform almost 90 percent of the tasks we need to accomplish on the fire-ground at any one time.

SET OF IRONS

A set of irons consists of a striking tool and a prying tool, married and carried together. The most common set of irons is an eight-pound flathead ax with a 30-inch halligan-type bar. The bar can include the halligan or a halligan-type bar, the San Francisco bar, and the Chicago Patrol bar. If your department doesn't have the tools listed above, any good striking tool, such as a sledgehammer, and a prying tool, such as a claw tool or pinch bar, can be put together to form a set of irons.

The most important factors to keep in mind when putting the set together are force and leverage.

- *Force.* The irons allow a firefighter to deliver striking force with the ax or sledgehammer. The force capabilities of the eight-pound ax are far superior to those of the six-

pound ax. This force may be used to breach walls, knock open doors, break windows, or deliver force to the bar to position it for maximum leverage.

• *Leverage.* Leverage allows the firefighter to pry. Prying can open locked doors, cause windows to slide open without removing glass, or move a heavy object out of the way.

When these two powers are combined into a set of tools that can easily be carried and used by one or two firefighters, the possibilities for success in any given operation increase greatly. If the firefighter using the tools is well trained, the chance of success rises dramatically. A well-trained firefighter with an imagination and such a set of tools is an unstoppable force on the fireground.

The irons tool set should be available to a pair of firefighters required to perform forcible entry. Taking the set apart, the team will become "the hammer



The irons also have special uses such as for roof work.

man" and the "irons man." This team will be able to force most of the common locking devices found in residential or commercial occupancies.

SCENARIO

Firefighters arrive at a residential fire around midmorning. Sizing up the situation, they determine that no one is home and smoke is showing. Taking a set of irons, the forcible entry team approaches the front door. It is locked. The team splits the tools: One firefighter takes the ax; the other the halligan bar. The irons man (the guy holding the bar) places the fork of the halligan about six inches above or below the lock. The bevel side of the fork should be against the door. The irons man slightly angles the bar downward or upward, whichever would be easiest for the hammer man to strike.

The second firefighter, swinging the ax from the hip,

TANK'S THE REPLACEMENT TANK SPECIALISTS!

Our custom fabricated
polypropylene tanks are built
to your exacting needs.

Full Lifetime Warranty

Contact us at (352) 368-3933
for information.

We have over
400 satisfied customers!

For More Facts Circle 159 on Reply Card

QUALITY KONNECTIONS

HIGH PERFORMANCE, FULL-TIME,
BUILT-IN SWIVEL STORZ HEADS...
...LOOK AT THE DIFFERENCE.

KOCHEK



BRAND-X



- Remove twist from LDH without aid of a fire fighter
- Will not extend out over running board
- Ultimate in safety...Prevents Storz head from twisting (even if lock is not engaged)
- Prevents road appliances from flipping, deletes all built-up energy at Storz head
- Custom threads and elbows at your request
- Color coded at your request

Call Kochek today...



KOCHEK CO. INC.

SPECIALTY FIRE EQUIPMENT

271 Old Colony Road, Box 369 ■ Eastford, CT 06242

Tel 1.800.420.4673 ■ FAX 1.800.772.0255

www.kochek.com/ ■ e-mail: info@kochek.com

For More Facts Circle 160 on Reply Card