



**From the Fireground**  
by Jason Hoevelmann

## **Techniques for Vent-Enter-Search**

### **Understand that everyone has their own opinions and you need to operate within the scope of your training and departmental guidelines**

By Jason Hoevelmann

Like most activities we engage in, two people are ideal when it comes to Vent-Enter-Search. Both don't need to enter the room but there is an increase in safety with two firefighters. In addition to the safety factor it makes deploying the ladder faster and removing a victim can be done with one firefighter inside and one outside.

For highly trained firefighters who practice this method frequently, one firefighter can perform this task. Unfortunately, with recent cuts in our fire service, this may become the norm for us. Just remember that we must use our experience, information from the interior teams and training to do this.

This is not a task that you can just say you're going to do because you have read about it; you have to get out and train on this.

We've realized conditions are right for VES and now we have to perform. We find the room that has been identified as an area that has a victim and the interior teams can't make the hallway. The window isn't very high, so we won't need a ladder.

The first thing we do is let the interior team know we are going to VES that room and that we are going to take the window. This can prepare the interior team for any change in interior conditions from our vented window.

We clear the entire window, set our halligan on the ground and use it as step. We have girth-hitched the tool with our webbing so that we can pull it up to us. If we are operating in pairs, the second firefighter can hand the tool to the interior firefighter.

We want to straddle the sill and go on air prior to climbing onto the window. Use your hook to sweep the floor below the window for victims, then sound it.

The floor is solid and we radio to command that one firefighter is entering the room for VES. As you enter, pull the hook in with you and rest one end on the sill and the handle inside the room for a reference point.

Enter the room and get your head at floor level and start casing out the room immediately, looking for the door. Go straight for the door, check the hall for any victims and close it. This protects you and any victims, and will allow for ventilation of the room from the open window.

Now it is go time. Start searching that room. Be careful to not get too crazy. Feel for bodies; don't just sweep beds, you might just sweep an infant off of a bed and not even know it. Really feel for victims. Cover the entire room for as long as conditions allow.

If you find a victim, get them to the window and radio that you have a victim. The outside firefighter can come in and assist if needed or meet you at the window to assist that way. It is really important to keep communicating with command what you're doing and what you've found.

If you don't find a victim or conditions worsen to the point that you need to get out, get out. Don't waste time -- just get out. Some will teach you to go back and open the door if your exit is not an emergent one to allow the attack crew to use it to vent. I normally suggest leaving it alone. There is no fire in that room and you have already searched it. But operate how you are trained.

As you exited safely, you need to again contact IC and let him know you are out of the building. Depending on conditions and the size of the building, this can be done more than once in multiple rooms. You have to communicate! It is paramount.

This is just a basic outline of how VES is performed. You need to participate in formal training before implementing this into your fireground operations. Understand that everyone has their own opinions and you need to operate within the scope of your training and departmental guidelines.

Thanks for reading and always train hard. I'll see you next month in "From the Fireground."