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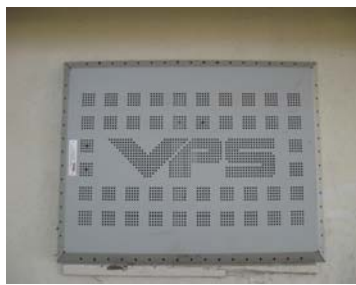
The Lost Art of The Fire Service



## INFORMATION SHEET

Prepared by: Marc Lucero, Richmond, CA

### TOPIC: VACANT PROPERTY SYSTEMS



**History:** Vacant Property Security is a company based out of Chicago, IL. The Company and the systems they use to secure vacant property are now currently being used in 14 states in the U.S. The VPS system consists of steel modular size perforated window screens and doors built of adjustable metal sheeting that are fitted externally over existing openings. The VPS has proven to be of a great concern to firefighters due to the inability to breach them quickly and they are extremely difficult to remove from the buildings and can trap firefighters on the inside of the structure during a fire. This is making it very important that we understand how they work.

**DOORS:** The hinges or locking mechanisms used in the keyless entry doors CANNOT be easily defeated due to the design of the doorframe. The door frame is designed to protect all parts of the locking mechanisms and hinge system by having an interlocking hinge and door. This means you can cut the hinge off but the bolts from each side of the hinge are raised and interlock into the door and frame, therefore preventing you from being able to slip it or pry it open after you cut it off. Its special design to protect against a simple hinge cut by firefighters is bad enough, but then they use up to five separate locking mechanisms on the keyless door and four on the keyed doors.

VPS only allows the company to install, maintain or remove the product. A special tool is required to install the system that only VPS makes. The Company is very tight with information about their products and would not let us in to see them. They did, however, hand deliver a training video from the company that is very marginal at best. The product is becoming more and more popular very quickly. So expect to see it more often.



The system has proven to be a formidable adversary during the firefighting operation limiting access and more importantly blocking the secondary means of egress and exiting for firefighters in emergency situations. Removing the VPS covers will be a **MUST** during a fire if we want to keep each other safe. Understanding how to defeat these systems is in the best interest of every firefighter on the fire ground.

### **Window Protection**

VPS modular window screens have a unique design that makes them one of the toughest systems ever designed. The basic screen is a strong but simple folded steel tray, with a perforated face for light transmission and ventilation or with a polycarbonate infill for weather protection. Dependent on the window opening and construction type to be protected, an assortment of attachment means is then used to secure the basic panel. A variation of attachments may be used on the same screen to ensure the best possible fit to the building. It is important to understand one window screen may use multiple methods to attach to one opening. We only need be concerned with the first layer the Spring Board Bar.



The components used on a single window are; the metal window screen, two springboard bars, two metal back bracket bars and four cable tensioning assemblies or hex bolts. The Screens are extremely heavy most being about 75lbs; some may be up to 200lbs. They are attached under tension with the cable system so it is important to be safe when removing them. The doors weigh 150 lbs and firefighters have been injured removing them.



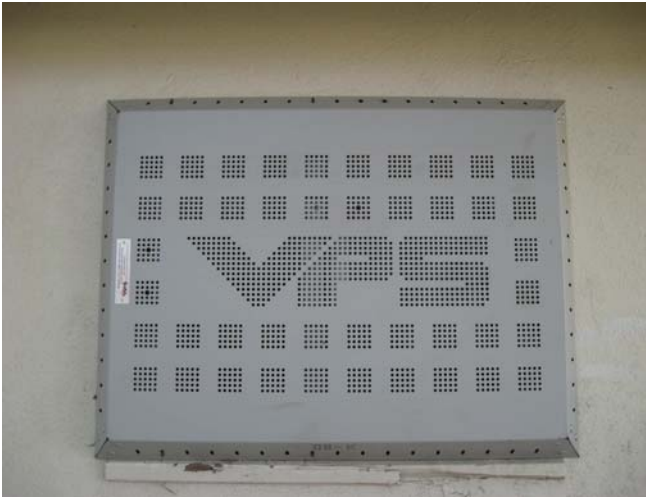
## **FORCIBLE ENTRY OPTIONS**

Finding and understanding the weak point is the most important first step in forcible entry. This allows the firefighter to choose the best option from what tools they have available to them on scene. Options will depend on tools available at the scene or called to the scene on special apparatus such as Rescues. The first tool choice should be the K-12 Cut-off Saw with a 14 inch blade. The 14 inch blade will be needed for the cutting depth. Second would be an Air Chisel. Chicago FD who has worked closely with the company has found these are really the only two ways to breach the VPS system quickly. The K-12 or air chisels are the first two choices, but a Hurst Tool or Air Arch Torch could be other options, if available. The bottom line is we will have to slow down because this will be a slow operation.

## **INSTALL and CONSTRUCTION FEATURES**

The following photos show a few of the attachment features used. It should help out in trying to understand the system and where its weak points may be.

**Window Screen**



**Keyed Door**



**Window Attachment from inside**



**Door Attachment from inside**



**Cable Adjustment Bracket**



**Connection point from Spring Bar**



**Spring Bar indication Pin (outside)**



**Spring Bar Indication Pin (inside)**

