



Case Study

Real-World Success Stories From Pest Control Professionals

M2 K9s & Aprehend Team Up at a Homeless Shelter

In collaboration with Mike Posey, **M2 Bed Bugs**, www.m2bedbugs.com

Background

Mike Posey from M2 Bed Bugs in Lancaster, OH first heard about Aprehend back in early 2018 during a presentation by Dr. Susan Jones from Ohio State University. At that time, he had 11 years experience in the industry and 5 years with his own business, and he was intrigued about a “greener” pesticide. Mike started to do some research in trade publications and on-line to learn more about Aprehend. Despite having a successful chemical protocol and some heat applications, Mike decided to use Aprehend exclusively for 6 months as a trial. The first thing he noticed is that customers were NOT calling back for re-treatments. He had to call them back and make sure things were ok, and he thought “wow, this is so impressive.” It allowed him to gain business in places where the customers “don’t like chemicals.” Since then, he has adopted Aprehend exclusively for use with his K9 teams and 95% of his work comes from bed bug treatments. Mike’s most notable illustration of Aprehend’s power is with a long-term active infestation at a homeless shelter.



Local Homeless Shelter needs

help

A local homeless shelter called Mike in 2021 after not getting results with ongoing bed bug infestations from a prior vendor. Active infestations were frequent and ongoing in many tenant apartments, and bed bugs were sighted daily in the office areas. The shelter wanted a provider that offered K9 inspections. Mike and Rosie the blue tick beagle found eggs and live bed bugs in

Figure 1 Scamp inspecting the office areas.



a room that had been inspected and cleared by human eyes the day prior. Rosie found bed bugs in a closet door frame. 50% of the rooms had active infestations. Scamp found bugs in the office area (Figure 1). The initial inspection with K9s took about an hour.

Mike felt that Aprehend would be an attractive solution for treatment and long-term on-going protection when applied quarterly. The shelter is a 35,000 sq.ft. combination of 20

tenant apartments, 2 common areas, laundry, and an administrative space with offices and cubicles.

Prep Strategy

The main prep strategy in tenant apartments was to remove anything under the bed & pick up clothes from the floor and put them in totes. This was done so that the technicians could access the area and vacuum. As Mike says, “I don’t need you to be spotless, I just need you to have things in order.” In general, the goal is to leave items where they are whenever possible, because the bugs will be comfortable there and you don’t want to just shift the harborages to another location. In the offices, the only prep required was to place any papers on the desk or floor into totes with NUVAN[®] PROSTRIPS[®].

M2 K9s & Aprehend



How do you train your dogs? M2 currently has 4 dogs on the team - Turbo, Sarge, Scamp, Jett. As far as training goes, to get them on bed bugs is quick. But to train them to actually work a house, it takes at least 3-4 months to feel confident that the dog will be hunting bed bugs and do what it’s trained to do. We are constantly training them. To insure that our dogs and handlers are at the top of their game, we have our dogs

and handlers tested regularly and accredited independently by the National Entomology Scent Detection Canine Association (NESDCA).

What makes a good bed bug dog? 1: *A love of food!* M2 dogs are trained using food. They are rewarded using food. When they find a bug, they get food. They do not have food bowls. If they are not working (Saturday and Sunday for example), we hide bed bugs in little tubes and they find the bugs. They are rewarded as if they are working for a customer. 2: *A great sense of smell.* If they can’t find the scent, they won’t be effective. 3: *Just the right size.* Beagles (and those around the same size) are the perfect size. Not too small, not too big. If a dog is too small or too hairy, you can’t always see what it is doing. If it is too big, it can’t get into smaller spaces and can damage customer property. 4: *Energy...with control.* A dog needs to last a few hours, but not burn himself out. Some dogs are too hyper and some are too sedate.

Does Aprehend impact their nose/smell? When starting out with Aprehend, we would spray a card, and then after drying it for a week, we’d place it in the training environment to see if the dog notices or alerts. He’s found that Aprehend does not impact their nose, unlike some other chemical treatments. “If there are fresh pesticides applied in a property, *continued on next page*”



M2 K9s & Aprehend, cont.



Turbo won't even go in the house; traditional chemical pesticides make him sneeze and his eyes water. In some cases if alcohol was sprayed on a bed, the dog will instantly alert. Because so many people have been

spraying alcohol on their beds for self-treatment, it's a false positive." M2 waits 30-45 days to take the dog back in, depending on the level of initial infestation.

Conclusion

After 9 years of running dogs, I still have the "wow" factor watching them work. You'd be surprised how good a dog can be, even if your human inspection is very good. The dog's nose can beat any human or team of humans, for example finding eggs on a cream-colored couch that you'd



never find. Dogs have incredible noses that can do amazing things like track other animals, track bad guys, find explosives, find drugs, find cadavers, and other things. M2 dogs go to school with police dogs, search and rescue dogs, cadaver dogs, and personal

protection dogs. Our handlers are also trained extensively. When we put them together, we have a great solution to bed bug problems.

There may be K9 skeptics, and not everyone has had a good experience training dogs or successfully implementing them into ongoing protocols. The dogs give me and my customers confidence. When I run the dogs after a treatment and the customer doesn't see any alerts, it gives peace of mind. The customers remember, "You're the guy that has that dog!" I have customers that don't know my name, but know my dog's name.

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Treatment Strategy

The initial treatment took 3 days to get through all the rooms and office space and adequately treat all surfaces.

Tenant apartments – Mattresses were encased, but no other products were used in conjunction with the Aprehend. Frames, boxsprings, and hotspots were treated with Aprehend. Monitors were placed in the apartments under bed frame legs.

Figure 2 Evidence of infestation during inspection in a tenant apartment.



Offices - Aprehend was applied around the baseboards, the sides of cabinets, under the chair seats, the underside of the desk perimeters, and pullout keyboard trays. Interestingly, the client made a switch to mesh chairs which provided less harborage sites compared to the upholstered fabric chairs that they had been using.

Check-In Room - Prior to M2, the shelter performed tenant check-in in the office area. Bed bug sightings occurred daily. Together with the staff, they converted a large storage closet into

the check-in room. All preliminary paperwork and service set-up happens here. Belongings are placed in totes, not on the floor. Employees are extremely happy, because even if bed bugs come into the facility, they leave the check-in room infested with Aprehend. The sightings are next to nothing in the office, and the staff has peace of mind.

Results

After the initial treatment and establishing protocols, the numbers started to fall. A follow-up inspection with the dogs is done after 30 days, because due to the biology and behavior of bed bugs, after 2 weeks there still may be activity and it's not enough time for all the bugs to be active and move across an Aprehend barrier. If the dog alerts, then the area is marked and the tech comes back to re-treat if necessary.

After working with this property on preventative treatments, there has been a complete turnaround in infestations. Now M2 goes back every month for K9 inspections and spot treats if there's an alert in the room and/or hallway. There might be 1-2 apartments that have a bug or two, but that's usually due to new tenants. The offices no longer have trouble, so the staff is extremely happy. The rooms are re-treated quarterly to add a fresh Aprehend layer and provide on-going protection.

Conclusion

Success at the homeless shelter—with both eradication and ongoing prevention—showcases Aprehend's power and versatility, but the combination of K9 inspection and Aprehend is Mike's go-to for all bed bug work. It's efficient, profitable, and highly effective.

Mike says, "Many PMPs are still thinking old-school, using a 'one-size-fits-all' approach for bed bugs. Bagging clothes and spraying entire houses for 10 bugs on the couch—that's not necessary. With Aprehend, we approach with a targeted strategy focusing on where there are bugs and physical evidence of where to treat rather than mass spraying of every surface.

With inflation, Aprehend is very cost effective because call-backs are reduced and I'm not making as many trips out on jobs. When you become efficient with it, knowing where to spray or not, you don't have to spray as much, and with dogs there's no guessing where the bugs are."

If you'd like to cut prep and treatment time, increase margins, and reduce call backs, give us a call at 800-891-8610.