



Hi everyone, Welcome to Waste360's NothingWasted! Podcast. On every episode we invite the most interesting people in waste recycling and organics to sit down with us and chat candidly about their thoughts, their work, this unique industry and so much more so thanks for listening and enjoy this episode.

[INTRO MUSIC]

Liz: Hi everyone. This is Liz Bothwell from Waste360 with Wade Scheel, Director of Regulatory Affairs from Stericycle Environmental Solution. Welcome Wade and thank you for being on the show.

Wade: Thank you, it's good to be here and I'm looking forward to the conversation.

Liz: Great, so my am I. I know you have a few decades of experience in hazardous waste but could you share a bit about your background and how you got into this industry.

Wade: I sure can. And I like to think of it as my career has matured because I am approaching about 30 years in the industry. I started out of school studying environmental engineering and got a position actually as a solid and hazardous waste manager with a county government in southeastern Wisconsin. And from there I worked about eight years in that position and then transitioned into the private sector and went into a sales position in the hazardous waste vendor services company, I worked there for a while and then transitioned into another hazardous waste company more of a small local regional company that wound up getting acquired by a Stericycle back in 2000 and so I have been with Stericycle since then.

Liz: Oh well that's great. Thirty years very admirable.

Wade: Yeah. Well let's just call it admirable.

Liz: Sustained compliance is an enormous responsibility; how do you help employees and customers do that?

Wade: Well I am in a very exciting and unique position and that I'm with our environmental health and safety team within Stericycle but I'm actually a customer facing support position, as well as being part of our government and legislative affairs group. So that means two things:

One is I watch the regulations to see what's coming and what's being developed and what's being implemented and adopted as far as regulations go that affect their compliance. So, we watch those regulations and evaluate and analyze how they're going to affect our customer programs and our services and then we advise out to our customers on those regulations. And then I'm also in a customer facing support position which basically means I get to help them navigate through their compliance challenges. So, we help by providing guidance to them, we help navigate any inspection challenges from inspections or issues that have surfaced from regulatory inspections. We help them through developing their programs and making sure that all aspects of their waste management and handling programs internally are compliant with the regulations as well.

Liz: Oh okay. Oh, that's an interesting position to be able to do both. That's fantastic.

I've read about the EPA's new management standards for hazardous waste pharmaceuticals rule. Is this driving a lot of what you're focusing on these days?

Wade: It is. Yes, it's one of the new rules that has been finalized and it will become effective. You said the pharmaceutical rule correct.

Liz: Yes.

Wade: Yeah. So, there's two aspects to the pharmaceutical rule. There's a whole new sub part of the hazardous waste regulations that have carved out requirement management standards for pharmaceuticals. And then there's also an exemption that was put into place for nicotine-based smoking sensation products. And so those FDA regulated over-the-counter nicotine smoking sensation products are exempted now from being a hazardous waste. And so that primarily affects those retailers and health care industry representatives that create pharmaceutical waste and this new rule was adopted by EPA officially in February and becomes effective in a couple of states, Iowa, Alaska, and Puerto Rico in August and then states will have to adopt it into their regulations over the next couple of years. But that is very much what we're paying attention to because it's a game changer for how pharmaceuticals must be managed. And there's a lot. It's quite a complex rule. So that is definitely where our attention is focused on figuring out what that rule means handling and disposing of pharmaceuticals

Liz: I'm sure this is an ongoing thing do you expect more changes. Will this get updated regularly? I'm assuming that's part of what you're working on. Watching.

Wade: Yeah. What the rule entails is it sets standards that the EPA has adopted and then the states can actually go above and beyond if they want to to regulate, take those standards and add to them or revise them as they adopt them into their own state regulations so it won't necessarily change at the federal level, it is what it is. The rule was adopted and approved by EPA. And so those standards are set. But what can vary is as the states adopt those rules into their regulations. Those states can make their own tweaks and adjust and decide to adopt it as it's written at the EPA rule level or they can make changes when they adopted into their regulations. So that's what we watch very closely because we have customers in all of the states. And so, we need to be able to know what's different in each state and how our services would change to adjust that or how our customers programs would need to change to adjust to fit those.

Liz: Sure. And how are you responding to the opioid crisis? Are the drug take back programs helping?

Wade: Yeah actually Stericycle is a leader in the arena of offering options and alternatives and programs and services for those individuals that want to collect unwanted medications from the public. And that is a substantial mechanism for fighting

the opioid crisis of having those extra medications. Stericycle have led the way in. And we are excited about the opportunities that we offer. So, for example we have two primary offerings in that arena. We have an envelope seal and send envelopes as what they're branded as that are off up to pharmacies or others that are authorized by the DEA to collect unwanted medications and they can basically hand these envelopes out to the public. And then the public simply fills those envelopes with their medications and mails them back to one of our destruction facilities, which is an incinerator. And then there is also another mechanism where if pharmacies or hospitals or health care clinics that are DEA registrants, they have the opportunity of putting kiosks which are something similar to a mailbox, a post office mailbox, but they're designed to collect medications from the public. So, it's basically a dropbox, where in the pharmacy, oftentimes they're located in the pharmacy or in a hospital lobby of some kind. The public can bring in their medications and just drop them into these kiosks and then we collect the material from those kiosks and again send them through to disposal via incineration.

Liz: Oh great. OK. They do seem to be everywhere now which is great. It makes it convenient for consumers to take care of it and keep it out of the landfill.

Wade: Absolutely.

Liz: Sharps are always top of mind to when discussing hazardous waste. Are you seeing progress in dealing with those as well?

Wade: Yeah there's quite a few what we call extended producer responsibility or EPR legislations and regulations coming out and what those are designed to do is to have the collection mechanisms set up by those like retailers and health care providers to offer up a collection mechanism, but actually the extended producer responsibility part of that equation is that the producers and the manufacturers and the distributors of those either medications or sharps are tasked with or the funding mechanism is required to be paid for by the manufacturers about. So the concept is that a ordinance or a statewide program will be adopted that says the producers and the manufacturers of sharps have to set up a collection, set up and pay for a collection program on those sourcing a lot more of those being adopted for both a collection of medications and for sharps. So, for example we're seeing that the state of California right now is going

through a program, or a program development phase, where they the rule has been adopted extended producer responsibility rule has been adopted and they're working through developing the regulations and what that's going to look like, but it's going to require a stewardship program to be designed and implemented to collect both unwanted medications and sharps. So yeah, sharps is definitely starting to become more of a prevalent, I guess collection of unwanted charge from the public is becoming more popular.

Liz: Okay, makes sense. Is California more progressive?

Wade: In all aspects of environmental regulation, they seem to be progressive. They are one of the states that have gone above and beyond the federal regulations and added to and supplemented federal regulations with additional more stringent requirements. So absolutely. And as I described with this extended producer responsibility legislation they're ahead of the game. There's only a couple of states that have even considered or approached or gone to their point of adopting those. And California is definitely one of the leaders in that arena as well.

Liz: Oh wow. Okay. So how has technology played a role in how hazardous waste is being handled and then communicated whether it's with customers or consumers?

Wade: I think we're seeing the technology affect our business in a variety of ways. We're going through a process right now of adopting a single platform for running and managing our business. And that is in the works right now, it's being developed so that will carry us from the start of creating in order to setting up a customer record through to handling the material, tracking the material through to disposal, reporting back out to our customers all the way through to producing the paperwork and the invoicing for the services, so that whole concept of improving our technology and getting onto one platform is in the works right now. So that's definitely one of the aspects of technology that's helping us and that we're moving forward with. The other concept is just the awareness and the connection with customers and the public on via social media platforms these days the technology out there that allows us to communicate with customers and the public is so much more advanced and there's so many more opportunities to connect directly with the potential users of our programs and services. It's exciting and you know this is one.

This is one mechanism and one aspect of how word is spreading of proper waste handling is through podcasts and conversations just like this.

Liz: Sure. And I see you guys have a blog and consumer customer education seems to be at the forefront of what you're doing so it's great that you're using technology to get it out there.

Wade: Our marketing department has been very good about taking the regulatory information that we've captured and that we've identified and sharing that out to our customers and the public and that's a great platform as using the blogs for that.

Liz: Oh that's great. So, I read an article that you guest wrote, it was around body shops and hazardous waste and things get real awfully fast when you see that the EPA can sign up to \$72,000 per day per violation for open containers or any other violations especially for repeat offenders. How can our listeners stay updated on the latest regulations? Because I know seeing black or white numbers like that can really make you stop and think and want to make sure you're compliant.

Wade: Yeah absolutely. Well I think there's maybe three aspects or three different avenues that the generators or producers out there would be able to stay on top of regulations. One is connecting with a partner where we services partner likes Stericycle to be able to you know keep them updated provide that necessary information around their programs and services. That's one avenue for them to be connected with a valued partner in that arena. Second is many of the states have their own hazardous waste divisions and programs and they offer up the ability to sign up for compliance alerts in an in an email format or subscription format or lists serve formats, so I encourage anyone out there in the regulated community to stay in touch with their statewide regulations by signing up for those list serves and those be the opportunity to get the alerts and announcements directly from the state. And the EPA has the same thing you can sign up for Federal Register alerts that provide you all of the information on what regulations the EPA is proposing or has adopted. So those are those are two. And then the third is their subscription services out there right service Stericycle subscribers to a couple of different industry associations and the subscription services that track and watch and monitor regulations and provide regular feeds out to the regulated community

on what's happening. So, there is a variety of different mechanisms to stay really in touch with what regulations are out there that could affect you.

Liz: Well that's great. Thank you. That's helpful. What other new regulatory changes are on the horizon that we should all be aware of?

Wade: Well I think with hazardous waste specifically, there's a proposed rule that EPA has proposed last year for adding aerosols as a universal waste and that's expected to become final sometime later this fall in 2019. And that's a significant change because just about everybody produces waste aerosols as part of their waste stream. They're so prevalent these days and many of those are a hazardous waste because of the propellants or the contents of that aerosol can canisters. So once that rule becomes final it's going to shift the regulatory requirements for aerosols and put them in the arena of being regulated as a as a universal waste. And that's pretty exciting because there is very relaxed standards associated with universal Waste Regulation. So you would not have to count those aerosols toward your hazardous waste generators status any longer, which is always helpful because it can you know reduce that amount of hazardous waste that you're generating and therefore could keep you in a lower regulated status of being a very small quantity generator or a small quantity generator. So that's pretty exciting.

Liz: Oh that is exciting. And then can listeners make an impact on upcoming regulations at the state and federal level? Is there anything we can do?

Wade: Yeah absolutely I would say that if you take advantage of those services or methods that I mentioned previously about staying connected with what regulations are being developed and proposed, there is most of the time and opportunity for the public and the regulated community to comment on those regulations. **So I would very much encourage that when you're paying attention to what's being proposed is that you look at the opportunity to take that advantage and reviewing those proposed regulations figuring out how they're going to affect your program your waste handling program and then comment on those, give your feedback to the regulators that are developing those or the legislature that's developing that right.** Regulations to make sure that it doesn't complicate your world and it helps not hurts. So, I definitely encourage you to comment on any proposed regulation. It doesn't have

to be down in the weeds detailed on the comments that you produce; it can be high level and it can just indicate the positive or negative impacts to your program. Again, it doesn't have to be all you don't have to comment just on the negatives you, they also welcome the opportunity to know whether or not it's a good regulation for you or for the regulated community.

Liz: Oh great. OK. That's good to know. That our voices can be heard. So, retail seems to be an area of focus for you in Stericycle. Could you tell us a little bit about the retail environmental compliance committee?

Wade: Yeah absolutely. The retail sector as a hazardous waste producer has what I would say kind of flown under the radar since about 10 years ago. And these, you know, environmental hazardous waste regulations have been in place for well over 30 years now. So, you know recently retail has been scrutinized and inspected pretty heavily for their hazardous waste compliance. And as such there's a, you know, an organization that represents Retail Industry Leaders Association or RELA that has developed a Web site of resources for retailers in particular to be able to provide guidance and advice and an overview of state regulations as they affect retailers. So, it's been a very useful resource and it's where we direct many of our retail customers to for that advice and guidance to manage our programs.

Liz: Ok. OK. And then for household hazardous waste, what role do the municipalities play in the disposal? Are you seeing improvements here or is it more being done on the private side?

Wade: Yeah, household hazardous waste actually that's where I started my career is working for a county government. And that's one of the programs that we established is the collection of household hazardous waste from our communities. And the challenge with that is that they're expensive those programs are expensive. Their effectiveness is based upon convenience. And so, the concept of collecting as much household hazardous waste as you can really depends upon whether or not there's convenient options for your residents to be able to drop off their material or to bring that material in for collection. So, the combination of collection events and permanent collection sites or temporary collection sites is often necessary to spread that convenience factor across your population. I see household hazardous waste programs continuing to be very

popular. I see them continuing to be funded at the state and local level. And of course, the private sector is involved from either managing or staffing those collection events and sites or simply being the disposal outlet for the material that's collected. So, there's definitely the private public partnership required as part of that model of collecting the household hazardous waste. But I do see them still being very popular, I still do see them as what I would consider necessary and effective at reducing the potential of pollution, simply because you know I've worked with many of these household hazardous waste programs, as well as agricultural chemical collection programs and I've seen how much people just hold onto this material and when it's time for it to be thrown away. You know, these household hazardous waste courtroom programs are so much more effective at capturing the hazard from those materials as just simply putting them in the landfill. So I'm a big advocate and proponent of household hazardous waste programs.

Liz: Oh wow, excellent. I'm jumping back to medical waste now and this is a little while ago but I know it's always a big issue. What did the Ebola epidemic teach you?

Wade: Well it taught us a couple of things. It taught us that we need to do much more pre-prep work and setting up protocols and policies for handling those types of ways, setting up the transportation and disposal mechanisms and approvals, so that if there is the need to have that type of highly contagious waste, we have the systems and the protocols and the practices ready to go and the approvals ready to go to be able to manage it. So that was definitely a learning tool for when this situation presented itself previously. Second thing, is just that that concept of protecting everyone, our health and safety team had to jump in to develop the protocols that our own technicians and our own drivers would be needing to employ to ensure that they were thoroughly protected from any risk of exposure. So, that whole concept of helping our customers understand what was required, being able to offer a service was challenging and then, you know, protecting and ensuring that we were watching out for our own employees and drivers health and safety was also a big learning factor. I think that we're very much at an advanced in the preparation aspect of this because we know that there's other risks out there that that have presented themselves from, you know, the potential from coming into the States. But it was definitely a learning curve because even the agencies that regulate the, you know, the CDC is in and the state level infectious waste programs really didn't have in place the necessary protocols or requirements or they hadn't even

considered all of the challenges that that type of situation or type of waste would present. So, it was a learning curve for all of us.

Liz: Oh, it seemed that way. Oh good, but it sounds like you're ready for whatever is boxed which is great. And Stericycle has moved from what seemed to be primarily a health care of medical waste focus and now even shredding documents for safety of information. How is that transition going in terms of holistically looking after corporations in all areas of waste including information and safety on the confidentiality side?

Wade: Yeah absolutely, with Stericycle's acquisition of shredding, we are a leader in the cure document destruction business and it has really presented an opportunity for us to work with our customers on a holistic approach as you described it for managing various ways streams within that the setting. Primarily, we've, you know, we've looked at incorporating those services into those customers that we already service from our health care waste standpoint from the medical and infectious waste and sharps and hazardous waste and recycling. And now we have the opportunity of working with them on document destruction. So, it's definitely an opportunity and is definitely going well as far as that integration of being able to consolidate service offerings and across the board and to all customers. So now we have the opportunity of managing you know a variety of a mixture of waste across the healthcare setting. So, from our hospital system to a manufacturer to commercial business, we have the ability to manage confidential records, the hazardous waste to universal waste and so forth.

Liz: Well that's great. And Stericycle also seems to take corporate social responsibility pretty seriously. You seem to be doing good not just trying to look good. So what strides are you all making in that regard as well?

Wade: Yeah, we're excited too. We have now within the organization a senior vice president of Environmental Health and Safety that manages our environmental health and safety programs on a global basis. And we've just recently announced that we're going to be ramping up our sustainability focus. We already have had a strong sustainability approach to our business with the concept of recycling cardboard from all of the waste operations that we manage as well as reusable sharps containers that we've had implemented for years and so instead of single use disposable sharps containers we have a process and a system in place where we're reusing sharps

containers. And the recent activity is looking globally at producing a more systematic and functional approach to sustainability. So, we're reviewing all of our practices and internal operations to see where we can make improvements from a sustainability setting either energy improvements or minimization of waste. And that's you know exciting changes within the organization. So, there is a commitment to our focus on that in 2019 latter half of 2019 and 2020 and beyond. So, we're very much looking forward to within the environmental health and safety organization as well as the other aspects of our of our organization and the functions within the company as well.

Liz: Well that's great. So, what else should we be paying attention to around hazardous waste, medical waste and recycling overall?

Wade: Well I think that we need to communicate out to everyone listening is that hazardous waste regulations have been in place for a long time. There's still a lot of activity from our regulatory agencies at the state and the EPA level from inspections and violations and penalties and so this is a very serious arena from the standpoint that it can lead us to substantial penalties for noncompliance with regulations. And the concept of having a solid program in place and having a business buy in to making sure that that program is effective and implement that across your platform of business is very important. It can lead to like I said substantial penalties but then that also becomes a brand image aspect as well. I worked directly with many of our retail customers and as you can see in some of the public information releases and alerts retailers have been buying substantial penalties for noncompliance across all aspects of waste management but particularly hazardous waste management. So that's where my focus and arena is and is in the hazardous waste regulations and I would say that it's still out there and it's still very important for you to have a successful and effective program for managing hazardous waste in place.

Liz: And you bring up a good point about the perspective of your brand and how people view it. It goes beyond the fines that could actually affect your business for years to come even beyond that, So it's very important to make sure you are compliant.

Wade: It is and to go back to the social media aspect of our business and that can be a positive thing. But it certainly can be a negative aspect of the concept that there's a lot

of there's a lot of folks watching these days what companies do good and what companies do bad and they get their information from social media and social media tends to pick up on the negatives and broadcast and publish those pretty rapidly and pretty effectively. So, the concept of being penalized pretty substantially for environmental harm is a really quick black eye that can surface and be broadcast pretty quickly with social media these days. So, we definitely work with our customers and present that to our customers is another reason why it's important to have a program in place and it's important to spend that money to do things right for waste management and disposal.

Liz: Yeah definitely. Thank you. And then you've been fortunate enough to be in this industry like you said for three decades. So, you're in a prime position to give advice to young professionals entering this industry. What would you say to them about the industry and moving forward in it?

Wade: Well I would say that there is a lot of opportunity for innovation in our industry and the exciting encouraging things that I'm seeing from the younger generations than me is not looking at things the way that we have always look at them. You know, environmental regulations don't tend to be sexy and they don't tend to attract. The high-level focus or attention or interest as you know IT concepts and the Silicon Valley type ideas crowd funding and so forth. The whole concept of innovation and where we're right for that right now because the technologies that are used to destroy waste and to manage waste, I think there's a lot of opportunity there for us to look at innovative ways of handling, transporting, packaging materials that ultimately need to get disposed of. And so those traditional disposal mechanisms are methods of incineration or in recycling for you know pulping the paper and getting that back into the mix. All of those aspects that I just mentioned are ripe for innovation and that's where just in awe of refreshing different perspective from younger generations is the opportunity. That's where I really see the opportunity. And then incorporating like you said before new technology into how we do what we do. Huge opportunity there for us to use technology to our advantage.

Liz: Definitely and like you said it's an exciting time to get into the industry so you can have a career out of it, so it's fantastic. So, what keeps you busy outside of work?

Wade: Well I do enjoy the outdoors when I can. That's primarily in the summer so I like to go out and fish and do some boating. I try to be active when we can. So do a little bit of outdoor exercise and activity too but it's just a good place to be in the summer and then I try to migrate south and in the in the winter because it's a little bit cold up here and snowy.

Liz: Smart man. So how can listeners hear more from you and Stericycle?

Wade: I would encourage them to continue to stay connected to us via our websites their Stericycle.com where we have our blog information and a lot of information that's updated regularly on the approach of our company and activities and our organization and our company. I encourage everyone to follow us on Stericycle.com.

Liz: Well thank you so much. This has been so informative, Wade. We really appreciate your time, and this has been a great conversation. Our listeners are going to learn a ton. So, thank you.

Wade: Great. Thank you for having me. It's been enjoyable. I appreciate it.

Liz: OK. Have a great day Wade.

Wade: Thanks, you too.