

Marine Safety Flash

A15-27 (15th October)



H2S on Back Deck

Incident Overview

This incident happened on board a PSV's when inside the 500 meter zone of an oil rig. The crew onboard smelled rotten egg when entering the deck area and decided to use the portable gas detector to measure the content of gas.

Key Findings

Just after starting cargo operation early in the morning at 06:35 Local Time (LT) the crew working on deck detected the smell of rotten egg in the air and at the same time the crew also noticed a spray of spill water from the rig with an oily texture. It was decided to measure if there was any gas present in the air in the area where the deck crew was working. The portable gas detector used to measure gave a positive reading (about 10ppm) on H2S gas presence in the area. At this point the Master decided to stop the cargo operation and to pull out of the area and well out of the 500 meter zone.

At 09:55 LT it was decided to enter the 500 meter zone and restart cargo operation with the rig.

Cargo operation commenced at 10:15 LT. At about 11:00 LT the crew once again smelled H2S gas.

Once again the portable gas detector operated by the 3rd. Engineer measured about 50ppm. At 11:25LT, when receiving the new reading the Master once again decided to stop the cargo operation and to pull out from the rig. The operation at this specific rig was then cancelled and new sailing orders given.

Recommendations

1. A safety meeting with all on board personnel to be conducted on both swings. Review documentation regarding H2S. Withdraw from area if smell or H2S reading is detected and alert duty officer as soon as possible.
2. It is expected that crew engaged in measuring gas to use proper protection such as Breathing Apparatus (BA) when H2S gas is discovered either by odour or by gas detection system. Restrict the number of personnel at the vents and the area.
3. Contact Radio Medico or similar for medical advice, if crew experiences symptoms of H2S exposure. All air intakes/inlets to accommodation should be closed by personnel using BA in order to avoid H2S gas getting into the living quarters of the ship. The vessel should stop the operation and pull away from the rig/area as soon as gas is detected.
4. Crew exposed to H2S to attend GP on return to shore.