

# Marine Safety Flash

## A16-13(12<sup>th</sup> April 2016)



## H2S Detected in Bilge tank

### Incident Overview

The presence of H2S gas was detected by the Chief Engineer who noticed the distinct “rotten egg” smell during engine rounds. The heavy smell originated from the sounding pipe on bilge water holding tank. Measurement was performed with a result of 52 ppm concentration of H2S gas. The sounding pipe was immediately sealed off and area evacuated. The tank vent valve on deck was removed and a hose was connected to route vent away from accommodation entrance to ship side. After the vessel had completed the job, tank content was discharged ashore and tank cleaned.

### Key Findings

- Long storage of bilge water may lead to H2S development
- Different chemicals may be added to decrease H2S after detection
- PMS does not have a dedicated job to clean bilge tanks at regular intervals.
- Cap on sounding pipe was off, leading to H2S in the engine room area

### Recommendations

- There should be standing order between engine crew to discharge bilge through bilge water separator at opportunity. Avoid long storage of bilge water when possible
- Bridge and Engine personnel to familiarize with procedures for handling of H2S in internal tanks
- Tank cleaning job will be added to PMS, also bi-monthly H2S measurements
- Ensure that sounding pipe from bilge water tank is closed with cap on between soundings, prevent H2S to escape to surroundings