

# Safety Alert

**Number: 23-13**

**Published: 18/09/2023**

**Subject: Hazardous Substances – Water Bottles Used for Chemicals**

## What Happened / Narrative

On a member's vessel, during a recent inspection of the engine room and steering flat spaces, it was observed that unknown fluids were stored in unsuitable containers. On investigation to clarify the contents, it was reported as being coolant for steering motors.

## Why Did it Happen / Cause

Good intentions to manage manual handling aspects of larger containers.

- Chemicals are often ordered in bulk quantities and may arrive in containers that can be too cumbersome to use for certain applications and pose manual handling issues for a single person. Subsequently the chemicals may be transferred to smaller containers that are easier to manage.

## Corrective Actions Taken / Recommendations

The vessel owner cascaded the following actions to their fleet:

- Hazard Hunt to locate any chemicals not correctly identified and stored.
- Time out for safety to be held covering recent incidents and the importance of the control of hazardous substances.
- Review of Risk assessments associated with the use of COSHH.
- If it is necessary to decant chemicals from their original containers:
  - Always decant the chemicals in the chemical storage area.
  - Use a container in good condition, of type appropriate for the chemical.
  - Ensure that both containers are clearly labelled. The labels should be clean and legible and should include:
    - full product name
    - Manufacturer name
    - safety data sheet (SDS) reference
  - **Do not use bottles normally used for, or associated with, drinking water.**
  - Wear the correct personal protective equipment including gloves and protective eyewear.
  - Storage of chemicals should be in accordance with the SDS and in a designated and properly controlled storage location.

## Photographs / Supporting Information



### Further information at:

- Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers (CoSWP) – Ch21 “Hazardous Substances and Mixtures”
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations
- IMCA Safety Flashes:
  - [04/16](#)
  - [13/17](#)
  - [29/17](#)

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