



Application Note AN-PAN-1001

# Online analysis of hydrogen sulfide and ammonia in sour water stripper

Sour water refers to the wastewater stream generated at many locations within a refinery, but specifically from crude distillation (CDU), fluid catalytic cracking (FCC), catalytic reforming, coker, and acid gas removal units [1]. Thus, this stream contains contaminants such as hydrogen cyanide (HCN) and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), but most importantly hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>). These contaminants can be highly corrosive and detrimental to company assets; therefore, they need to be removed at a

sour water stripping plant (SWS) before the stripped sour water (SSW) of effluent can be reused in the refinery.

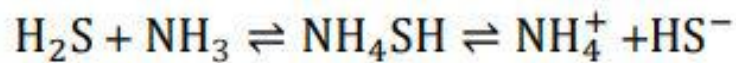
This Process Application Note details the simultaneous online analysis of H<sub>2</sub>S and NH<sub>3</sub> in sour water which was previously treated in the sour water stripper (SWS). The method includes automatic cleaning and calibration. Fast and accurate results are continuously supplied for process control.

## INTRODUCTION

«Sour water» is condensed wastewater produced during many downstream refining processes containing hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, and other contaminants. It is often acidic in nature and can cause corrosion problems within the refinery's pipework so must be treated before it can be reused or disposed to the waste treatment plant.

The sour water is treated in a sour water stripper

(SWS) that uses a steam stripping process to remove sulfides and ammonia as gases. The sour water is received directly from the refinery to the flash drum as part of the «degasification» step (Figure 1). In there, the remaining light hydrocarbons are removed or «flashed off» from the water. The sour water is then stabilized in a tank before it is heated and sent to the stripper column.

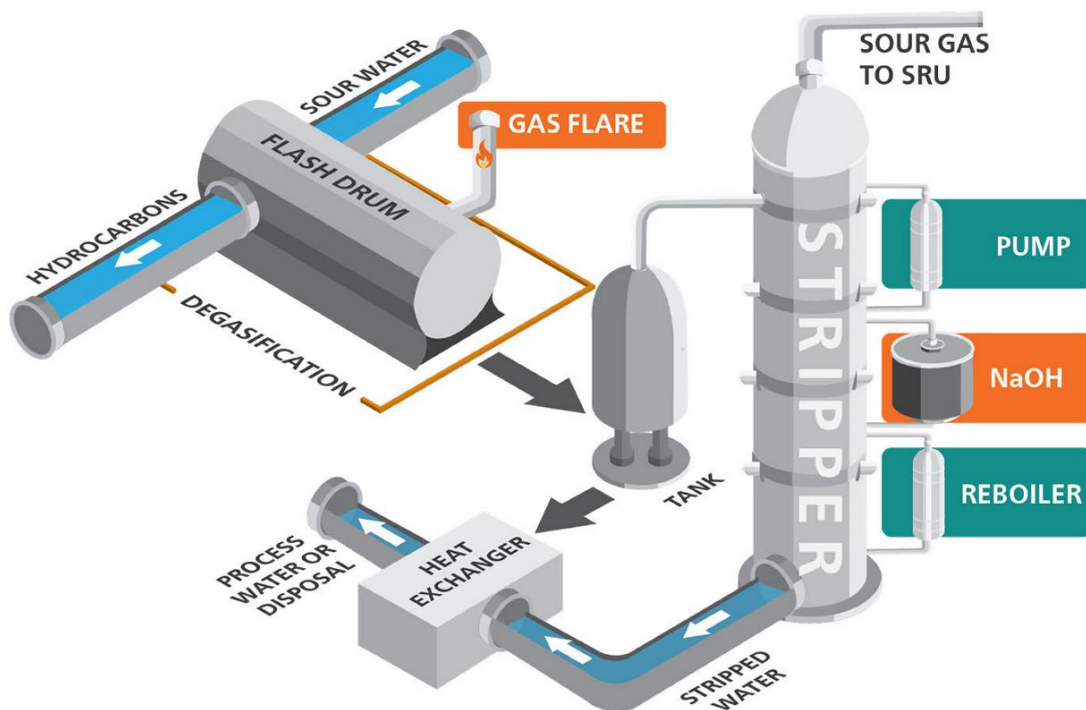


---

**Reaction 1.** Chemical decomposition reaction in a stripper column

At optimum pH, the sour water mixes with steam and the ammonia and hydrogen sulfide gases vent to the top of the stripper column to the Sulfur Recovery Unit (SRU). This separation happens due to the difference within the

components' boiling points. The stripped water is either used to produce steam in the reboiler or pumped within control limits to the wastewater treatment plant for further processing.



**Figure 1.** Sour water stripping process scheme (SRU: Sulfur Recovery Unit).

Monitoring H<sub>2</sub>S and NH<sub>3</sub> content in stripped sour water is necessary to guarantee stripping efficiency and verify if the wastewater can be recycled or released to the environment.

The poisonous conditions of this process make manual sampling for analysis a challenge since human intervention is needed to adapt current operation conditions to the process. Thus, online and inline analysis solutions are preferred.

In order to ensure an adequate extraction of H<sub>2</sub>S from the stream, it should be constantly monitored online. In the same way, optimization

of the ammonia stripping efficiency should be extensively monitored to avoid the formation of ammonium (NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>), which cannot be stripped as a gas. Therefore, caustic (NaOH) is injected at the bottom of the tower to keep the pH above 8, facilitating NH<sub>3</sub> gas formation. Online analysis of ammonia and sulfides will increase the «stripper efficiency» of the SWS, leading to significant steam reduction and increased energy savings. Effectively stripping and monitoring H<sub>2</sub>S and NH<sub>3</sub> is also an essential operation in the overall pollution reduction program of refineries.

## APPLICATION

The 2060 Process Analyzer can analyze H<sub>2</sub>S and NH<sub>3</sub> simultaneously with automatic cleaning and calibration steps using absolute wet chemical techniques. Sulfide (S<sup>2-</sup>) is determined by a precipitation titration with silver nitrate (AgNO<sub>3</sub>). Ammonia is determined by Dynamic Standard Addition (DSA). Fast and accurate results are continuously transmitted to the programmable logic controller (PLC) for process control.



**Figure 2.** 2060 Process Analyzer for online analysis of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide in the sour water stripping process.

**Table 1.** Parameters to monitor in SWS effluent.

Analyte	Concentration (mg/L)
NH <sub>3</sub>	0–200
H <sub>2</sub> S	0–50

## REMARKS

Other contaminants that increase the sour water corrosiveness like phenol and cyanide can also

be analyzed with Metrohm Process Analyzers.

## FURTHER READING

[Brochure: Petroleum and Petrochemicals Industry](#)  
[Mercaptans and hydrogen sulfide in raw oil in accordance with ASTM D3227 and UOP163](#)

[Determination of salt in crude oil](#)  
[Online thermometric titration of acid number \(AN\) in oils \(ASTM D8045\)](#)

## BENEFITS FOR TITRATION IN PROCESS

- Protection of company assets with built-in alarms at specified warning limits to prevent corrosion
- Safer working environment for employees (corrosive environments)
- Guarantee compliance with environmental standards
- Lower energy cost by avoiding over stripping of ammonia and sulfide



---

## REFERENCE

1. Sour Water Stripping (SWS) - Oil & Gas | Pall Corporation  
<https://www.pall.com/en/oil->

[gas/refining/sour-water-stripping.html](https://www.pall.com/en/oil-gas/refining/sour-water-stripping.html)  
(accessed 2021-10-05).

## CONTACT

瑞士万通中国  
北京市海淀区上地路1号院  
1号楼7702  
100085 北京

[marketing@metrohm.com.cn](mailto:marketing@metrohm.com.cn)

## CONFIGURATION



### 2060 Process Analyzer

2060 Process Analyzer 是一在湿化学分析,用于无数用。此程分析提供了一个新的模化概念,由一个称«主机»的中心平台成。

主机由部分成。上部包含触摸屏和工算机。下部含有柔性取部,其中放有用于分析的硬件。如果主取部容量不足以分析挑,那主机可以展多四个外的取部机,以保有足的空来最具挑性的用。附加机的配置方式使每个取部机可以与具有集成(非接触式)液位的合使用,以增加分析的正常行。

2060 Process Analyzer 提供不同的湿化学技:滴定法、舍滴定法、光度定、直接量和准添加入法。

足所有目要求(或足的所有需求),可提供品理系,以保分析解决方案可靠。我可以提供任何品理系,如冷却或加、和脱气、等。