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Scan-Shipping Client Advisory Services

The SOLAS Container Verify Gross Mass

Scan-Shipping wishes to notify our customers that the **container weight verification** as outlined by Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) will begin enforcement on July 1, 2016.

At this point we wish to make you well aware that this regulation is not expected to be postponed and shippers should be ready to comply with SOLAS prior to the said date.

Background to SOLAS

The aim of the Verified Gross Mass (VGM) is first and foremost **safety** – both at port and at sea. Wrongly declared container weight has been the main cause of lost containers, collapsed stacks and damage to the vessel due to unstable stacking. Incorrect weights mean that the weight distribution onboard is often different to what is logged in the stowage plan, with heavier boxes placed higher in stacks and lighter boxes bearing the loads. This causes the stacks to become unstable and consequentially major accidents.

To help our customer prepare for this Regulation, we have compiled the following simplified FAQ:

What is the SOLAS Container Verify Gross Mass (VGM) Regulation?

The regulation states that all packed containers to be loaded on to a container vessel must have its gross weight verified. Without the verification the container will not be allowed on board.

Who is responsible for ensuring the weight is verified?

The party responsible is the SHIPPER.

The Shipper is defined as the legal entity or person named on the Bill of Lading or Sea Waybill under *“The Shipper”*

How can the Shipper determine the gross weight?

In the SOLAS only two methods is allowed for VGM:

METHOD 1



METHOD 2



The loaded and sealed container is taken to weighing bridge at container terminal.

A receipt may be issued by third party as verification of the weight

In most ports, there are weighing bridges. This is the recommended method, especially in break bulk shipments (grains, scrap etc.)

Shippers are advised to obtain a receipt or validation documents after the container has been weighed.

Method 1 is the preferred method.

The VGM = individual packages + weight of pallets + other packaging material + tare weight of the container

The shipper may weigh all packages and cargo items, including the weights of pallets and other packaging and securing material to be packed in the container, and add the tare weight of the container.

In Method 2, it is important that the Shipper has industry accepted equipment for weighing.

For container Tare weight, please enquire with your Scan-Shipping office. The tare weight depends on the type, and dimension of the container.

In this Method, Shippers are required to provide a declaration of the VGM signed by an Authorized Company representative. In the declaration, the following is necessary:

- Booking / Bill of Lading (BL) No.
- Container No.
- Verified Weight
- Unit of measurement (KG or LB)
- Authorized Person Signatory and Name



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When will the regulation takes effect?

The SOLAS VGM comes into effect 1st July, 2016.

Checklist to Shippers in preparation for the SOLAS VGM:

- Familiarize yourself with the regulations
- Decide which method of the VGM check/control suits your needs
- Create an internal work process to incorporate weighing container as part of shipping process
- Take note that there will be an earlier cut-off for delivering container to terminal therefore early preparation will be required
- Additional cost is bound to occur during implementation and should be anticipated
- Train your employees on VGM requirements

Where can I read more on the SOLAS VGM?

Here are few external links as additional reading material:

International Maritime Organization

<http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Safety/Cargoes/Containers/Pages/Verification-of-the-gross-mass.aspx>

World Shipping Council

[http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/faqs/SOLAS VGM Industry FAQs Dec 2015 US letter WEB.pdf](http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/faqs/SOLAS_VGM_Industry_FAQs_Dec_2015_US_letter_WEB.pdf)

Feedback and question

Scan-Shipping is monitoring SOLAS VGM closely, and will provide additional information when it is available.

Should you have any question on the regulation, contact any offices at <http://www.scan-shipping.com/contact>