

A NEW REGULATION FOR A SAFER SUPPLY CHAIN

VERIFIED GROSS MASS EFFECTIVE FROM 1ST JULY 2016

In November 2014, the International Maritime Organization adopted an amendment to the Safety of Life at Sea convention (SOLAS) regarding mandatory container weight verification. The amendment applies to all member states who will, in turn, adopt it into their own national law. Each country will provide its own guidelines for the implementation.



1. The Situation

Today, weight declarations of loaded containers are not always accurate. This leads to an increased risk of accidents throughout the supply chain.



2. The Challenge

From July 1st 2016, Shippers will be required to provide the Verified Gross Mass (VGM) of each shipment to their ocean carrier and the terminal operator. It remains the shippers' responsibility to obtain and provide the VGM in accordance with local government guidelines and before the carrier's cut off.



3. The Implication

SOLAS rules state that if a Shipper fails to provide a VGM to the ocean carrier and the terminal operator, the container cannot be loaded on-board the vessel. In this case, the Shipper is accountable for any additional charges. Shippers may authorise a third party to provide the VGM, however, shippers remain responsible for the process.



4. Weight Definition

VGM is determined by using the following methods:

Method 1: Weighing the packed container once all cargo has been loaded & sealed in to the container.

Method 2: by calculating the weight of the cargo (including packaging), dunnage and the container tare.

MSC recommend that shippers keep a record of VGM's for requests by authorities.



5. Empty container weight (container tare weight)

The container tare weight can be checked in two ways:

- The tare weight is physically printed on the outside of the container doors
- In the case of method 2, the container tare weight lookup on myMSC.com



6. Worldwide Procedures

Procedures will vary by country, please see attached document with the relevant information.

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7. Government approval status

The French government has published since May 28th 2016 a decree with tolerance 5% inaccuracy allowed on two methods.

8. What to include in your VGM instructions

The following items are mandatory and must be in all VGM instructions :

- Booking number or B/L number
- The container number
- The VGM in kg
- The name of the responsible person in capital letters, as electronic equivalent of the signature

9. How to submit your VGM instructions

- myMSC.com
- EDI (via INTTRA, GT NEXUS, Cargo Smart and any other)
- Shipping instructions signed
- Fax, email (see 11)

10. Deadlines for sending your VGM instructions

VGM must be known to the ship-agent, **at least 24 hours before physical closing of the vessel.**

The VGM cut-off date will be mentioned on the booking confirmation.

If the VGM is received later, the container will **not be Planned / loaded on the vessel.**

11. Admin Fees and costs

If the VGM has to be handled manually by the local agent, a local fee of **25 €** per container will be applied. This also applies for VGM info added in the electronic booking.

If the VGM is not received before VGM closing time, container will be put on hold and **all related costs** like demurrage, storage, moves, plugging... will be for the account of the shipper.

12. Contact information

- Email : vgm.france@mscfr.mscgva.ch
- Tel: + (33) 2.32.74.68.64