



The Logic in Logistics



**Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)
Verified Gross Mass (VGM)**

WHAT IS THE SOLAS CONTAINER WEIGHT VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT?

To improve safety in the supply chain, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has made amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention chapter VI, Regulation 2, Paragraph 6 indicating that all shippers must verify the mass of a packed export container prior to vessel loading.

WHEN IS THE EFFECTIVE DATE?

The SOLAS VGM will take effect on July 1, 2016.

WEIGHING

WHAT IS A VERIFIED GROSS MASS?

Verified gross mass (VGM) is the total gross mass of a packed container, which includes the cargo weight, packaging materials, block & bracing materials and container tare. The VGM must be provided by the shipper for terminal operators to arrange for safe vessel/terminal stowage plans.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VGM DECLARATION?

The responsibility for obtaining and documenting the VGM of a packed container lies with the shipper shown on the OEC Bill of Lading.

HOW TO DETERMINE THE GROSS MASS OF A PACKED CONTAINER?

There are two permissible methods prescribed by IMO that shippers may use to determine the weight of a packed container:

In accordance with SOLAS guidelines, the container tare weight can be used in the VGM calculation. The tare weight is marked on the door-side of each container.



SUBMISSION

HOW TO SUBMIT VGM TO OEC GROUP?

OEC's VGM form or shipper's VGM form are acceptable forms of submission. If shipper is using their own VGM form, it must contain the required data elements.

WHAT VGM DATA ELEMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED?

- Booking number or bill of lading number.
- Container number.
- Verified Gross Mass (VGM) with unit of measure (KGS or LBS).
- Signature of the shipper or authorized person.
- Additional information and or documents required by relevant state authorities, if any.

IS THERE A CUT OFF TIME FOR VGM SUBMISSIONS TO BE RECEIVED BY OEC?

VGM is used in the preparation of the ship stowage plan. The VGM cut-off time may differ from one terminal to another. The cut-off time information will be stated on OEC's booking confirmation.

IS VGM MANDATORY ON THE BILL OF LADING?

No, the VGM is not required on the bill of lading, only the cargo weight is required.

WILL OEC ACCEPT AN AMENDED VGM?

Yes, OEC will accept an amended VGM however the shipper will be responsible for all amendment fees and/or penalties that incur.

OEC HANDLING

DOES OEC OFFER ANY TYPE OF WEIGHING/SCALE SERVICES TO HELP SHIPPERS IN OBTAINING THEIR VGM?

Yes, OEC can arrange to have a packed container weighed. Shipper will be responsible for all costs associated with doing so.

DOES OEC NEED TO CHECK THE WEIGHING EQUIPMENT TO ENSURE THAT IT IS CERTIFIED AND CALIBRATED TO MEET VGM REQUIREMENTS?

OEC will not check the certification and calibration of the equipment used for weighing. The shipper must ensure that the weighing equipment or service they choose to use are appropriate and meet VGM requirements. Shipper's using method 2 should be able to provide their scale certifications in the event their weight is questioned.

PENALTIES

HOW TO HANDLE DISCREPANCIES IN VGM?

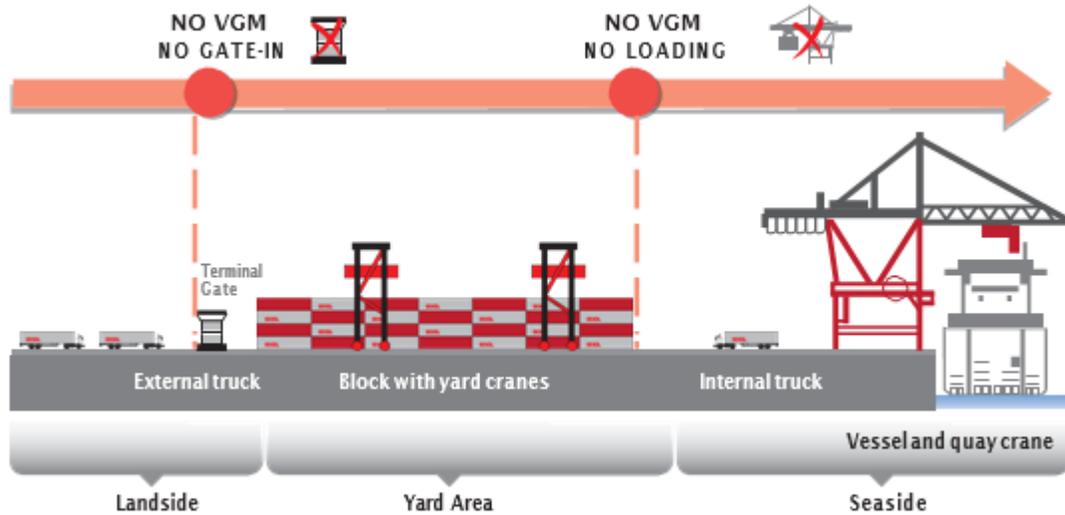
Some terminals announced that packed containers will be weighed for VMG verification. If there is any discrepancy beyond the defined tolerance level, the VGM of the container weighed at the terminal will be used to determine the proper stowage or handling of the container.

WILL MARINE TERMINALS ACCEPT CONTAINERS TO GATE-IN WITHOUT A VGM?

It depends on the country's regulation and/or terminal policy. Some regulations and policies prefer to carry out all weighing formalities before terminal gate-in or outside the terminal gates. Some terminals have stipulated a "No VGM, No Loading" policy while others have set a "No VGM, No Gate-in" rule. Hence, depending on national rules and/or the terminal's policy, the container may or may not be accepted at the terminal without a VGM.

WHAT HAPPENS IF VGM IS NOT PROVIDED?

If the shipper fails to provide the VGM of the packed container, the container shall not be loaded on the ship until it is obtained. The shipper will be responsible for all fees associated with obtaining a proper VGM. These fees may include but are not limited to demurrage, per diem, additional drayage, etc.



How to meet the container weight mandate

As a shipper, what are your options?

METHOD 1

Take a loaded container over a **weighbridge**, subtract the weight of the truck, chassis, and fuel to get the weight of the packed container.



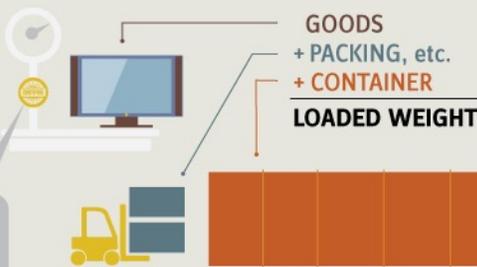
Scales must be certified and calibrated in line with the national standards of the country where the weighing occurred and Method 2 is subject to national certification and approval.



METHOD 2

Weigh each item – including its packaging, palleting, dunnage and other packing and securing materials – going into the box.

Add that sum to the weight of the container to find the weight of the packed container.



What are you required to do?

Provide a document, paper or electronic, signed by the shipper to the shipping line and terminal declaring that the **shipper verified** the weight and that it was weighed properly.



The SOLAS amendment will be enforced by the coast guard or other agency responsible for SOLAS regulations in a given country and punishments for violations will vary by country.

What happens in the case of noncompliance?

There are all kind of possibilities for what could happen to the box that failed to provide the certified weight document but none are settled.

Terminals may choose to hold a container or send it back, but whatever happens, the ship will leave and the container will not.

