

SOLAS CONTAINER WEIGHING REQUIREMENTS

What the Changes Mean for You

Changes to the SOLAS shipping treaty mean all shipping container weights must be properly verified by an approved method of weighing. Container weight verifications can be achieved in two ways. Either method requires that your scales be maintained and calibrated on a regular basis to ensure weighing accuracy.

What

IMO's International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires that every container's gross mass is verified with signature, and submitted to the carrier in time to be used in ship's stowage plan.

Who

The shipper is responsible to obtain and document the verified gross mass of a packed container. The carrier is responsible to obtain the verified gross mass of the container in advance of vessel loading.

Why

The amendment is intended to reduce loss of containers from vessels, to provide assurance to other parties in the supply chain, and improve safety of the work force, vessel, and equipment.

When

The new regulation came into effect on July 1, 2016.

Where

The requirements apply in all 171 IMO member countries, and the 3 associated members.

How

There are 2 methods for calculating the VGM (Verified Gross Mass)

Method 1: Weigh container after loading (must only include the weight of the container and its contents).

Method 2: Weigh all cargo and contents (dunnage, pallets, etc...), and add weight to container tare weight as listed on container.

Pending Industry Information

Contracting governments to the International Maritime Organization are tasked with implementation and enforcement through their national authorities. Many contracting governments have yet to publish their implementation and enforcement guidelines.



Things To Consider

Exporters:

- Determine methodology for weighing and certifying cargo
- Equipment in place, calibrated and certified?
- What documentation will you use to provide verified gross mass?
 - Who in your company is an authorized signer?

Importers

- Begin discussions with suppliers on their process.
- Increase booking lead times to allow extra processing time at origin.
- Consider possible mode change for critical orders needed to arrive in July.

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