

## 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 authorize 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.

### 5. Empty container weight (container tare weight)

The container tare weight can be checked in two ways:

a) The tare weight is physically printed on the outside of the container doors

b) In the case of method 2, the container tare can be found on the website of most carriers

### 6. Government approval status

For method 2 the government will check the procedures and will certify the methods used.

Additional info: [http://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/scheepvaart/container\\_gewicht](http://mobilit.belgium.be/nl/scheepvaart/container_gewicht)

The General Service for Shipping (DGS) will be responsible for enforcement and implementation of the VGM regulation within Belgium. More info: [vgm@mobilit.fgov.be](mailto:vgm@mobilit.fgov.be)

### 7. What to include on your VGM instructions ?

The following items are mandatory and must be on all VGM instructions

- Booking or Bill of Lading number
- Container number
- VGM + unit
- Authorized person's signatory (submitter of the VGM who may be authorized to act on behalf of shippers)
- Responsible party name

### 8. 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.

### 9. Entrance at the terminal

Containers arriving at the gate without VGM will be allowed at the terminal, however not loaded when VGM not provided in time. Please be aware that the terminal has no weighing facilities.

### 10. Fees and costs

Please contact our sales team at [sales@seabow.be](mailto:sales@seabow.be).

### 11. Possible consequences for not submitting the VGM in time

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.

For more detailed information and to view the full text of the applicable SOLAS regulations, please copy the below URL in your browser.

<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/container/Pages/default.aspx>