



SOLAS – VGM (Verified Gross Mass)
Effective Date: July 1st, 2016



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Definition and Purpose

SOLAS (International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea)

VGM (Verified Gross Mass) = Total Weight of Cargo, Loading Aids, Dunnage and Tare of Container to become effective July 1st, 2016

The VGM was created in order to protect the people and assets of the carrier, the terminal and the cargo.





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Administration on National Level

- SOLAS is part of the IMO (International Maritime Organization, a United Nations Agency).
- All States (countries) which are members of the IMO have to adopt these VGM Rules
 - either in their original form or
 - with additional requirements in accordance with local/national laws or rules
- Enforcement and “policing” of the VGM Rules remain with the local State (Government) authorities, responsible for maritime affairs (e.g. Coast Guard in the U.S., Maritime & Coastguard Agency in the U.K., etc.).



SOLAS – VGM (Verified Gross Mass) Requirements

- The **SHIPPER** (being the party shown as shipper in the Bill of Lading or Sea Waybill) is responsible for providing the VGM to the carrier in reasonable time prior to vessel loading and/or full gate in at the sea port terminal.
- The **VGM** consists of: Cargo weight including packaging and dunnage (securing) materials + Tare weight of container
- The **CARRIER** is responsible for relaying the VGM to its terminal.
- **CONTAINER** means standard containers, tank containers, flat racks and bulk containers.
- The **NVOCC** is the shipper vis-à-vis the carrier and, therefore, responsible for providing the VGM to the carrier.



SOLAS – VGM (Verified Gross Mass) Requirements

- The **DATA** to be provided to the Carrier consists of:
 - The VGM and the Shipper's (Individual's) authorized Signature (can be electronic)
 - Local/national Laws/Rules might require additional data, processes or documents (e.g. weighing note)
- The **SCALE** used for weighing has to be calibrated/certified in accordance with local/national rules.
- There are two **METHODOLOGIES** for calculating the VGM:
 - Weigh the packed/laden container
 - Weigh all packages, packaging and dunnage material and add the tare weight of the container
- Carriers **will NOT LOAD containers** without having the VGM.
- Terminals might be authorized **to reject container full gate in** without having the VGM.



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General Information

- The implementation of the SOLAS VGM is very dynamic due to local conditions and requirements, infrastructural challenges and the global scope.
- The effective date of July 1st, 2016, is not expected to be postponed. Therefore, Shippers should be ready to comply with SOLAS already in June 2016.
- The Container Tare Weight is imprinted on the container and some carriers make it available on their web sites. The official container weight can vary as a result of its current condition (e.g. wet wooden floors, as a result of repairs etc.).
- VGM (weight) tolerance is under consideration. Numbers mentioned but not confirmed are 5% with maximum of 500 Kos.
- The shipping industry is working on globalized standard for electronic transmission of required data.
- Web Link (for more detailed information) World Shipping Counsel:
<http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/cargo-weight>.



Thank you!