



SOLAS – Verified Gross Mass of Containers

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has adopted amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention that require the declared weight of a packed container to be verified by certified equipment.

This requirement was introduced to reduce the risk of injury or death both at the wharf and out at sea.

What are the requirements?

The packed weight of the container needs to be declared sufficiently in advance for the vessel operator to prepare the stowage plan.

Estimating the total weight of the packed container is no longer accepted and must be obtained using one of the two accepted methods with verified equipment:

- Method 1: Weighing the packed container
- Method 2: Weighing the cargo / packaging and adding it to the tare weight of the container

What weighing equipment is recognised?

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) will prescribe what equipment and the accuracy standards that will be acceptable or recognised to verify the cargo and container weight.

AMSA have set the standard for accuracy based on the OIML standards (www.oiml.org) and the NMI (www.measurement.gov.au).

More information can be found on the AMSA website www.amsa.gov.au.

JUST THE FACTS

- From the 1st July 2016 a packed container cannot be loaded onto a vessel without the total weight being verified.
- It is the shipper's responsibility to obtain and document the verified weight of the packed container.
- Container weight must be verified by certified equipment using one of the following methods:
 - Method 1: Weighing the packed container
 - Method 2: Weighing the goods including packaging and adding the tare weight of the container

Who is responsible for obtaining the VGM?

The shipper named on the Bill of Lading or equivalent transport documentation.

What happens if the VGM is not provided?

Containers without a VGM will be denied loading aboard the vessel. This could lead to incurring additional costs for penalties, additional transport and handling at the terminal.

Next steps?

Our paperwork and processes have already been updated and we can step through the process with you to ensure all of the new requirements have been satisfied.