



VGM FAQ / Weight Verification Requirements (Basics)

- Effective Date = **July 1, 2016**
- Enforcement Date = **October 1, 2016**
- VGM = Verified Gross Mass, which is the total weight of the container + the cargo itself
- VGM must be submitted prior to loading the container on the vessel
- Carriers have announced, “No VGM, No Load”
- Several Methods for weighing a container and newly accepted methods
 - Method 1: Weigh the container when empty, then again after loading
 - Method 2: Weigh the cargo + contents of container (crates, pallets, dunnage, straps, air bags, etc.), then add to the tare weight of the container
 - “Rational Method”: submitted by AgTC. Shippers certify the weight of their cargo, while the carriers certify the weight of their containers.
 - “Port Terminal Method”: Port terminal weighs the container prior to loading. The South Carolina Ports are the first to offer this in the USA
- Under all methods, the weighing equipment used must meet certification and calibration requirements.
- All certified container-weighing equipment currently now in use in the USA and in compliance with federal or state laws, including the Intermodal Safe Container Transportation Act and the container weight requirements in 29 CFR 1918.85(b) is allowed and considered compliant with the SOLAS regulation.
- VGM can be submitted electronically [Team Ocean Services, Inc. will do this for our clients]
- OCEMA best practices guide to submit VGM
- OCEMA Process Map to submit VGM
- Shipper name listed on the Master bill of lading is responsible
- Suggestion is to submit cargo weight on the shipper’s letter of instructions

Who created the rule?

The *International Maritime Organization (IMO)* and the *World Shipping Council*, trade organizations that represent container liner companies, will require verification of container weights at origin set for July 1, 2016. The amendment created to the International Convention for the **Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)** requires the **verified gross mass (VGM)** of containers to be documented before they can be loaded on ships.

Who is responsible?

Simply stated, the shipper name listed on the master bill of lading. It may include of the following parties:

- The **beneficial cargo owner** (owner of the goods; the exporter)
- The **non vessel operating common carrier (NVOCC)** or
- The **master loader**: the entity that consolidates various shippers’ cargo



How is Weight Verified?

Two Methods

- **Method 1:** requires weighing the container, normally when it is empty; then again after loading.
**Bulk cargo such as scrap metal, un-bagged grain MUST be weighed by this method.
- **Method 2:** requires weighing the cargo and contents of the container and adding those weights to the tare weight of the container.

Note: No weight estimation allowed.

Plus Two More

- **“Rational Method”:** submitted by AgTC. Shippers certify the weight of their cargo, while the carriers certify the weight of their containers.
**Bulk cargo such as scrap metal, un-bagged grain MUST be weighed by this method.
- **“Terminal Port Method”:** Port weighs the container prior to loading. South Carolina Ports are the first to offer this in the U.S.A.

Under all methods, the weighing equipment used must meet certification and calibration requirements. All certified container-weighing equipment currently now in use in the U.S.A. and in compliance with federal or state laws, including the Intermodal Safe Container Transportation Act and the container weight requirements in 29 CFR 1918.85(b) is allowed and considered compliant with the SOLAS regulation.

How do I find certified weighing facilities?

Some countries plan to provide these services at the port and some have already started. Many carrier sites indicate where to go to find this information.

What is the deadline to supply the VGM to the terminal?

This is still to be determined on an international level. Deadlines will differ according to a number of factors; shippers should obtain information on documentary cut-off times from their carriers in advance of shipment. Team Ocean Services will submit the data for shippers to the appropriate parties in a timely manner. It is up to the shipper to obtain the information and communicate that to Team Ocean Services, Inc.

How do I communicate VGM to Team Ocean Services?

Either via the TOS VGM form, through e-mail, or on our website at www.teamww.com.