

A COMMITMENT TO SAFETY



VERIFIED GROSS MASS

CUSTOMER READINESS Q&A

Will you be issuing a global customer advisory on VGM at some stage?

The first advisory has been distributed to customers and to selected forwarders as well.

Will there be a standard paper/soft copy template issued by Maersk Line for our global shippers to use?

Unfortunately not – but we will make it possible to submit the VGM via maerskline.com, and also via EDI. Shippers submitting shipping instructions manually via mail or fax may state the verified gross mass on the SI, provided that it is submitted prior to the deadline for this information.

What is the penalty for not complying with the new regulation?

It will be up to individual governments to set a penalty if any. Also, carriers are legally not allowed to load a container without a Verified Gross Mass document.

How will we handle a container at the gate without a verified gross mass?

The SOLAS amendment requires that a packed container without a VGM cannot load to a vessel. Depending on local conditions, a packed container can either be weighed in the gate or inside the terminal. Or the terminal may admit that the container awaits the shipper to provide the VGM.

As a freight forwarder, how do I have confirmation that the shipper is supplying the right weight?

Carriers take the stand that when the shipper declares the weight as verified, then we take his word for it, and so should a forwarder. The responsibility lies solely with the shipper.

What is the deadline for submitting VGM to the carrier? Should it be submitted after cargo cut-off or after the final load list has been sent to terminal?

That will depend on the requirements of each individual location. But carriers need to submit their VGM latest at the load list cut off at the first load port in order to use the weight in the planning of the vessel.

Will all ocean container terminals have weighing scales in place to perform weighing?

No. Weighing at the ocean terminal should be seen as an exception. Shippers should seek to weigh and provide VGM prior gate-in at the terminal. This in order best plan the vessel operation, to minimise risk of missing the cut-off, and to minimise cost to shippers from extra weighing and handling at terminals.

Are there governance guidelines available or being considered for longstanding containers still in the terminal yard prior to July 1, 2016 and were not weighed?

There are no guidelines for longstanding containers as of today. If a VGM is not received then the container will not be loaded and will be considered long-standing. The same is subject to follow-up and export detention/demurrage.

Since we have shippers stow weight count and load term on BL, how much of the same affects the carrier legal wise?

The above clause is restricted to the declaration on the bill of lading and any discrepancy arising in the future due to mismatch with the physical weight. However the VGM is a new rule being implemented by IMO where it is the shipper's responsibility to ensure they provide the correct / accurate "Gross Mass Weight of the container" to be considered for physical loading of the unit on the vessel.

How will the vessels receive copies of the VGM certificates, especially in the small government-operated African ports where paper may be the only option?

The vessels will not receive copies, but the load list is expected to contain a mark for any VGM received. Then our legacy systems will have documentation for the VGM received via SI, separate certificate/document or from terminal EDI.

Is the VGM a self-certification from the customer? If yes, the weight received could be only estimated and not really verified.

The WSC guideline clearly states "Estimating weight is not permitted. The shipper (or by arrangement of the shipper, a third party) has a responsibility to weigh the packed container or to weigh it's contents."

Is VGM a legal document that the shipper should provide or just a number that the carrier or terminal will rely on?

The shipper can provide the VGM as an information through E-Channel / or their current SI submission channel to carrier. Regarding the format and the weighing. It will be the country's decision to follow a particular method and will be decided and communicated by the country to all the stakeholders.