

SOLAS - VGM

WHAT: The International Maritime Agreement for **Safety of Life at Sea**. It is an international maritime safety agreement to ensure compliance with minimum safety standards in equipment and operation. It will require that shippers verify and certify the gross mass of all shipping containers prior to vessel loading.

WHEN: Adopted in 2014 to take effect **July 1, 2016**.

WHY: The impetus behind this new rule arose from the sinking of the MSC Napoli in 2007 when investigation by the British Marine Accident Investigation found that significant discrepancies between declared and actual weights of the containers stowed on deck was a contributing factor in the disaster.

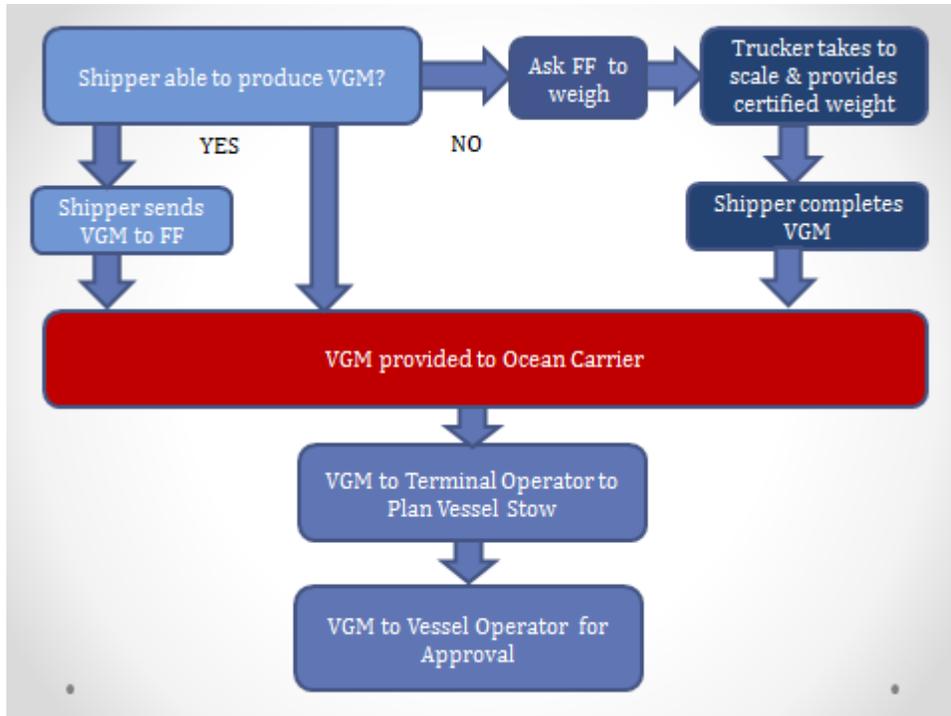


137 (20%) weighed more than 3 tons over their declared weights; the largest differential for a single container was 20 tons and the aggregate weight of the 137 containers was 312 tons more than shown on the cargo manifest!

HOW: The new SOLAS VGM rules require that the verified gross mass is documented, signed by someone duly authorized by the shipper, and provided to the Ocean carrier (manually or electronically) in time to prepare the vessel stow plan. No matter what country a ship is departing from, container carriers cannot load a container for which it has not received a verified gross mass declaration from the shipper. Shippers can send the VGM direct to the ocean carrier or can provide the VGM to their forwarder who will in turn submit to the ocean carrier by the cut-off date. Forwarders booking freight via INTTRA can submit VGMs via INTTRA.

Two Acceptable methods for producing VGM:

1. After packing and sealing container the shipper weighs the container or arranges to have it weighed by their forwarder or trucker.
2. Shipper weighs all cargo and packing materials and adds the tare weight of the container (as noted on container door).



M.E. Dey will assist our clients in arranging for weight verification at certified scales after loading when needed.

For more detailed information on SOLAS visit:

- [IMO's Guidelines on SOLAS.](#)
- <http://www.worldshipping.org/industry>
- <http://www.worldshipping.org/>

Contact our Export Division with questions on SOLAS VGM.