



SOLAS VGM Guide

- 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, or a delay in loading
- Shipper name listed on the Master bill of lading is responsible
- Suggestion is to submit cargo weight on the shipper's letter of instructions
- 2 Methods for weighing a container
- 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.
- VGM can be submitted electronically [Scarborough will do this for our clients]
- OCEMA best practices guide to submit VGM [Download Recommendations](#)
- OCEMA Process Map to submit VGM [Download Process Map](#)

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**: entity that consolidates various shippers' cargo

How to find certified weighing facilities:

Some ports and terminals plan to provide these services at the port including Ports Authorities for Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Houston, Virginia, Massachusetts, Port Everglades.

How to communicate VGM:

VGM can be submitted electronically via EDI messages called VERMAS with the code of 304, INTTRA, GT Nexus, Cargosmart, Mobileweight.com or via a carrier's own electronic portal. Scarborough will submit VGM for clients to the carrier. Shippers must send their weight to Scarborough.



Click image to view Journal of Commerce's full infographic and weighing reference guide.

How to verify Weight:

Two Methods for Weighing.

Method 1: requires weighing the container after loading of all goods. **Many ports are offering a weighing service at the terminal prior to loading the container on the vessel.** Shipper can also weigh container over a weigh bridge, then subtract the weight of the truck, chassis and fuel to get the weight of the packed container.

The weighing equipment used in Method 1 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.

Bulk cargo such as scrap metal, unbagged 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, which can be found on the rear door of the container or in some cases, on the carrier's website. Note: No weight estimation allowed.

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. Scarborough 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 Scarborough. Scarborough suggests to submit as much data as possible at time of loading the container.

More on VGM:

To view past and recent news on VGM, [click here](#).

To view questions and answers on YouTube, [click here](#).

To download VGM Declaration Form, [click here](#).