

FAQS
WHAT SHOULD SHIPPERS TAKE NOTE OF?

1. What is the SOLAS container weight verification requirement?

Misdeclaration of the gross mass of a packed container can compromise the safety of the ship, seafarers and shore-side workers, by leading to incorrect vessel stowage decisions and potentially collapsed container stacks or loss of containers overboard.

In November 2014, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has amended the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) to require that all packed containers come with a verified weight before they are loaded onto ships for export.

[IMO is a United Nations specialised agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.]

2. When is it coming into effect?

This requirement will become legally effective on 1 July 2016. After that date, it would be a violation of SOLAS to load a packed container onto a vessel if the vessel operator and marine terminal operator do not have a verified container weight.

3. Who must declare the verified gross mass of the container?

The shipper is responsible for the verification of the packed container's weight.

4. How is the verified gross mass of the packed container obtained?

The SOLAS regulations prescribe two methods to verify the container weight once container packing has taken place.

i. Weighing the container after it has been packed, or

ii. Weighing all the cargo and contents of the container and adding those weights to the container's tare weight as indicated on the door end of the container.

Estimating weight is not permitted.

5. When to submit the VGM?

The VGM can be submitted electronically directly to the port company that will load the packed container at any time prior to on-carriage to port.

6. What happens if the VGM is not submitted?

The packed container may not be loaded onto the ship without the shipper's weight verification.

7. How to submit the VGM?

The weight verification may only be submitted electronically, via the loading port company website, to the load port only.

8. Where to get further information?

Guidelines/ information on the container weight verification requirement can be found on: www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/cargo-weight

Please approach your respective Pacifica Shipping representatives for further clarification.

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