



Zentralverband Deutscher Schiffsmakler e.V.

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The SOLAS Container Weight Verification Requirement - Verified Gross Mass (VGM) -

The implementation and enforcement of the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) requirements regarding the verification of the gross mass of packed containers will enter into force on July the 1st, 2016.

The fundamental elements are: **No VGM, No loading.**” A container without a VGM is not allowed to load onto the vessel. The shipper is responsible for providing the VGM.

VGM is the total gross mass of a packed container which includes the cargo weight, block & bracing materials and container tare. The SOLAS Convention offers two methods to obtain the VGM:

Method 1: The 'shipper' may weigh the packed container by using 'calibrated and certified equipment',
or

Method 2: The 'shipper' may weigh all packages and cargo items, including the mass of pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container and adding the tare mass of the container to the sum of the single masses, using a certified method approved by the competent authority of the State in which packing of the container was completed.

In Germany weighing instruments used for weighing packed containers have to be of accuracy class IIII (IV) of the EU Directive 2009/23/EC (from 20.4.2016 2014/31/EU). When using Method No.2 weighing instruments of accuracy class III have to be used .

The gross mass has to be determined as accurately as possible. In Germany no further tolerances are specified by the inaccuracies (maximum permissible errors in service) of the used weighing instrument. During an inspection both the maximum permissible errors in service of the check weigher as well as the characteristics of the inspected container will be taken into account.

The responsibility for obtaining and providing the VGM lies with the shipper. 'Shipper' means a legal entity or person named on the bill of lading or sea waybill or equivalent multimodal transport document (e.g. "through" bill of lading, "Sea waybill) as shipper and/or who (or in whose name or on whose behalf) a contract of carriage has been concluded with a shipping company.

It is against international regulation to load a packed container without the VGM.

The shipper is responsible for the potential regulatory penalties and all costs associated to the exception handling of the containers without the VGM.

For more detailed information, see the BG Verkehr website:

<http://www.deutsche-flagge.de/en/safety-and-security/cargo/loading-of-containers>

The Zentralverband Deutscher Schiffsmakler e.V. (German Shipbrokers' Association) is the confederation at national level of all nine local shipbrokers' associations in Germany. The main purpose of the ZVDS is to promote the joint professional interests of German ship brokers and agents, without imposing any restrictions or supervision on the economic freedom of the individual companies. For further details, see the ZVDS website: www.zvds.de