



## IMO – SOLAS Regulation Loaded Container Verified Gross Mass (VGM)

Dear Valued Customers

International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention, Chapter VI Regulation 2 – Cargo information regarding mandatory Verification of the gross mass of a container carrying cargo together with associated guidelines published as MSC.1/Circ. 1475.

Effective 1st July 2016, all loaded containers are required to have a Verified Gross Mass (VGM) declared by shippers. The requirement making container weight verification a condition for vessel loading will become legally binding on July 1, 2016. The enforcement of the SOLAS requirements regarding the verified gross mass of packed containers falls within the competence and is the responsibility of the SOLAS Contracting Governments. Contracting Governments acting as port States should verify compliance with these SOLAS requirements. Any incidence of non-compliance with the SOLAS requirements is enforceable according to national legislation.

### **What does it mean to provide a loaded Container Verified Gross Mass (VGM)?**

The VGM is the certified Gross Cargo weight (including weight of all packing material & dunnage) plus container tare weight. There are two methods for the Shipper to calculate the VGM:

Method 1: Weigh a packed & sealed container on a weighing bridge/device.

Method 2: Computing the VGM by using a Verified Cargo Weight (including packing materials) and adding the container tare weight.

### **Who is responsible to provide the VGM?**

The SOLAS regulation stipulates that the Shipper is responsible to provide the VGM to relevant parties (Terminal and Carrier). There is no requirement for either the Carrier or the Terminal to have a VGM checked, verified, certified or re-weighed. The Carrier is also not responsible to verify whether correct method/certification has been used by the Shipper. Under the SOLAS requirements, the shipper named on the ocean bill of lading is the party responsible for providing the maritime (ocean) carrier ('master') and the terminal operator ('terminal representative') with the verified gross mass of a packed container.

NYK will not accept any billing for services related to weighing of boxes unless explicitly requested by NYK.



### **What information is required when we receive from Shipper?**

VGM submission by Shipper to NYK Line requires the following basic information as a minimum:

- Booking number
- Container number
- Verified Gross Mass
- Date, Name (as signatory) of the person who is duly authorised by the Shipper for VGM issuance as per regulations.

### **What is the date of implementation?**

VGM data is required for all cargo loaded on/after 1st of July 2016. The recent IMO circular has provided clarification on how to handle Transshipment cargo per following:

- for Transshipment cargo loaded at origin/first load port prior to 1 July 2016 which will then tranships on/after 1 July 2016, VGM data is not required.
- for Transshipment cargo loaded at origin/first load port on/after 1 July 2016, VGM data is required.

The IMO Circular released also advises that National authorities should adopt a 'practical and pragmatic approach' when verifying compliance during the initial 3 month period allowing stakeholders to refine, if necessary, procedures for documenting, communicating and sharing VGM data.

As such the new regulations come into force with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 and NYK Line intends to continue to work towards 1st July implementation.

### **When is VGM required?**

VGM is required prior to any container shipment. Cargo will not be loaded onto a vessel unless a certified VGM has been provided by the Shipper.

Actual cut off time will vary by port / terminal or inland CY / port and is likely to be either:

- Current/existing CY cargo cut-off time at the Terminal (including inland, CY and rail)
- or
- Prior to / during Terminal Gate In

It is therefore important that the Shipper finalises the VGM data at the time of or prior to cargo leaving Shipper's premises and that VGM data is provided to the Carrier and/or Terminal in a timely manner.

For Marine Terminals that require to have the VGM prior Gate In or latest at the time of gate-in then the Shipper should ensure that VGM data has been supplied prior to arriving at the Terminal gate to avoid the risk of not being allowed to enter the Terminal. All costs associated with mitigating this problem are to be borne by Shipper.



### **NYK Line Carrier Door move**

Only where the marine Terminal requires VGM prior to or at Gate-In, NYK Line will require confirmation of VGM data prior to leaving the shippers' premises or at the weighing facility whilst on route to the marine terminal (all costs and arrangement of same for shippers account) prior to the Terminal VGM deadline set.

### **How does the Shipper obtain the Container Tare weight from NYK?**

NYK Line will create an eComm website solution whereby customers can retrieve container tare weight. Alternatively container tare weight can also be manually obtained from the door of the container itself.

### **How does the Shipper provide VGM data to NYK Line?**

Via an eComm website solution that is user ID and password protected. Our eComm will have excel download/upload functionality to ease the process of adding VGM data to each individual container under one bookings number. Our eComm website will be available from the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of June 2016.

NYK Line is also reviewing VGM Submissions via Portals as e.g. INTTRA, CargoSmart and GTNexus

### **Will there be a charge if I manually submit VGM data to NYK Line?**

Yes, NYK Line will apply a VGM administrative fee for manual submission @ USD 30, - per container. This is to cover NYK Line's costs to process and handle a manual VGM submission. This charge will only be applicable once NYK eComm is available.

### **How does NYK provide VGM to Terminal and Vessel Operator?**

VGM data received from the Shipper will be added to existing communication processes to the Terminal for vessel stowage planning. It is important that local requirements from all stakeholders are followed and adhered to in a timely manner.

### **Why is VGM needed?**

This is a global IMO SOLAS mandatory regulatory requirement to avoid accidents due to wrong vessel stowage. VGM is used for vessel planning and safe stowage.



**What happens if VGM cannot be provided?**

Cargo will not be loaded. NO VGM = NO LOAD! There may be Terminals not accepting to gate in if a (inland) transport company cannot provide a VGM. All associated costs with shut out / re-nomination / weighing / return of cargo, etc will be for Shipper's account.

NYK Internal process will be set up whereby we will check/confirm submission of VGM. Final check will be required prior to data submission to Terminal and Vessel Operator. If not provided at that time then EDI data submission will advise same with instruction to the Terminal not to load until VGM confirmed. In many cases Terminal will not load anyway if no VGM has been provided.

**Is there a Global single standard implementation process?**

There is no standardised Global Industry or "one size / fits all" implementation process. Instead implementation needs to be based on local solutions by individual country, port and/or Terminal VGM submission time/cut-off will vary by port/terminal.

Please refer to the below WSC links which provides more detailed background and information.

WSC IMO Requirement for Container Weight Verification

<http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/cargo-weight>

WSC Guidelines for Implementing SOLAS Container Weight Verification Requirement

[http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/WSC Guidelines for Implementing the SOLAS Container Weight Verification Requirement.pdf](http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/WSC%20Guidelines%20for%20Implementing%20the%20SOLAS%20Container%20Weight%20Verification%20Requirement.pdf)

We will keep you informed of further updates including VGM documentation requirements and communication.

Please contact your local NYK office / representative for further information

**NYK Line**