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# **VERIFICATION OF CONTAINER WEIGHTS: BACKGROUND AND NEW OPERATIONAL REALITY**

*CESAC*  
*October 2015*





- **Before 2014: SOLAS\* Convention only required that prior to loading a shipper must:**
  - Provide ship's master or representative with the gross mass of the container.
  - “Ensure” the actual gross mass is in accordance with the declared gross mass.
- **No effective enforcement in most jurisdictions.**
- **No IMO requirement to verify actual weights.**

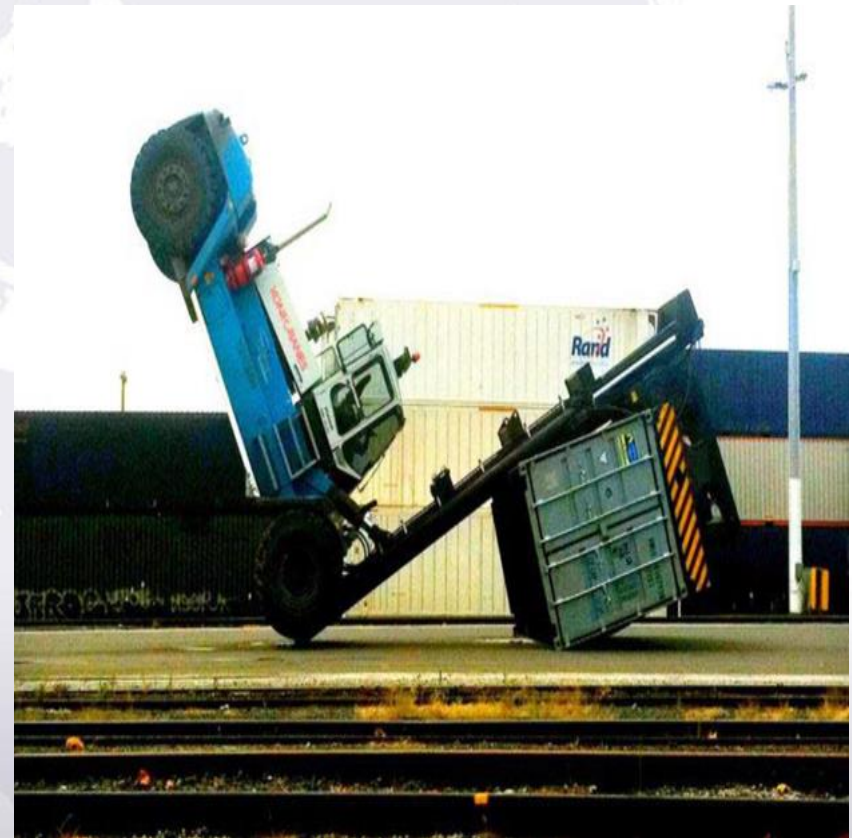
\*SOLAS is “Safety of Life at Sea”.



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# Magnitude of the problem (1)

- **Despite industry self-help efforts to reduce incidences of shippers providing incorrect container weights, the problem continues.**
- **WSC Member lines' experience:**
  - The problem is significant and arises in almost every trade.
  - In some trades, it is rampant.





## Magnitude of the problem (2)

### Official British investigation of the *MSC Napoli* structural failure incident (2007):

- **20% of the containers on deck had actual weights that differed more than 3 tons from their declared weights.**
- **The largest difference was 20 tons.**
- **The total weight of the 20% misdeclared containers was 312 tons *heavier* than on the cargo manifest\*.**

\*The carrier's cargo manifest states the gross mass as declared by the shipper in its shipping instructions to the carrier.



## Magnitude of the problem (3)

- Ukraine Customs weighed all containers over a two week period in October 2012 discharged in Ukrainian ports:
  - ***56% of the containers had an actual weight greater than the weight stated in the carrier's cargo manifest.***
- Other Customs administrations have reported similar findings (e.g. Poland and India).

# Magnitude of the problem (4)



*June 2011: Container ship Deneb in Algeciras*

For other examples of incidents involving misdeclared container weights, see IMO document: DSC17/INF.5



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# Consequences

## Misdeclared weights lead to:

- Risk of personal injury or death to crew and shore side workers
- Ship instability
- Incorrect vessel stowage
- Collapsed container stacks
- Re-handling and re-stowing
- Higher operating costs
- Chassis and ship damage
- Supply chain delay
- Shut-out of accurately declared cargoes
- Road safety problems





# New SOLAS amendments: Basic Principles

1. Before a packed container can be loaded onto a ship, its weight must be determined through weighing. ***No exception to this requirement.***
2. Two permissible methods for weighing:  
**Method 1:** Weigh the packed container.  
**Method 2:** Weigh the cargo and other contents and add tare weight of the container.
3. **Estimating weight is *not* permitted.** Shipper must weigh or arrange for weighing of packed container or its contents.





# New SOLAS amendments: Basic Principles *(continued)*

4. Shipper may rely on BCO's or other forwarders' properly derived weights, using Method 1 or 2.
5. *But -- shipper remains responsible for verified weight.*
6. Weighing equipment must meet national certification and calibration requirements.
7. Governments may apply **enforcement** tolerance limits. Does **not** relieve the shipper from obligation to provide verified weight obtained from weighing.



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# New SOLAS amendments: Basic Principles *(continued)*

## 8. Carrier and terminals may rely on shipper's "signed" weight verification.

*"Signed" means:*

- *Specific person representing shipper must be named and identified as having verified accuracy of weight; and,*
- *Weight verification is to be provided as or be part of a shipping document (e.g. declaration including a weight ticket); and,*
- *Shipping document can be electronic.*

## 9. Vessel stow plans should use verified weights for all packed containers loaded on board.



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# New Operational Reality

## One:

A verified weight is a condition for loading a packed container onto a ship.



**No Verified Weight**



**No Load**



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# New Operational Reality

## Two:

The shipper is responsible for providing the verified weight.

**“Shipper”**

=

**Party identified on  
maritime carrier’s  
Bill of Lading**





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# New Operational Reality

## Three:

**Lack of signed shipper weight verification can be remedied by weighing the packed container at port or elsewhere.**



***Carriers and port terminals will need to agree on how such situations will be handled.***



## Four:

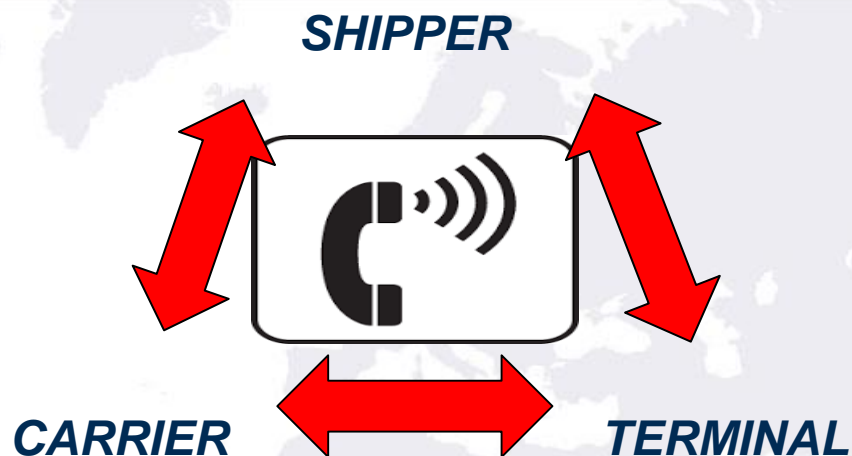
### **Government implementation**

*Commercial parties need to understand and arrange for compliance with national requirements (e.g., certification and documentation.)*



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# Time is running short



**SUPPLY CHAIN PARTIES NEED TO TALK TO EACH OTHER  
*NOW* ABOUT:**

- **OBTAINING**
- **PROVIDING,**
- **TRANSMITTING,**
- **RECEIVING**
- **USING PROPER VERIFIED CONTAINER WEIGHTS.**



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Thank you

**More information available at:**

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