

## TCF International Broadcast - 6 May 2016



### EFFECTIVE 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2016

The Container Weight Verification **global** requirements as outlined by the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) will begin being enforced as of July 1, 2016.

#### Background:

Australia is 1 of 170 countries that is a member of the IMO (International Maritime Organisation).

The proposed amendment to SOLA, Chapter VI, Regulation 2 and the associated IMO Guidelines regarding the verified gross mass (VGM) of a container carrying cargo, was adopted at the 94th MSC session in November 2014 for entry into force on **1 July 2016**.

The amendment required mandatory verification of the gross mass of a container prior to loading on vessels. This applies to standard containers, tank containers, flat racks and bulk containers.

Major accidents and incidents resulting from overweight containers have prompted the International Shipping community to take this action as a preventative to further accidents. Terminal operators, carriers and load planners will use the VGM to plan the load and stow of containers on container vessels safer and earlier.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has been obliged to accept and implement these changes.

The regulations provides for 2 methods to verify the VGM of a container, namely:

**METHOD 1** - weighing the packed container using calibrated and certified equipment after it has been sealed

**METHOD 2** - weighing 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 weight of the container, as printed on the containers compliance plate, to the sum of the single item weights, using a certified method approved by the competent authority of the State in which packing of the container was completed.

### As a Shipper/Exporter, what are my responsibilities?

- The Shipper is responsible for the VGM to be supplied. The VGM supplied must be certified and signed by an authorised representative of the company loading the container.
- VGM to be provided prior to the container being delivered to the terminal
- There is no designated form assigned by AMSA. TCF However will provide a form to Shippers to use when reporting the VGM to TCF
- If the VGM is found to have been reported incorrectly fines will be applied under the current Chain of Responsibility laws and Container Weight Declaration (CWD) requirements. The penalty unit value is AUD 180.00 per unit. The number of units per offence is 50 as per MO42.

### How Should I prepare for the MO42 changes?

- You may already comply, you just need to check. Current regulations already reflect that an accurate gross mass must already be provided on the maritime shipping documents. The only change is the "prescribed" standards of accuracy. Many of you will already be compliant if your equipment complies with the National Measurement for trade requirements.
- If you will use Method 2 to obtain a VGM, what is the accuracy of the equipment you use, or intend to use, for obtaining and declaring the VGM. You should check and know to what standards of accuracy the weighing device(s) you use are certified and calibrated to.
- If you do not have scales that comply, you should consider obtaining them. If you do not have the capability to obtain the VGM via Method 2, then Method 1 will be the only method available to you.
- Weighbridges may not be plentiful at the time required or in your location. Increases in costs for transport via a weighbridge in addition to the weighbridge charges will apply
- There may be other weighing option available to you. Machinery such as side loaders with scales, cranes, gantries and portable container scales can be used to weigh containers and obtain a VGM provided they meet accuracy standards.

### What happens if a VGM is not supplied?

- If the shipping document, with regard to a packed container, does not provide the verified gross mass (VGM) and the master or his representative and the terminal representative have not obtained the VGM of the packed container, it shall not be loaded on the ship.

TCF International welcomes the SOLAS regulations in an effort to reduce risk and accidents. We will endeavour to work with our Export Customers to ensure that the changes are adopted smoothly as we approach 1 July 2016.

If you have any questions relating to this, please contact your local TCF International Office.