

## Verified Gross Mass - New SOLAS guidelines effective per July 1st 2016

### Introduction

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has amended the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS) to require, as a condition for loading a loaded container on to a ship for export, that the container has a verified gross mass (VGM). The shipper is responsible for obtaining the VGM of a loaded container and communicating it to A2B-online Container B.V. This requirement will become mandatory on the 1st of July 2016 and will apply globally. After that date, it would be a violation of SOLAS to load a loaded container on to our ships if we do not have a verified container gross mass. The requirement will increase safety for vessel and terminal operators, people and assets, as well as shippers cargo.

### Scope

This requirement is mandatory for all A2B-online Container B.V. short sea transports services through Moerdijk.

### What is VGM?

VGM is the verified total gross mass of a loaded container. This means the total weight of all the goods including pallets, packaging, securing materials and the tare weight of the container.

### What do you need to do as from July 1st 2016?

The responsibility for obtaining and providing the verified gross mass lies with the shipper. The VGM details need to be provided to A2B-online Container B.V. prior to vessel loading and sufficiently in advance in order to prepare the vessel stowage plan.

### How to determine the VGM?

The SOLAS regulations prescribes two methods by which the shipper may obtain the verified gross mass of a loaded container.

**1.** The shipper may weigh the packed and sealed container using calibrated and certified equipment.



**2.** The shipper or, by arrangement of the shipper, a third party may weigh all packages and cargo items individually, including the mass of pallets, dunnage and other packing and securing material to be packed in the container, and add the tare mass of the container to the sum of the single masses of the container's contents. The tare weight of the container is visible on the exterior of the container.

Estimated weight is not permitted!

### How to communicate?

The VGM shall be communicated to A2B-online Container B.V. in writing and `signed` by a person duly authorized by the shipper and identified as having verified the accuracy of the weight declaration on behalf of the shipper.

This VGM confirmation may be an electronic signature or may be replaced by the name, in capitals, of the person authorized to sign in order to be compliant with the SOLAS requirement. SOLAS does not mandate any particular form of how this communication have to look like.



### What if your VGM is not submitted?

A2B-online Container B.V. is prohibited to load a container without a VGM on to the ship until its VGM has been obtained.

In case of non- or late declaration of the VGM, additional costs can incur. On top of this, fines and other penalties may be imposed to the shipper under national legislation.

### Where can I find additional information?

Additional information can be found via the following website: <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Safety/Cargoes/Containers/Documents/MSC.1%20Circ.1475.pdf>

## SOLAS update - Frequently Asked Questions

Dear customer,

As informed in our last leaflet on the 13th of May we would like to inform you further about the new SOLAS regulations in effect as from the 1st of July.

### **Who is responsible:**

The shipper is responsible for obtaining the VGM of a loaded container and communicating it to A2B-online Container B.V.

### **Which routes are effected by the new SOLAS regulations?**

The SOLAS regulation effects all A2B-online Container routes from Moerdijk.

### **VGM, what does that mean?**

VGM is the verified total gross mass of a loaded container. This means the total weight of all the goods including pallets, packaging, securing materials and the tare weight of the empty container.

### **What if I book a empty (uncleaned) unit?**

Also empty (uncleaned) tanks require a VGM as described in the IMO Guidelines point 12.1:

*12.1 : Shippers of empty containers and operators of empty containers are encouraged to have practices and arrangements in place to ensure that they are empty. The tare weight will visually appear on the container in accordance with the International Organization for Standardization and should be used.*

In short: please use your empty container tare weight as VGM when shipping empty units.

### **Which data do I need to communicate to A2B-online Container B.V. and how should this look like?**

The VGM shall be communicated to A2B-online Container B.V. in writing and `signed` by a person duly authorized by the shipper. This VGM confirmation may be an electronic signature or may be replaced by the name, in CAPITALS, of the person authorized to sign in order to be compliant with the SOLAS requirement. SOLAS does not mandate any particular form of how this communication have to look like.

In short: we need the verified gross weight of the tare weight of the unit and everything loaded in the container. Communicated as described above per email, update booking, CMR or other shipping instruction.

### **Who should I send the VGM advise?**

The VGM would have to be communicated to A2B-online Container BV.

For quay to quay bookings to: [opscontainer@a2b-online.com](mailto:opscontainer@a2b-online.com)

For door to door bookings to : [cscontainer@a2b-online.com](mailto:cscontainer@a2b-online.com)

### **Will your terminals accept containers where no VGM is advised for yet?**

Our terminals will accept units on to the terminals but units will not be loaded on to a vessel without a proper VGM advise.

### **What are your VGM cut-off times?**

VGM cutt-off time is 1 hour before sailing closing time and always between 07:00 till 17:00 hrs on working days.

### **Do any of your terminals offer a weighing service?**

We are investigating possibilities for weighing on our terminals. If you require a weighing service please let us know.

### **How can I tell the weight of a A2B-online container?**

The tare weight of the container is on the container door. We can also supply a list of our container weights if required.

### **When will you start using the VGM weights?**

Off course as per 1st of July but we will begin testing as from Monday 27th of June. Please already advise the VGM of your booked unit or shipment as from that date in order to test our and your system and procedures.

In case you have more questions please let us know on [salescontainer@a2b-online.com](mailto:salescontainer@a2b-online.com)

