

# Every ton counts

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# Effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 weight of containers needs to be verified

Shipping containers is a pretty safe business – especially with Hapag-Lloyd. In recent years, however, the industry has seen some major incidents at sea and on shore arising from packed containers that had incorrect weight declarations.

## What will change as of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016?

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention (Chapter VI, part A, regulation 2), that requires packed containers' gross mass to be verified prior to stowage aboard ship. As from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 this regulation, effective as global law, prohibits loading of a packed container in absence of the verified gross mass (VGM). This applies to all packed containers which are to be loaded to a vessel under SOLAS regime in international maritime traffic.

## Why does the new legislation help us all?

All parties along the supply chain will benefit from the new rules:

- Shippers: Reduced risks of damages to their cargo
- Carriers: Increased safety for crew and vessel by improved stowage.  
Time savings by reduced re-stows and avoidance of last minute cancellations
- Terminals: Enabling for a better pre-stow, improved and accelerated dispatch and minimized last minute changes

Generally our industry will face less delays and a safer working environment. This regulation will significantly increase safety and transport quality for all players in the supply chain.

## What do you need to do effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016?

The VGM details need to be provided to the carrier sufficiently in advance of vessel loading. The responsibility for obtaining and providing the verified gross mass lies with the shipper.

## How to determine the VGM?

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

1. The shipper may weigh the packed and sealed container using calibrated and certified equipment.
2. The shipper may add the weight of each package stuffed in the container, add the packing and securing material and add the tare weight of the utilized container. The method itself needs to be certified and approved by a national regulatory body.

An estimation of weight is not permitted.

The weight so obtained shall be submitted to the carrier. Hapag-Lloyd, as your carrier, will take care for proper processing of data along the transport chain.

## How can you submit the VGM?

Hapag-Lloyd participates in EDI standardization initiatives to offer enhanced versions for electronic transmission. Furthermore Hapag-Lloyd will offer various means of communication to provide the VGM information easily. It is highly recommended to use electronic interchange channels to submit the VGM.

## What happens if your VGM is not submitted?

A packed container, for which the verified gross mass has not been obtained will not be loaded on the vessel. Loading of a packed container without VGM to a vessel is an offence against an existing SOLAS regulation.

## Where to get further information?

Information on the legislation can be found on:

**[www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/cargo-weight](http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/cargo-weight)**

If you should seek for assistance, please contact your local **Hapag-Lloyd office**. We will provide further information and more details about this new regulation in regular updates in our **website**.

