

## Fact sheet

### Verification of the weight of packed containers (VGM)

#### – What do the regulations say?

From 1 July 2016, all export containers to be loaded on board a ship must be fitted with a so-called "verified weight" – VGM (Verified Gross Mass). The requirement is global and has been introduced out of consideration for maritime safety. The regulations are stipulated in the so-called SOLAS Convention and have been adopted by United Nations' International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The Danish Maritime Authority is the authority responsible for the implementation of the regulations in Denmark. In early May 2016, a separate Danish order hereon was issued.

The Danish regulations apply to all Danish ships and all containers intended, in a Danish port, to be loaded onto a ship (irrespective of flag) engaged in international trade. However, containers on chassis frames, trailers, mafi trailers and the like on ro-ro voyages of less than 600 nautical miles are exempted.

The Danish regulations also apply to all containers for which the packing is finalised in Denmark (and Greenland). The regulations on the VGM of a container always follow the country in which the packing of the container is finalised.

The VGM is to be established by the shipper or its shipping agent. The VGM differs from the current indication of the container weight in the transport documents since the VGM can be established only in two ways.

- 1) Weighing by means of a suitable weight. The shipper/shipping agent can have the container weighed by means of a suitable weight, which means an approved weight of at least class IV for non-automatic weights or at least class Y(b) for automatic weights. See a separate fact sheet on method 1.
- 2) Calculation according to a certified method. The shipper/shipping agent can weigh all packages and cargo elements, including pallets, etc. to be packed in the container and add the container tare mass to the sum. The method requires that the shipper/shipping agent has a quality management system, for example of ISO standard. See a separate fact sheet on method 2.

According to the regulations, the shipper/shipping agent must inform the master/its representative and the port terminal operator about the VGM. The container must not be loaded onto the ship until the master and terminal operator has a VGM. Please observe that the container must not be loaded onto the ship if no VGM is available.

It is, as a general rule, the shipper's responsibility to establish the VGM, but the terminal operator can offer to do this according to method 1. See a separate fact sheet on this.

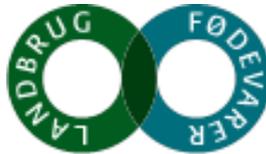
It is not the responsibility of the terminal operator or the master to verify a VGM. When a VGM is given in a transport document, the actors in the transport chain must assume that it is correct.

The individual shipowners and terminal operators can set a deadline for receiving a VGM. In practice, it will therefore depend on local conditions when and how the shipper/shipping agent is to inform about the VGM prior to the arrival in port and/or loading of the ship.

Therefore, you are advised to contact the relevant actors in the transport chain with a view to establishing procedures, deadlines, etc.

For additional information, please contact the Danish Maritime Authority by telephone +45 72 19 60 00, or by e-mail: [sfs@dma.dk](mailto:sfs@dma.dk), or visit our webpage: [www.dma.dk](http://www.dma.dk).

More detailed international guidelines and Q&A have been developed by the industry, which are updated on an ongoing basis.



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