New Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Regulation

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has amended the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) regarding weight verification requirements, effective 1 July 2016.

The intention of the SOLAS amendment is to reduce the number of accidents caused by wrongly declared container weights. This convention is binding obligatory law for all IMO member states. Its implementation in the IMO member countries is currently taking place at different rate throughout the world.

The regulations require the shippers of all containers to provide a certified weight certificate showing the Verified Gross Mass (VGM) of the laden container to the ocean carrier in advance of vessel loading so it can be used in the preparation of the vessel’s stowage plan.

This means that no containerized cargo will be loaded on a vessel unless the shipper has provided a signed weight verification to the carrier.

Benefits of the new SOLAS regulation:

• Greater levels of safety for the ship, the crew and longshoremen
• Minimization of losses due to wrongly declared weight
• Better stowage and processing at the terminal

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How to get ready for the new SOLAS Regulation

Two Methods
SOLAS uses two methods to determine the Verified Gross Mass (VGM) of the container:

1. The Shipper weights the loaded container by using certified and calibrated scales (e.g. Weighbridge)

2. The shipper weighs all cargo items, dunnage and packaging material and adds the tare weight of the container. A certification in accordance with the national regulations is required for this method.

Getting ready
Shippers are strongly advised to familiarize themselves with the SOLAS regulation and its adoption in national laws. It is recommended to understand the way the VGM can be determined and how and when it needs to be submitted to the carrier that issues the Bill of Lading or Seaway Bill.

Who, how and when
• The shipper is required to provide the VGM to the carrier that is issuing the Bill of Lading or Seaway Bill. In CEVA’s case this is our Non-Vessel-Operating-Carrier (NVOCC) Pyramid Lines.
• The VGM includes the cargo, dunnage, packaging material and the tare weight of the container
• Deadlines for the provision of the data are based on various factors and will differ
• The most important information to be provided are the VGM and the signature of the authorized person. Additional information may be required.

For more information please contact your CEVA contact person or email us at oceanfreight@cevalogistics.com.

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