

LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Guidelines on the Verification of Gross Mass of a Container with Cargo Packed in Hong Kong

Purpose

Members are invited to note this information paper pertaining to the guidelines on the verification of gross mass ('VGM') of a container with cargo packed in Hong Kong.

Background

2. The amendment to Chapter VI, Regulation 2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea ('SOLAS')¹ will be in force in Hong Kong on 1 July 2016. The amendment requires mandatory VGM of containers prior to loading onto vessels to which SOLAS Chapter VI applies. Details are set out in the Marine Department Notice Nos. 43/2016, 87/2016 and 90/2016 at *Annexes 1 to 3* respectively.

Briefing Sessions

3. Several briefing sessions were held from April to June 2016, the presentation slides of which can be downloaded from the website of Marine Department (MD).²

Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions

4. The "Guideline on the Verification of Gross Mass of a Container with Cargo Packed in Hong Kong" and a set of FAQs can be downloaded from the website.³ For further enquiries, please call the Marine Industrial Safety Section at 2852 4477.

Local Vessels Safety Branch
Shipping Division
Marine Department
June 2016

¹ http://www.worldshipping.org/industry-issues/safety/SOLAS_CHAPTER_VI_Regulation_2_Paragraphs_4-6.pdf

² http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/ocean/pdf/miss_vgm_presentation.pdf

³ http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/ocean/miss_vgm.html and
http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/faq/faq_miss_vgm.html

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 43 OF 2016⁴

(New Shipping Requirement)

**Guidelines on the Verification of Gross Mass of a Container
with Cargo Packed in Hong Kong**

The amendment to SOLAS Chapter VI, Regulation 2 will be in force in Hong Kong on 1 July 2016. The amendment requires mandatory verification of the gross mass (VGM) of containers prior to loading onto vessels to which SOLAS Chapter VI applies. The Marine Department has updated its website with information relevant to the VGM requirements. Additionally, making reference to the concerned guidance of IMO, a “Guideline on the Verification of Gross Mass of a Container with Cargo Packed in Hong Kong” has been published to provide guidance to operators in the industry to comply with the new requirement.

The guideline and the associated information are available in the website of Marine Department at the address below. Operators in relation to shipping and forwarding industries are recommended to browse the webpage and take necessary actions accordingly.

- http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/ocean/miss_vgm.html

Maisie CHENG
Director of Marine

Marine Department
Government of HKSAR
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Action file: SD/MISS/117/1(5)

⁴ <http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/notices/pdf/mdn16043.pdf>

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 87 OF 2016⁵

(Shipping Requirement)

International Shipment of Packed Containers
on or after 1 July 2016 by Sea

The Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Carriage of Cargoes) Regulation, Cap. 369AV, (Revision 2016) (hereunder called “the Regulation”) will be in force on 1 July 2016. Section 3A of the Regulation incorporated the latest requirements of the SOLAS Chapter VI Regulation 2 to require shippers to verify and declare the verified gross mass of packed containers to carriers before loading them on vessels.

On 23 May 2016, after considered the concerns of member States, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) issued circular MSC.1/Circ.1548 (as enclosed) advising members to take practical and pragmatic measures to enforce the above-mentioned requirement in the initial 3-month period provided that the stability and safe operation of vessels are not affected. Considering the similar concerns of operators in the industry and the practical arrangement of other countries, Marine Department adopts the advice of IMO and will enforce the requirements in a practical and pragmatic manner from 1 July 2016 to 30 September 2016.

H.M. TUNG
Director of Marine (Ag.)

Marine Department
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⁵ <http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/notices/pdf/mdn16087.pdf>

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 90 OF 2016⁶

(Shipping Requirement)

**Approved Weighing Equipment for Verification of Gross Mass of
a Packed Container**

The Merchant Shipping (Safety) (Carriage of Cargoes) Regulation, Cap. 369AV, (Revision 2016) (hereunder called “the Regulation”) will come into force on 1 July 2016. Section 3A of the Regulation incorporated the new requirement of Amendment to SOLAS Chapter VI Regulation 2 requires shippers to verify the gross mass of packed containers and declare to carriers before loading them on vessel.

One of the methods for verification of container gross mass (VGM) is to weigh a packed container directly by using an approved weighing equipment. As such, a piece of the record of gross mass of the packed container is needed to be issued by the concerned weighing operator.

Some approved weighing equipment operators do not possess lifting appliances in situ for lifting the packed container from the trailer for measuring the sole gross mass of a container. In that case, these operators are required to carry out two weighing operations, i.e. one for the trailer and one for the packed container plus the trailer. They are required to provide two record sheets as proof of compliance with the above weighing operations. The VGM of the packed container is the result of the subtraction of the two readings.

The approval status may be revoked if the approved weighing equipment operator does not follow the above instructions. The public accessible list of approved weighing equipment on the Marine Department’s website provides information on the above two types of operators.

H.M. TUNG
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Marine Department
Government of HKSAR
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⁶ <http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/notices/pdf/mdn16090.pdf>