



**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

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**DG's Order No. 01of 2016**

**Subject: Guidelines for implementing amendments to Regulation 2 of Chapter VI of the SOLAS Convention entering into force with effect from 01<sup>st</sup> July 2016 concerning Verified Gross Mass of the container.**

**To all Ship Owners, Ship Operators and Managers, Masters and Officers of Merchant Ships, Agents, Charterers, Cargo Packers, Cargo Consolidators, Hauliers, Freight Forwarders, Shippers, Consignors, Training Providers, Inspectors of Cargoes, Port Authorities, ICD and Off-Dock Operators, Terminal Operators and others involved in the transport of containers.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. The existing regulations pertaining to declaration of gross mass of the container did not always ensure that there was no deviation between the actual gross 'mass of the container and its declared gross mass, even though Regulation 2.3 of SOLAS chapter VI required shippers to ensure that the gross mass of the cargo unit was in accordance with the gross mass declared on the shipping documents.
2. The substantial deviation between the declared gross mass of the container and its actual gross mass resulted in several shipping casualties, as the actual weight distribution on board the ship differed from the stowage plan of the ship. The unaccounted deviations in container gross mass resulted in stack collapses, lost containers, damage to ships, cargo, environment, *etc.* In addition, this also resulted in economic losses including supply chain disruptions, as containers scheduled for carriage could not be accepted due to the vessel reaching its permissible marks before the completion of loading on account of the deviation in gross mass of the containers.
3. The environmental and economic costs incurred due to deviation in container gross mass declaration are passed down the supply chain leading to greater costs for all concerned. All these issues, including the prime issue of safety at sea and pollution prevention necessitated a re-look at the existing provisions.
4. Following concerns raised by the shipping industry regarding the mis-declaration of the declared gross mass of packed containers, the 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Maritime Safety

Committee (MSC) meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) held in November 2014, adopted amendments to Regulation 2 of Chapter VI of SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea, 1974) Convention, incorporating new paragraphs 4, 5 & 6 to the existing Regulation 2 pertaining to Cargo information through RESOLUTION MSC.380 (94) (Annex-1).

5. The SOLAS amendment places a requirement on the shipper of packed containers to verify and provide the container's gross mass to the carrier and terminal representative prior to loading onto a ship, and provide this information in the shipping document, duly signed by the authorized person of the shipper. This amendment gives shippers two possible options for deciding which method to use for obtaining such an accurate gross mass. VGM is effective from 1 July 2016.
6. IMO has issued guidelines regarding the Verified Gross Mass of a container carrying cargo dated 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014 through MSC.1/Circ.1475 (Annex-2).
7. IMO Secretary-General has issued Circular Letter No.3624 dated 10 February 2016 for awareness and effective implementation of amended SOLAS regulation VI/2 (Annex-3).
8. IMO has issued advice to administrations, port state control authorities, companies, port terminals and masters regarding the SOLAS requirements for Verified Gross Mass of packed containers through MSC.1/Circ.1548 dated 23 May 2016 (Annex-4).

#### APPLICATION:

9. Unless specified in paragraph 10, the SOLAS requirements to verify the gross mass of a packed container apply to all containers to which the CSC applies, and which are to be stowed onto any ship. These guidelines apply in relation to export consignments from the Bangladesh; the gross mass of inbound containers will have either been verified in the country of loading or through prior agreement between shipper and carrier.
10. The provisions of SOLAS Chapter VI, Part A, Regulation 2 do not apply to:
  - (i) A packed container on a chassis or trailer to be driven on a ro-ro ship which is engaged on short international voyages.
  - (ii) Cargo items tendered by a shipper to the master for packing into a container already on board the ship.
  - (iii) "Offshore containers" to which the CSC, according to the *Guidelines for the approval of offshore containers handled in open seas* (MSC/Circ.860) and the *Revised recommendations on harmonized interpretation and implementation of the International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, as amended* (CSC.1/Circ.138/Rev.1), does not apply.
11. Where the application of a trade provision is specified in a contract of sale and there is any conflict between the trade provision and SOLAS, SOLAS takes precedence.

#### PROVISIONS OF NATIONAL LAW:

12. In exercise of the powers conferred by section 506 of Bangladesh Merchant Shipping Ordinance, 1983 (Ord. XXVI of 1983), government has notified Bangladesh Merchant Shipping (Convention Implementation) Rules, 2006. According to rule 4 of Bangladesh

Merchant Shipping (Convention Implementation) Rules, 2006; Ship, respective organization and the classification society approved by the government shall comply with the provisions of the convention. Shippers are therefore needed to comply with the SOLAS requirement of Verified Gross Mass of a container carrying cargo.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

13. Unless there is anything repugnant in the subject, or context, for the purpose of these Guidelines terms shall have the meaning as defined in para 2 of MSC.1/Circ.1475: Guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo as attached in Annex-2.
14. All those words and terms, not defined in these guidelines, shall be implied according to the usual meanings of English dictionary.

#### **DELIBERATIONS:**

15. Circular No-02/2016 dated 03.05.2016 were issued by the Principal Officer, Mercantile Marine Office informing all concerned to comply with the new SOLAS requirements for Verified Gross Mass of laden containers.
16. To avoid hindrances to trade while complying with the new regulations, meetings were held with the various stakeholders on 02.06.2016 and 12.06.2016 at the Department of Shipping, Dhaka and at Port Training Complex, Chittagong on 20.06.2016 to discuss various issues on the implementation of SOLAS requirements for Verified Gross Mass of packed containers.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE:**

##### **A. General provisions:**

17. Subsequent to the deliberations with the various stakeholders, following has been decided with regard to implementing the amendments to Regulation 2 of SOLAS Chapter VI. For ease of reference in this Order, the methods specified at SOLAS Chapter VI, Regulation 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 are referred to as **Method 1** and **Method 2** respectively. Shippers from Bangladesh may adopt either of the methods for verifying the gross mass of the containers.
18. It should be noted that certain types of cargo items (e.g. scrap metal, un-bagged grain, and other cargo in bulk) do not easily lend themselves to individual weighing of the items to be packed in the container. In such cases, the usage of Method 2 would be inappropriate and impractical, and Method 1 should be used instead.
19. Approved weighbridge operators are the official source of information for the verified gross mass of packed containers. All authorized weighbridge operators shall weigh each packed and sealed container individually regardless of size, whether FCL or LCL, and regardless of the number of shippers with shipments loaded inside the container.
20. The verified gross mass information of each container shall then be conveyed to the single entity that packed and sealed the container (whether shipper, forwarder, master forwarder,

consolidator, logistics or other third party service providers) who shall then forward the same to the carrier.

21. **Off-docks** or other facilities having calibrated and certified weighbridges and DoS approval for method 1 of VGM shall issue VGM certificate in a form approved by DoS.
22. **ICD's** may use Method 1 of VGM if they have DoS approval for doing so, otherwise VGM shall be carried out at approved off-docks.
23. **EPZ** or other factory premises approved for Method 2 of VGM may carry out VGM there; otherwise VGM Method 1 shall be completed at any approved off-docks and weighbridges.
24. **Shippers at Mongla port** may use VGM Method 2 if approved or otherwise VGM Method 1 from any approved off-docks or weighbridges or MPA weighbridges.
25. After verifying the gross mass by either of the specified methods, the shipper is required to inform the verified gross mass of the container (except for containers carried on a chassis, or a trailer when such containers are driven on of a ro-ro ship engaged in short international voyage) to the master of the vessel, or his representative, to enable preparation of the stowage plan, sufficiently in advance of the loading. The master or his representative and the terminal shall specify the time frame before which the information is required to be provided by the shipper. The information regarding the reporting time frame of the Master/terminal shall be available in the public domain and be easily accessible by all concerned including the shippers.
26. With regard to shipper informing the terminal, the IMO Circular No.MSC.1/Circ.1475 dated 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014 pertaining to 'guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo'; at para 6.3.1 has specified that the shipper may meet its obligation under the SOLAS regulations by submitting the verified gross mass to the shipping company. It shall therefore be the responsibility of the shipping company to inform the terminal. The shipper may submit the verified gross mass to the terminal representative upon delivery of the container to the terminal, if required.
27. The shipper shall ensure that the shipping document containing the information about the gross mass of the container is signed by a person duly authorized by the shipper. The name and designation of the person signing the shipping document should be clearly legible along with the contact details (phone nos. & email ID.), to enable the person to be contacted at any time during the course of the shipment of the container. The information may be submitted in electronic format (EDI) using Class III Digital Signature for verification of the authenticity of the document.
28. The shipper of the container shall also ensure that the requirements of IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units 2014 (Le. CTU Code) are adhered to while packing/stuffing the container.

## **B. METHOD 1:**

29. Shippers adopting Method 1 for verifying the gross mass of the container shall ensure the following:

- 29.1. Verification of gross mass of the container shall be carried out at a location away from the port/terminal to avoid congestion at the port/terminal area. The container should preferably be weighed by weighbridge at the container stuffing point/Off-Dock/container freight station/ICD, or en-route to the port/terminal.
- 29.2. The weighbridge/weighing appliances used for ascertaining the gross mass of the container shall be approved by the DoS and should comply with the requirements specified in Section 'E' from para 43 to para 50 of this Order.
- 29.3. For obtaining approval to adopt Method 1, the following procedure shall be followed:
  - 29.3.1. The weighbridge operator/ stuffing point/Off-Dock/container freight station/ICD shall submit the details of the certified and calibrated appliances proposed to be used for verifying the gross mass of the container along with details of all other relevant documents, procedures, QMS to the Department of Shipping (DoS) along with applicable fee for processing the issue of approval.
  - 29.3.2. The DoS shall inspect weighbridge/stuffing point/Off-Dock/container freight station/ICD to verify that the certified process, associated instruments etc., confirm the ability to comply with the requirements for adopting the procedures specified in Method 1.
  - 29.3.3. On successful completion of the inspection, the DoS shall grant approval to the certified process of the weighbridge operator/ stuffing point/Off-Dock/container freight station/ICD.
- 29.4. List of companies/shippers that are approved by the Department of Shipping for using Method 1 [i.e SOLAS Chapter VI, Reg 2.4.1] for verifying the gross mass of the container shall be displayed on the website of the Department of Shipping.
- 29.5. The verified gross mass of the container obtained at the weighbridge/weighing appliances shall be provided by the weighbridge/weighing appliances operator in a tamper proof document to the shipper. It shall be the responsibility of the shipper to upload the relevant information specified in Annex- 5 of this Order on a dedicated secure website that can be accessed by all concerned including the master of the vessel, or his representative. Until such a dedicated secure website is approved, the information shall be provided in a tamper proof document. The information may also be forwarded by the shipper through electronic means to the master or his representative, immediately on the verification of the gross mass of the container.

### **C. METHOD 2:**

30. Shippers adopting Method 2 for verifying the gross mass of the container need to be aware that Method 2 may not be suitable for all types of cargoes. Certain cargoes like scrap metal, bulk cargo, *etc.* may impose substantial challenges and costs if Method 2 is adopted for such cargo.
31. Shippers intending to adopt Method 2 for verification of gross mass of container are required to have their certified method approved by the Department of Shipping. For obtaining this approval, shippers shall comply with the following:

- 31.1. The certified method of the shipper shall be part of a Quality Management System (QMS) complying with the requirements of ISO 9001:2008/2015 standards, or such updated standards that is applicable from time to time.
  - 31.2. The shipper shall maintain calibrated weighing scales duly certificated by Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI). List of such certified weighing scales proposed to be used in the certified method for verifying the gross mass of the container shall be maintained.
  - 31.3. It is the responsibility of the owner of the container to ensure that the tare weight of the container is correctly marked on the container. However, the shipper shall have mechanism to re-verify the weight of the empty container, if required to ensure that the weight of the empty container conforms to the tare weight marked on the container. For such re-verification whenever required, a combination of electronic scale and pulley/chain block, or other relevant methods are also acceptable. During re-verification, if any noticeable deviation is observed between the actual weight of the empty container and the tare weight marked on the container, such empty container should not be accepted for stuffing the container without ensuring that the tare weight marked on the container reflects the actual weight of the container.
  - 31.4. The shipper shall demonstrate the ability to display the information regarding the verified gross mass of the container and other relevant information as specified in Annex-5 of this Order on a dedicated secure website. The shipper may establish its own website, or have tie-up with other dedicated secure website so that the information can be accessed by all concerned including the master of the vessel, or his representative. The verified gross mass of the container shall be provided in a tamper proof document. Until such a dedicated secure website is approved, the information shall be provided in a tamper proof document. The information may also be forwarded by the shipper through electronic means to the master or his representative, immediately on the verification of the gross mass of the container.
32. For obtaining approval to adopt Method 2, the following procedure shall be followed:
- 32.1. Shipper shall submit the details of the certified method proposed to be used for verifying the gross mass of the container along with details of all other relevant documents as specified in Annex-6 of this Order to the Department of Shipping (DoS) along with applicable fee for processing the issue of approval.
  - 32.2. The DoS shall have the premises of the shipper inspected to verify that the certified process, associated instruments etc., confirm the ability of the shipper to comply with the requirements for adopting the procedures specified in Method 2.
  - 32.3. On successful completion of the inspection, the DoS shall grant approval to the certified process of the shipper.
  - 32.4. List of companies/shippers that are approved by the Department of Shipping for using Method 2 [i.e SOLAS Chapter VI, Reg 2.4.2] for verifying the gross mass of the container shall be displayed on the website of the Department of Shipping.

#### **D. DEDICATED SECURE WEBSITE**

33. Shippers/Terminals/ports/Off-dock/weighbridge operators, *etc.* are encouraged to develop dedicated website, either singularly or collectively, so as to provide required information about the verified gross mass of the container to all concerned. In such instances, they shall comply with the requirements specified at Section 'D' paragraphs 34 to 42 of this Order.
34. The dedicated secure website shall have its server, associated backup systems *etc.*, located within Bangladesh so that it is subject to Bangladesh cyber security laws and other associated laws to ensure the integrity and security of the data.
35. Dedicated secure website desiring to participate in this programme shall demonstrate to the Department of Shipping the ability for displaying the information on real time basis to all concerned along with details of shippers, weighbridges/weighing appliances, terminals, carriers, *etc.* participating in their system. The website may in addition provide service of electronically transmitting information to the master or his representative.
36. The dedicated secure website shall comply with the requirements of information security management systems, or such updated standards that is applicable from time to time, as follows:
  - 36.1. ISO/IEC 27001:2013 (Information technology - Security techniques - Information security management systems - Requirements)
  - 36.2. ISO/IEC 27002:2013 (Information technology - Security techniques - Code of practice for information security controls)
  - 36.3. ISO/IEC 20000 (Information technology - Service management).
37. The dedicated secure website shall have a firewall system designed to prevent unauthorized access to, or from the network conforming to the requirements of the latest industry standards.
38. The dedicated secure website shall be in possession of a valid Quality Management System (QMS) certificate confirming compliance with: ISO 9001:2008/2015 standards, or such updated standards that is applicable from time to time.
39. The dedicated website shall also demonstrate its ability to retain information for a period of 3 years on the website. In addition, the website shall be able to retain information for a further period of 2 years in external stowage devices, which can be accessed whenever required.
40. The information provided in the public domain by the dedicated secure website shall only be as specified by the Department of Shipping from time to time.
41. The dedicated secure website shall provide without any cost, the information regarding gross mass of containers and other relevant information to all Government Authorities like Department of Shipping, Mercantile Marine Office, Customs department, Port authorities *etc.* In addition, the dedicated secure website shall also provide periodical/annual reports to the Department of Shipping including other information available in the database of the website whenever required by the Department of Shipping without any cost.

42. List of dedicated secure websites accepted by the Department of Shipping for providing the service shall be displayed on the website of the Department of Shipping.

#### **E. WEIGHBRIDGE/WEIGHING APPLIANCES:**

43. The weighbridge/weighing appliances participating in the programme shall be Electronic type weighbridge/weighing appliances.
44. The weighbridge/weighing appliances shall be calibrated and be in possession of a valid certificate from Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).
45. The weighbridge/weighing appliances shall be in possession of a valid Quality Management System (QMS) certificate confirming compliance with: ISO 9001:2008/2015 standards, or such updated standards that is applicable from time to time, within a period of 6 months from the date of issue of this Order.
46. The weighbridge/weighing appliances shall have adequate capacity to weigh the loaded container along with the trailer/truck/lorry, if required.
47. The weighbridge/weighing appliances shall have tamper proof mechanism that prevents tampering with the calibration.
48. The weighbridge/ weighing appliances shall provide information about verified gross mass in a tamper proof document.
49. The weighbridge/weighing appliances shall verify the calibration with standard weights at frequent intervals and the details of such verification should be recorded. The details of the verification should be available during inspection by authorized personnel.
50. Noting the current practices of weighing of containers across Bangladesh and to facilitate trade as well as to ensure that the spirit of the Convention is adhered to, weighbridge/ weighing appliances operators desiring to participate in the programme need to approach the DoS along with copy of their valid calibration certificate from Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), copy of the Quality Management System (QMS) certificate complying with the requirements of ISO 9001:2008/2015 standards (or such updated standards that is applicable from time to time) and copy of tamper proof document proposed to be issued by the weighbridge/weighing appliances for acceptance. Format of the check list that shall be utilized by DoS for acceptance of the weighbridge/ weighing appliances is provided at Annex-7.

#### **F. PERMISSIBLE TOLERANCE LIMITS:**

51. Globally, matters relating to weights and measures including maximum permissible errors in weights *etc.* are dealt by the International Organization of Legal Metrology (i.e. Organisation Internationale de Metrologie Legale) — an inter-Governmental treaty organization established in 1955 to promote the global harmonization of matters pertaining to legal metrology. In Bangladesh Department of Legal Metrology of the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) under the Ministry of Industries is the nodal department with regard to the matters pertaining to weights and measures.



52. The Bangladesh Standards of Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1982 was enacted in Bangladesh to establish and enforce standards of weights & measures and other aspects pertaining to legal metrology. Under the provisions of The Bangladesh Standards of Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1982, the Bangladesh Standards of Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1982 have been notified. The said Ordinance & Rules specify the various aspects with regard to calibration, certification, and the maximum permissible errors. The maximum permissible error of the verified gross mass of the container obtained at different locations is therefore required to be governed by the provisions of the Legal Metrology Act and its Rules. However, to facilitate the ease of compliance, during the initial stages of implementation, a variation up-to: 1000 kgs may be considered as acceptable between the weights obtained at different locations. However, it is reiterated that this figure of 1000 kgs is only for facilitation purpose. In case of disagreement between parties, the provisions of the said Ordinance and its Rules shall be applicable.

#### **G. ENFORCEMENT AND MISCELLANEOUS:**

53. In accordance with the provisions of Regulation 5.5 of Chapter VI of the SOLAS Convention, the verified gross mass of container exceeding the maximum gross weight indicated on the container safety approval plate (CSC Plate) shall not be loaded on ships under any circumstances. No tolerance in this regard is allowed.
54. The decision of the Master of a vessel whether to accept or reject a container shall be final.
55. Dedicated secure website and weighbridges/weighing appliances participating in this programme shall be audited/ inspected by authorized personnel.
56. Weighbridge/weighing appliances participating in the programme and providing incorrect verified gross mass of container may be debarred.
57. Dedicated secure website accepted for participation in the programme and not carrying out the specified responsibilities shall be debarred.
58. Container owners not marking the correct tare weight on the container shall be displayed on the website of the Department of Shipping.
59. The names of the shippers defaulting in the declaration of the verified gross mass of containers shall be displayed on the website of the Department of Shipping.
60. Instances of mis-declaration of verified gross mass of container are to be reported to the Department of Shipping.
61. According to rule-5 (Failure to comply with the provisions of the conventions) of Bangladesh Merchant Shipping (Convention Implementation) Rules, 2006; - If the provisions of the convention are not complied with, the govt. shall suspend the running activities of the organization until the failure is rectified.
62. In the event of failure with the provisions of the convention entity responsible shall be liable to commercial penalty such as - Repacking costs, administration fees for amending documents, demurrage charges etc.
63. In the event of an incident or an issue with a container stow as part of Port State Control or an investigation by the Regulator, the carrier and/or their terminal representative should be

able to demonstrate that they have systems in place to ensure prior to the loading of packed containers that they have the verified gross mass for each container and that any changes in the container gross mass notified between pre-booking and loading aboard a ship are managed.

64. The requirements of this DG's Order will be mandatory with effect from 1st July 2016.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Z Bhuiyan', written in a cursive style.

**Commodore M Zakiur Rahman Bhuiyan, OSP, BSP, psc, BN**  
Director General

**ANNEX 1**

**RESOLUTION MSC.380(94)  
(adopted on 21 November 2014)**

**AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION  
FOR THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA (SOLAS), 1974, AS AMENDED**

THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE,

RECALLING Article 28(b) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Committee,

RECALLING ALSO article VIII(b)(vi)(2) of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974 ("the Convention"), concerning the amendment procedure applicable to the annex to the Convention, other than to the provisions of chapter I,

HAVING CONSIDERED, at its ninety-fourth session, amendments to the Convention, proposed and circulated in accordance with article VIII(b)(i) thereof,

1 ADOPTS, in accordance with article VIII(b)(iv) of the Convention, amendments to the Convention, the text of which is set out in the annex to the present resolution;

2 DETERMINES, in accordance with article VIII(b)(vi)(2)(bb) of the Convention, that the said amendments shall be deemed to have been accepted on 1 January 2016 unless, prior to that date, more than one third of the Contracting Governments to the Convention or Contracting Governments, the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than 50% of the gross tonnage of the world's merchant fleet, have notified to the Secretary-General of the Organization their objections to the amendments;

3 INVITES SOLAS Contracting Governments to note that, in accordance with article VIII(b)(vii)(2) of the Convention, the amendments shall enter into force on 1 July 2016 upon their acceptance in accordance with paragraph 2 above;

4 REQUESTS the Secretary-General, for the purposes of article VIII(b)(v) of the Convention, to transmit certified copies of the present resolution and the text of the amendments contained in the annex to all Contracting Governments to the Convention; and

5 ALSO REQUESTS the Secretary-General to transmit copies of this resolution and its annex to Members of the Organization which are not Contracting Governments to the Convention.

ANNEX

**AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE  
SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA (SOLAS), 1974, AS AMENDED**

**CHAPTER II-2  
CONSTRUCTION – PROTECTION, FIRE DETECTION AND FIRE EXTINCTION**

**Part C  
Suppression of fire**

**Regulation 10 – Fire fighting**

1 The title of existing paragraph 5.2 is replaced as follows:

**"5.2 Machinery spaces of category A containing internal combustion machinery"**

**CHAPTER VI  
CARRIAGE OF CARGOES AND OIL FUELS**

**Part A  
General Provisions**

**Regulation 2 – Cargo information**

2 The following new paragraphs 4 to 6 are added after existing paragraph 3:

"4 In the case of cargo carried in a container<sup>\*</sup>, except for containers carried on a chassis or a trailer when such containers are driven on or off a ro-ro ship engaged in short international voyages as defined in regulation III/3, the gross mass according to paragraph 2.1 of this regulation shall be verified by the shipper, either by:

- .1 weighing the packed container using calibrated and certified equipment; or
- .2 weighing all packages and cargo items, including the mass of pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container and adding the tare mass of the container to the sum of the single masses, using a certified method approved by the competent authority of the State in which packing of the container was completed.

5 The shipper of a container shall ensure the verified gross mass<sup>\*\*</sup> is stated in the shipping document. The shipping document shall be:

- .1 signed by a person duly authorized by the shipper; and
- .2 submitted to the master or his representative and to the terminal representative sufficiently in advance, as required by the master or his representative, to be used in the preparation of the ship stowage plan<sup>\*\*\*</sup>.

6 If the shipping document, with regard to a packed container, does not provide the verified gross mass and the master or his representative and the terminal representative have not obtained the verified gross mass of the packed container, it shall not be loaded on to the ship.

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\* The term "container" should be considered as having the same meaning as defined and applied in the International Convention for Safe Containers (CSC), 1972, as amended, taking into account the *Guidelines for the approval of offshore containers handled in open seas* (MSC/Circ.860) and the *Revised recommendations on harmonized interpretation and implementation of the International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, as amended* (CSC.1/Circ.138/Rev.1).

\*\* Refer to the *Guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo* (MSC.1/Circ.1475).

\*\*\* This document may be presented by means of EDP or EDI transmission techniques. The signature may be an electronic signature or may be replaced by the name, in capitals, of the person authorized to sign."

## CHAPTER XI-1 SPECIAL MEASURES TO ENHANCE MARITIME SAFETY

3 The following new regulation 7 is added after existing regulation 6:

### **"Regulation 7 – Atmosphere testing instrument for enclosed spaces**

Every ship to which chapter I applies shall carry an appropriate portable atmosphere testing instrument or instruments\*. As a minimum, these shall be capable of measuring concentrations of oxygen, flammable gases or vapours, hydrogen sulphide and carbon monoxide prior to entry into enclosed spaces\*\*. Instruments carried under other requirements may satisfy this regulation. Suitable means shall be provided for the calibration of all such instruments.

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\* Refer to the *Guidelines to facilitate the selection of portable atmosphere testing instruments for enclosed spaces as required by SOLAS regulation XI-1/7* (MSC.1/Circ.1477).

\*\* Refer to the *Revised recommendations for entering enclosed spaces aboard ships* (resolution A.1050(27))."

**APPENDIX**  
**CERTIFICATES**

**Record of Equipment for Cargo Ship Safety (Form C)**  
**Record of Equipment for Cargo Ship Safety (Form E)**

4 Section 2 of the Record of Equipment for Cargo Ship Safety (Form C) and the Record of Equipment for Cargo Ship Safety (Form E), is replaced with the following:

"2 **Details of life-saving appliances**

1	Total number of persons for which life-saving appliances are provided .....	Port Side	Starboard Side
2	Total number of davit launched lifeboats	.....	.....
2.1	Total number of persons accommodated by them	.....	.....
2.2	Number of self-righting partially enclosed lifeboats (regulation III/43 <sup>1</sup> )	.....	.....
2.3	Number of totally enclosed lifeboats (regulation III/31 and LSA Code, section 4.6)	.....	.....
2.4	Number of lifeboats with a self-contained air support system (regulation III/31 and LSA Code, section 4.8)	.....	.....
2.5	Number of fire-protected lifeboats (regulation III/31 and LSA Code, section 4.9)	.....	.....
2.6	Other lifeboats	.....	.....
2.6.1	Number	.....	.....
2.6.2	Type	.....	.....
3	Total number of free-fall lifeboats	.....	.....
3.1	Total number of persons accommodated by them	.....	.....
3.2	Number of totally enclosed lifeboats (regulation III/31 and LSA Code, section 4.7)	.....	.....
3.3	Number of lifeboats with a self-contained air support system (regulation III/31 and LSA Code, section 4.8)	.....	.....
3.4	Number of fire-protected lifeboats (regulation III/31 and LSA Code, section 4.9)	.....	.....
4	Number of motor lifeboats (included in the total lifeboats shown in 2 and 3 above)	.....	.....
4.1	Number of lifeboats fitted with searchlights	.....	.....
5	Number of rescue boats	.....	.....
5.1	Number of boats which are included in the total lifeboats shown in 2 and 3 above	.....	.....
6	Liferafts	.....	.....
6.1	Those for which approved launching appliances are required	.....	.....
6.1.1	Number of liferafts	.....	.....

1 Refer to the 1983 amendments to SOLAS (MSC.6(48)), applicable to ships constructed on or after 1 July 1986, but before 1 July 1998.

2 **Details of life-saving appliances** (continued)

6.1.2	Number of persons accommodated by them	.....
6.2	Those for which approved launching appliances are not required	
6.2.1	Number of liferafts	.....
6.2.2	Number of persons accommodated by them	.....
6.3	Number of liferafts required by regulation III/31.1.4	.....
7	Number of lifebuoys	.....
8	Number of lifejackets	.....
9	Immersion suits	
9.1	Total number	.....
9.2	Number of suits complying with the requirements for lifejackets	.....
10	Number of anti-exposure suits	.....
11	Radio installations used in life-saving appliances	
11.1	Number of search and rescue locating devices	
11.1.1	Radar search and rescue transponders (SART)	.....
11.1.2	AIS search and rescue transmitters (AIS-SART)	.....
11.2	Number of two-way VHF radiotelephone apparatus	.....

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MSC.1/Circ.1475  
9 June 2014

**GUIDELINES REGARDING THE VERIFIED GROSS MASS  
OF A CONTAINER CARRYING CARGO**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-third session (14 to 23 May 2014), having considered the proposal by the Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers, at its eighteenth session (16 to 20 September 2013), approved the *Guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo*, as set out in the annex.

2 The Guidelines are intended to establish a common approach for the implementation and enforcement of the SOLAS requirements regarding the verification of the gross mass of packed containers.

3 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed Guidelines to the attention of all parties concerned.

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## ANNEX

### GUIDELINES REGARDING THE VERIFIED GROSS MASS OF A CONTAINER CARRYING CARGO

#### 1 Introduction

1.1 To ensure the safety of the ship, the safety of workers both aboard ships and ashore, the safety of cargo and overall safety at sea, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), as amended, requires in chapter VI, part A, regulation 2 that packed containers' gross mass are verified prior to stowage aboard ship. The shipper is responsible for the verification of the gross mass of a container carrying cargo (hereinafter "a packed container"). The shipper is also responsible for ensuring that the verified gross mass is communicated in the shipping documents sufficiently in advance to be used by the ship's master or his representative and the terminal representative in the preparation of the ship stowage plan. In the absence of the shipper providing the verified gross mass of the packed container, the container should not be loaded on to the ship unless the master or his representative and the terminal representative have obtained the verified gross mass through other means.

1.2 The purpose of these Guidelines is to establish a common approach for the implementation and enforcement of the SOLAS requirements regarding the verification of the gross mass of packed containers. The Guidelines provide recommendations on how to interpret and apply the provisions of the SOLAS requirements. They also identify issues that may arise from the application of these requirements and provide guidance for how such issues should be resolved. Adherence to these Guidelines will facilitate compliance with the SOLAS requirements by shippers of containerized shipments, and they will assist other parties in international containerized supply chains, including shipping companies and port terminal facilities and their employees, in understanding their respective roles in accomplishing the enhancement of the safe handling, stowage and transport of containers.

#### 2 Definitions

2.1 For the purpose of these Guidelines:

2.1.1 *Administration* means the Government of the State whose flag the ship is entitled to fly.

2.1.2 *Calibrated and certified equipment* means a scale, weighbridge, lifting equipment or any other device, capable of determining the actual gross mass of a packed container or of packages and cargo items, pallets, dunnage and other packing and securing material, that meets the accuracy standards and requirements of the State in which the equipment is being used.

2.1.3 *Cargo items* has the same general meaning as the term "cargo" in the International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, as amended (hereinafter referred to as "the CSC"), and means any goods, wares, merchandise, liquids, gases, solids and articles of every kind whatsoever carried in containers pursuant to a contract of carriage. However, ship's equipment and ship's supplies<sup>1</sup>, including ship's spare parts and stores, carried in containers are not regarded as cargo.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the *Revised recommendations on the safe transport of dangerous cargoes and related activities in port areas* (MSC.1/Circ.1216).

2.1.4 *Container* has the same meaning as the term "container" in the CSC and means an article of transport equipment:

- (a) of a permanent character and accordingly strong enough to be suitable for repeated use;
- (b) specially designed to facilitate the transport of goods, by one or more modes of transport, without intermediate reloading;
- (c) designed to be secured and/or readily handled, having corner fittings for these purposes; and
- (d) of a size such that the area enclosed by the four outer bottom corners is either:
  - (i) at least 14 m<sup>2</sup> (150 sq. ft.); or
  - (ii) at least 7 m<sup>2</sup> (75 sq. ft.) if it is fitted with top corner fittings.

2.1.5 *Contract of carriage* means a contract in which a shipping company, against the payment of freight, undertakes to carry goods from one place to another. The contract may take the form of, or be evidenced by a document such as sea waybill, a bill of lading, or multi-modal transport document.

2.1.6 *Gross mass* means the combined mass of a container's tare mass and the masses of all packages and cargo items, including pallets, dunnage and other packing material and securing materials packed into the container (see also "*Verified gross mass*").

2.1.7 *Package* means one or more cargo items that are tied together, packed, wrapped, boxed or parcelled for transportation. Examples of packages include, but are not limited to, parcels, boxes, packets and cartons.

2.1.8 *Packed container* means a container, as previously defined, loaded ("stuffed" or "filled") with liquids, gases, solids, packages and cargo items, including pallets, dunnage, and other packing material and securing materials.

2.1.9 *Packing material* means any material used or for use with packages and cargo items to prevent damage, including, but not limited to, crates, packing blocks, drums, cases, boxes, barrels, and skids. Excluded from the definition is any material within individual sealed packages to protect the cargo item(s) inside the package.

2.1.10 *Securing material* means all dunnage, lashing and other equipment used to block, brace, and secure packed cargo items in a container.

2.1.11 *Ship* means any vessel to which SOLAS chapter VI applies. Excluded from this definition are roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) ships engaged on short international voyages<sup>2</sup> where the containers are carried on a chassis or trailer and are loaded and unloaded by being driven on and off such a ship.

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<sup>2</sup> SOLAS regulation III/2 defines "short international voyage" as an international voyage in the course of which a ship is not more than 200 miles from a port or place in which the passengers and crew could be placed in safety, and which does not exceed 600 miles in length between the last port of call in the country in which the voyage begins and the final port of destination.

2.1.12 *Shipper* means a legal entity or person named on the bill of lading or sea waybill or equivalent multimodal transport document (e.g. "through" bill of lading) as shipper and/or who (or in whose name or on whose behalf) a contract of carriage has been concluded with a shipping company.

2.1.13 *Shipping document* means a document used by the shipper to communicate the verified gross mass of the packed container. This document can be part of the shipping instructions to the shipping company or a separate communication (e.g. a declaration including a weight certificate produced by a weigh station).

2.1.14 *Tare mass* means the mass of an empty container that does not contain any packages, cargo items, pallets, dunnage, or any other packing material or securing material.

2.1.15 *Terminal representative* means a person acting on behalf of a legal entity or person engaged in the business of providing wharfage, dock, stowage, warehouse, or other cargo handling services in connection with a ship.

2.1.16 *Verified gross mass* means the total gross mass of a packed container as obtained by one of the methods described in paragraph 5.1 of these Guidelines. (see also "gross mass").

### **3 Scope of applicability**

3.1 The SOLAS requirements to verify the gross mass of a packed container apply to all containers to which the CSC applies, and which are to be stowed onto a ship determined by the Administration to be subject to SOLAS chapter VI.

3.2 For example (but not limited to), a packed container on a chassis or trailer to be driven on a ro-ro ship is subject to the SOLAS requirements, if the ship has been determined by the Administration to be subject to SOLAS chapter VI and is not engaged on short international voyages. However, cargo items tendered by a shipper to the master for packing into a container already on board the ship are not subject to these SOLAS requirements.

3.3 The term container includes tank-containers, flat-racks, bulk containers etc. Also included are containers carried on a chassis or a trailer except when such containers are driven on or off a ro-ro ship engaged in short international voyages (see definition of ship). Excluded from the definition is any type of vehicle<sup>3</sup>. Also excluded from the definition are "offshore containers" to which the CSC, according to the *Guidelines for the approval of offshore containers handled in open seas* (MSC/Circ.860) and the *Revised recommendations on harmonized interpretation and implementation of the International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, as amended* (CSC.1/Circ.138/Rev.1), does not apply.

### **4 Main principles**

4.1 The responsibility for obtaining and documenting the verified gross mass of a packed container lies with the shipper.

4.2 A container packed with packages and cargo items should not be loaded onto a ship to which the SOLAS regulations apply unless the master or his representative and the terminal representative have obtained, in advance of vessel loading, the verified actual gross mass of the container.

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to the *Revised recommendations on harmonized interpretation and implementation of the International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, as amended* (CSC.1/Circ.138/Rev.1).

## **5 Methods for obtaining the verified gross mass of a packed container**

5.1 The SOLAS regulations prescribe two methods by which the shipper may obtain the verified gross mass of a packed container:

5.1.1 Method No.1: Upon the conclusion of packing and sealing a container, the shipper may weigh, or have arranged that a third party weighs, the packed container.

5.1.2 Method No.2: The shipper (*or, by arrangement of the shipper, a third party*), may weigh all packages and cargo items, 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 using a certified method as described in paragraphs 5.1.2.3 and 5.1.2.3.1. Any third party that has performed some or all of the packing of the container should inform the shipper of the mass of the cargo items and packing and securing material that the party has packed into the container in order to facilitate the shipper's verification of the gross mass of the packed container under Method No.2. As required by SOLAS VI/2 and paragraph 5, the shipper should ensure that the verified gross mass of the container is provided sufficiently in advance of vessel loading. How such information is to be communicated between the shipper and any third party should be agreed between the commercial parties involved.

5.1.2.1 Individual, original sealed packages that have the accurate mass of the packages and cargo items (including any other material such as packing material and refrigerants inside the packages) clearly and permanently marked on their surfaces, do not need to be weighed again when they are packed into the container.

5.1.2.2 Certain types of cargo items (e.g. scrap metal, unbagged grain and other cargo in bulk) do not easily lend themselves to individual weighing of the items to be packed in the container. In such cases, usage of Method No.2 would be inappropriate and impractical, and Method No.1 should be used instead.

5.1.2.3 The method used for weighing the container's contents under Method No.2 is subject to certification and approval as determined by the competent authority of the State in which the packing and sealing of the container was completed.<sup>4</sup>

5.1.2.3.1 How the certification is to be done will be up to the State concerned, and could pertain to either the procedure for the weighing or to the party performing the weighing or both.

5.1.3 If a container is packed by multiple parties or contains cargo from multiple parties, the shipper as defined in paragraph 2.1 is responsible for obtaining and documenting the verified gross mass of the packed container. If the shipper chooses Method No.2 to obtain the verified gross mass, the shipper is then subject to all the conditions given in paragraphs 5.1.2, 5.1.2.1, 5.1.2.2, and 5.1.2.3.

## **6 Documentation**

6.1 The SOLAS regulations require the shipper to verify the gross mass of the packed container using Method No.1 or Method No.2 and to communicate the verified gross mass in a shipping document. This document can be part of the shipping instructions to the shipping company or a separate communication (e.g. a declaration including a weight certificate produced by a weigh station utilizing calibrated and certified equipment on the route between the shipper's origin and the port terminal). In either case, the document should clearly highlight that the gross mass provided is the "verified gross mass" as defined in paragraph 2.1.

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<sup>4</sup> Reference to the relevant MSC Circular regarding contact information for the competent authority.

6.2 Irrespective of its form, the document declaring the verified gross mass of the packed container should be signed by a person duly authorized by the shipper. The signature may be an electronic signature or may be replaced by the name in capitals of the person authorized to sign it.

6.3 It is a condition for loading onto a ship to which the SOLAS regulations apply that the verified gross mass of a packed container be provided, preferably by electronic means such as Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) or Electronic Data Processing (EDP), to the ship's master or his representative and to the terminal representative sufficiently in advance of ship loading to be used in the preparation and implementation of the ship stowage plan.

6.3.1 Because the contract of carriage is between the shipper and the shipping company, not between the shipper and the port terminal facility, the shipper may meet its obligation under the SOLAS regulations by submitting the verified gross mass to the shipping company. It is then the responsibility of the shipping company to provide information regarding the verified gross mass of the packed container to the terminal representative in advance of ship loading. Similarly, the shipper may also submit the verified gross mass to the port terminal facility representative upon delivery of the container to the port facility in advance of loading.

6.3.1.1 The master or his representative and the terminal representative should enter into arrangements to ensure the prompt sharing of verified container gross mass information provided by shippers. Existing communication systems may be used for the transmission and sharing of such verified container gross mass information.

6.3.1.2 At the time a packed container is delivered to a port terminal facility, the terminal representative should have been informed by the shipping company whether the shipper has provided the verified gross mass of the packed container and what that gross mass is.

6.3.2 There is no SOLAS prescribed time deadline for the shipper's submission of the verified gross mass other than such information is to be received in time to be used by the master and the terminal representative in the ship stowage plan. The finalization of the ship stowage plan will depend on ship type and size, local port loading procedures, trade lane and other operational factors. It is the responsibility of the shipping company with whom the shipper enters into a contract of carriage to inform the shipper, following prior discussions with the port terminal, of any specific time deadline for submitting the information.

## **7 Equipment**

7.1 The scale, weighbridge, lifting equipment or other devices used to verify the gross mass of the container, in accordance with either Method No.1 or Method No.2 discussed above, should meet the applicable accuracy standards and requirements of the State in which the equipment is being used.

## **8 Intermodal container movements and transshipments**

8.1 The verified gross mass of a packed container should be provided to the next party taking custody of the container.

8.1.1 If a packed container is transported by road, rail or a vessel to which the SOLAS regulations do not apply and delivered to a port terminal facility without its verified gross mass, it may not be loaded onto a ship to which the SOLAS regulations apply unless the master or his representative and the terminal representative have obtained the verified gross mass of the container on behalf of the shipper (see also paragraph 13.1).

8.1.2 If a packed container is delivered to a port terminal facility by a ship to which the SOLAS regulations apply for transshipment onto a ship to which the SOLAS regulations also apply, each container being delivered is required by the SOLAS regulations to have had a verified gross mass before loading onto the delivering ship. All packed containers discharged in the transshipment port should therefore already have a verified gross mass and further weighing in the transshipment port facility is not required. The delivering ship should inform the port terminal facility in the transshipment port of the verified gross mass of each delivered packed container. The master of the ship onto which the transhipped, packed containers are to be loaded and the port terminal facility in the transshipment port may rely on the information provided by the delivering vessel. Existing ship-port communication systems may be used for the provision of such information in agreement between the commercial parties involved.

## **9 Discrepancies in gross mass**

9.1 Any discrepancy between a packed container's gross mass declared prior to the verification of its gross mass and its verified gross mass should be resolved by use of the verified gross mass.

9.2 Any discrepancy between a verified gross mass of a packed container obtained prior to the container's delivery to the port terminal facility and a verified gross mass of that container obtained by that port facility's weighing of the container should be resolved by use of the latter verified gross mass obtained by the port terminal facility.

## **10 Containers exceeding their maximum gross mass**

10.1 SOLAS regulation VI/5 requires that a container not be packed to more than the maximum gross mass indicated on the Safety Approval Plate under the International Convention for Safe Containers (CSC), as amended. A container with a gross mass exceeding its maximum permitted gross mass may not be loaded onto a ship.

## **11 Containers on road vehicles**

11.1 If the verified gross mass of a packed container is obtained by weighing the container while it is on a road vehicle, (e.g. chassis or trailer), the tare mass of the road vehicle (and, where applicable, the tractor) should be subtracted to obtain the verified gross mass of the packed container. The subtraction should reflect the tare mass of the road vehicle (and, where applicable, the tractor) as indicated in their registration documents as issued by the competent authority of the State where these assets are registered. The mass of any fuel in the tank of the tractor should also be subtracted.

11.2 If two packed containers on a road vehicle are to be weighed, their gross mass should be determined by weighing each container separately. Simply dividing the total gross mass of the two containers by two after subtracting the mass of the road vehicle and the tractor, where applicable, would not produce an accurate verified gross mass for each container, and should not be allowed.

## **12 Empty containers**

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 (ISO) standard for container marking and identification<sup>5</sup> and should be used.

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to standard ISO 6346 – Freight containers – Coding, identification and marking.

### **13 Contingencies for containers received without a verified gross mass**

13.1 Notwithstanding that the shipper is responsible for obtaining and documenting the verified gross mass of a packed container, situations may occur where a packed container is delivered to a port terminal facility without the shipper having provided the required verified gross mass of the container. Such a container should not be loaded onto the ship until its verified gross mass has been obtained. In order to allow the continued efficient onward movement of such containers, the master or his representative and the terminal representative may obtain the verified gross mass of the packed container on behalf of the shipper. This may be done by weighing the packed container in the terminal or elsewhere. The verified gross mass so obtained should be used in the preparation of the ship loading plan. Whether and how to do this should be agreed between the commercial parties, including the apportionment of the costs involved.

### **14 Master's ultimate decision whether to stow a packed container**

14.1 Ultimately, and in conformance with the Code of Safe Practice for Cargo Stowage and Securing<sup>6</sup>, the ship's master should accept the cargo on board his ship only if he is satisfied that it can be safely transported. Nothing in the SOLAS regulations limit the principle that the master retains ultimate discretion in deciding whether to accept a packed container for loading onto his ship. Availability to both the terminal representative and to the master or his representative of the verified gross mass of a packed container sufficiently in advance to be used in the ship stowage plan is a prerequisite for the container to be loaded onto a ship to which the SOLAS regulations apply. It does, however, not constitute an entitlement for loading.

### **15 Enforcement**

15.1 Like other SOLAS provisions, the enforcement of the SOLAS requirements regarding the verified gross mass of packed containers falls within the competence and is the responsibility of the SOLAS Contracting Governments. Contracting Governments acting as port States should verify compliance with these SOLAS requirements. Any incidence of non-compliance with the SOLAS requirements is enforceable according to national legislation.

15.2 The ultimate effectiveness and enforcement of the SOLAS container gross mass verification requirement is that a packed container, for which the verified gross mass has not been obtained sufficiently in advance to be used in the ship stowage plan, will be denied loading onto a ship to which the SOLAS regulations apply. Any costs associated with the non-loading, storage, demurrage or eventual return of the container to the tendering shipper of the container should be subject to contractual arrangements between the commercial parties.

### **16 Effective date of the SOLAS requirements regarding verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo**

16.1 The SOLAS requirements regarding verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo (SOLAS regulation VI/2) are expected to enter into force in July 2016.

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to the *Code of Safe Practice for Cargo Stowage and Securing* (resolution A.714(17)) and subsequent amendments.

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Circular Letter No.3624  
10 February 2016

To: All IMO Members  
Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Verification of the gross mass of packed containers – amendments to SOLAS regulation VI/2**

1 The Secretary-General has the honour of advising that the amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended, adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-fourth session (17 to 21 November, 2014), through resolution MSC.380(94), were accepted on 1 January 2016. Consequently, the aforementioned amendments will enter into force on 1 July 2016, in accordance with SOLAS article VIII(b)(vii)(2).

2 The amendments to SOLAS regulation VI/2, as set out in the annex to resolution MSC.380(94), introduce the requirement for the gross mass of a packed container to be verified by the shipper prior to loading on a ship. The verification of the gross mass of a packed container may be achieved by either of two methods:

- .1 weighing the packed container using calibrated and certified equipment; or
- .2 weighing all packages and cargo items, including the mass of pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container and adding the tare mass of the container to the sum of the single masses, using a certified method approved by the competent authority of the State in which packing of the container was completed.

3 In accordance with new paragraph 6 of SOLAS regulation VI/2, if the shipping document, with regard to a packed container, does not provide the verified gross mass and the master or his representative and the terminal representative have not obtained the verified gross mass of the packed container, it shall not be loaded on to the ship.

4 The Maritime Safety Committee also approved the *Guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo* (MSC.1/Circ.1475), with a view to establishing a common approach for the implementation of the SOLAS requirements regarding the verification of the gross mass of packed containers.



5 While the Guidelines developed by the Organization provide the basis for consistent implementation, there is still a need for SOLAS Contracting Governments to communicate, at a national level, with all parties involved in maritime containerized transport (e.g. shippers, port authorities, container terminals, shipping agents and carriers) on how methods 1 and 2 will be given effect, together with any measures that will be put in place to ensure compliance.

6 The Secretary-General encourages all IMO Member Governments and international organizations to ensure that awareness of the upcoming requirement for the verification of the gross mass of packed containers is as widespread as possible. Furthermore, the Secretary-General urges SOLAS Contracting Governments to ensure that the necessary information and processes for effective implementation of amended SOLAS regulation VI/2, as set out in the annex to resolution MSC.380(94), are in place before 1 July 2016.

7 Additional relevant information has been posted on the IMO website at:  
<http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Safety/Cargoes/Containers/Pages/Verification-of-the-gross-mass.aspx>)

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MSC.1/Circ.1548  
23 May 2016

**ADVICE TO ADMINISTRATIONS, PORT STATE CONTROL AUTHORITIES, COMPANIES,  
PORT TERMINALS AND MASTERS REGARDING THE SOLAS REQUIREMENTS  
FOR VERIFIED GROSS MASS OF PACKED CONTAINERS**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-sixth session (11 to 20 May 2016), recalled that the amendments to SOLAS regulation VI/2, adopted by resolution MSC.380(94) and which will enter into force on 1 July 2016, introduce new paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 relating to the verification of the gross mass (VGM) of packed containers.

2 In this context, the Committee noted the concerns of Member States regarding practical aspects of compliance with the aforementioned SOLAS amendments, in particular, relating to transhipped containers and communication of VGM information, in an initial period following their entry into force.

3 The Committee agreed that Administrations and port State control authorities should adopt a practical and pragmatic approach when verifying compliance with the requirements of SOLAS regulations VI/2.4 to VI/2.6, for a period of three months after 1 July 2016, with a view to:

- .1 permitting packed containers that are loaded on a ship before 1 July 2016 and are transhipped on or after 1 July 2016 to be shipped to their final port of discharge without the VGM specified in SOLAS regulations VI/2.4 to VI/2.6; and
- .2 providing flexibility to all the stakeholders in containerized transport to refine, if necessary, procedures for documenting, communicating and sharing VGM information.

4 Notwithstanding the above, the Committee emphasized that the stability and safe operation of ships, including the safe packing, handling and transport of containers, is not limited to the provision and use of VGM information and is also covered by a number of SOLAS regulations, including SOLAS regulations VI/2.1, VI/2.2 and VI/2.3, and other IMO instruments, amongst others.

5 Member States are invited to be guided accordingly and to bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all concerned, especially port State control officers.

6 This circular will remain effective until 1 October 2016.

## INFORMATION ABOUT VERIFIED GROSS MASS OF CONTAINER

Sl.No.	Details of Information	Particulars
1	VGM No.	
2	VGM method (Method-1/Method-2)	
3	Verified Gross Mass of Container	
4	Name of the Shipper	
5	License No.of shipper	
6	24 x 7 contact details of authorized official of shipper	
7	MLO/Shipping agents name	
8	Container No.	
9	Container Seal No.	
10	Container Size (TEU/FEU/other)	
11	Maximum permissible weight of container as per the CSC plate	
12	Weighbridge registration no. & Address of Weighbridge	
13	Date and time of weighing	
14	Weighing slip no.	
15	Type (Normal/Reefer/Hazardous/others)	
16	Commodity	
17	if Hazardous, UN No, IMDG class	
	<p>Verified by:</p> <p>Signature of authorized person: (weighbridge operator/ stuffing point/Off-Dock/container freight station/ICD)</p> <p>Name-</p> <p>Rank-</p> <p>NID No.</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Phone:</p> <p>E-mail:</p> <p>Address:</p>	<p>Issued by:</p> <p>Signature of authorized person of shipper:</p> <p>Name-</p> <p>Rank-</p> <p>NID No.</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Phone:</p> <p>E-mail:</p> <p>Address:</p>

## SCRUTINY SHEET FOR ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF SHIPPER FOR ADOPTING METHOD - 2

Sl.No.	Requirements	Compliance	Remarks
	<b>BASIC REQUIREMENTS</b>		
1	Name of the Shipper		
2	Names of the Owners/Directors/ Proprietor/ Partner/Trustees etc., of the organization		(Documentary evidence to be attached)
3	Date of Registration of the Organization (Company/Society/Partnership etc.,)		1. Copy of certificate of incorporation of the organization to be attached. 2. Copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association/other equivalent documents to be attached [as applicable]
4	Name of the Director/Official authorized to sign documents		
5	Fees: Demand Draft/online payment for Taka..... /- in favour of Department of Shipping.		For Assessment and Issue of Certificate.
6	Registered Address of Location of the organization Telephone /Fax/E-Mail		
7	Address for Communication 24x7 Telephone/ Fax /E-Mail		
8	Layout of the premises (Stuffing location) with relevant documents		Copy of the layout plan to be attached.
9	Ownership details of the premises	Lease deed valid upto:  Whether lease deed has enabling provision for renewal of lease for a further period	If owned: copy of the ownership documents to be attached. If leased: copy of the leased deed duly registered with the appropriate authority to be attached.
10	The organization premises to have the necessary permissions from the concerned local authorities (Municipal /Poura shovha /DC/Industrial etc., as applicable).		Shop and Establishment registration, Municipality licence, etc., as applicable to be attached
11	Quality Management System Certificate complying with the requirements of ISO 9001:2008/2015	Valid till.....	Copy of certificate to be attached

	standards		
12	Details of calibrated electronic weighing equipments		Certificates from Legal Metrology Department of BSTI to be submitted
13	Lifting Hooks for slinging the empty container		Safe working load to be specified
14	Chain block		Safe working load to be specified
15	Premises to have adequate space for weighing the individual items including pallets, etc		
16	Ability to issue tamper proof document containing information specified in Annex-5		Copy of the tamper proof document to be submitted
17	Ability to display information on independent website/tie-up with independent website		Agreement of tie-up with independent website to be submitted
18	Ability to digitally transmit container VGM data to website, terminal & Master of the vessel		

Recommendations/Comments of DoS Surveyor:

Name and Signature of DoS Surveyor:

Comments of Chief Nautical Surveyor / Principal Officer:

List of enclosures:

## INFORMATION ABOUT WEIGHBRIDGE

Sl.No.	Details of Information	Particulars
1	Name of the weighbridge Operator	
2	Address of weighbridge	
3	Weighbridge Registration/License No. issued by BSTI	
4	Details of the weighbridge: Type: Mechanical / Electronic Make: Model: Serial No.	
5	Weighbridge calibration certificate issued from BSTI and Certificate No. and Date of issue with validity	Certificate No. Date of issue: Validity:
6	Weighbridge QMS certificate confirming compliance with ISO 9001:2008/2015 or such updated standards that is applicable from time to time.	Certificate No. Date of issue: Validity:
7	Does the weighbridge have adequate capacity to weigh the loaded container along with the trailer/truck/lorry, if required?	
8	Does the weighbridge have provision to provide information about verified gross mass in a tamper proof document?	

Signature of authorized person of weighbridge operator

Name:

Date: