

Marine Notice No. 05 of 2016

Notice to all Shippers, Consignors, Freight Forwarder, Shipowners, Masters, Charterers, Terminal Operators, Ports, Carriers, Seafarers and others involved in the transport of containers

New SOLAS requirements for the Verification of the Gross Mass of Containers

Amended 23/02/2016

Implementation of change to SOLAS Chapter VI

Following concerns raised internationally by the shipping industry in relation to the mis-declaration of container weights, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has amended the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS), Chapter VI, Regulation 2. These changes come into force internationally on 1st July 2016.

The changes to the convention are as follows:

SOLAS CHAPTER VI
CARRIAGE OF CARGOES AND OIL FUELS
Part A
General Provisions

Regulation 2 – Cargo information

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

"4 In the case of cargo carried in a container*, 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** is stated in the shipping document. The shipping document shall be:

- .1 signed by a person duly authorized by the shipper;
- .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***.

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.”

* 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 Electronic Data Processing (EDP) or Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transmission techniques. The signature may be an electronic signature or may be replaced by the name, in capitals, of the person authorized.

IMO Guidelines

Guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo have been produced by the IMO in IMO Circular [MSC.1/Circ.1475](#) which accompanies this notice.

These changes, which come into effect on the 1st July 2016, will make it mandatory for the shipper to provide a verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo to the Master of a ship or their representative prior to stowage aboard ship. 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 their representative and the terminal representative in the preparation of the ships stowage plan.

From 1st July 2016 a container carrying cargo shall not be loaded on a ship without the gross mass of the container being verified.

The Shipper in these regulations 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.

Methods for obtaining the verified gross mass of a packed container

Two methods are prescribed by which a shipper may obtain the verified gross mass of a packed container.

Method No. 1

Upon the conclusion of the packing and sealing of a container, the shipper may weigh, or have arranged that a third party weighs, the packed container.

This should be carried out using a calibrated weighing instrument, weigh bridges should meet the requirements of the European Communities (Non-Automatic Weighing

Instruments) Regulations currently in force (S.I. 424 of 1992, as amended by S.I. 447 of 1994). Automatic weighing instruments meeting the same standards of accuracy may be used in place of a weighbridge.

The current requirements for non-automatic weighing instruments are available on the Irish Statute Book website [S.I. 424 of 1992 – European Communities \(Non – Automatic Weighing Instruments\) Regulations 1992](#). As amended by [S.I. 447 of 1994 - European Communities \(Non-Automatic Weighing Instruments\) \(Amendment\) Regulations, 1994](#).

Method No. 2

The shipper may weigh all packages or cargo items that are to be packed in the container, including any packing material, dunnage, securing/lashing material and add the total to the tare mass of the container being used. A record of the calculation should be retained by the shipper for inspection by relevant authorities.

The weighing equipment must be calibrated in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and meet the accuracy requirements for class III weighing equipment as defined the EC non-automatic measuring instruments directive.

The shipper should have a documented procedure for compliance with this method and it should be incorporated into their quality management system.

Role of the Marine Survey Office

The Marine Survey Office (MSO) of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is responsible for the enforcement of these requirements, both with regards to ships in Irish ports and Irish ships wherever they may be.

Irish Maritime Administration,
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport,
Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, DO2 TR60, Ireland.

17/02/2016

For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:
The Marine Survey Office, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, DO2 TR60, tel: +353-(0)1-678 3400.
For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, tel: +353-(0)1-678 3418.
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