



THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
LIBERIA MARITIME AUTHORITY

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Marine Advisory: 07/2016

(This Marine Advisory supersedes Marine Advisory 06/2016)

SUBJECT: Verification of Gross Mass of a Container Carrying Cargo

Ref: a. Resolution MSC 380(94)
b. MSC.1/Circ.1475
c. MSC.1/Circ. 1548

Dear Shipowner/Operator/Master:

On 1 July 2016 new amendments to regulation 2 of SOLAS chapter VI enter into force, requiring the shipper to ensure the verified gross mass of a packed container is stated on the shipping document.

Mis-declared or incorrect container weights could result in incorrect stowage; collapsed container stacks; loss of stability and stress risks to ships; risk of personal injury or death to seafarers and shore-side workers; and other damage to the ship and environment.

Under the new regulation the gross mass of container carrying cargo shall be verified by the shipper, either by:

- a. weighing the container after it has been packed; using calibrated and certified equipment; or
- b. weighing all packages and cargo items, including the mass of pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container and adding these weights to the container's tare weight, using a certified method approved by the competent authority of the State in which packing of the container was completed.

The shipper of a container shall ensure the verified gross mass is stated in the shipping document, taking into account guidelines in reference (b). The shipping document shall be:

- a. signed by a person duly authorized by the shipper; and
- b. 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.

Except as noted below, if the shipping document, with regard to a packed container loaded on a ship on or after 1 July 2016, 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.

At its ninety-sixth session, the Marine Safety Committee considered the practical aspects of compliance with the aforementioned SOLAS amendments, in particular, relating to transhipped containers and communication of VGM information. It was agreed in reference (c) that in an initial period following entry into force, 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.

The Liberian Administration will implement the pragmatic approach. Therefore, for a period of three months after 1 July 2016, packed containers that are loaded on a ship before 1 July 2016 and are transhipped on or after 1 July 2016 may be shipped to their final port of discharge without the VGM specified in SOLAS regulations VI/2.4 to VI/2.6.

For more information please contact the Technical Department at Technical@liscr.com or telephone +1 703 790 3434.

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