



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Prevention Policy (CG-5P)
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U.S. Declares an Equivalency to Regulation VI/2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)

The Coast Guard has determined that existing U.S. laws and regulations for providing verified container weights are equivalent to the requirements in SOLAS Regulation VI/2. The Coast Guard sent to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) a letter outlining its determination that its current regulatory regime provides for other entities within the container export chain to work in combination with the shipper to determine and verify container weights, and it provides ships' masters with container weights in order to ensure ships are loaded and operated safely.

This equivalency acknowledges the dynamic and flexible business relationship between the entities in the export chain, and it provides flexibility for these entities to reach arrangements in order to ensure compliance with the SOLAS amendments that come into effect on July 1, 2016. Shippers, carriers, terminals, and maritime associations have outlined multiple acceptable methods for providing verified gross mass (VGM). A couple examples are: (1) the terminal weighs the container, and when duly authorized, verifies the VGM on behalf of the shipper, and (2) the shipper and carrier reach agreement whereby the shipper verifies the weight of the cargo, dunnage, and other securing material, and the container's tare weight is provided and verified by the carrier.

For the purposes of determining the VGM of a container, any equipment currently being used to comply with Federal or State laws, including the Intermodal Safe Container Transportation Act and the container weight requirements in 29 CFR 1918.85(b), are acceptable for the purpose of complying with SOLAS.

The Coast Guard, in the normal course of vessel inspections under its flag state and port state control authorities, will continue to verify that ships' masters receive the VGM of containers in order to ensure that ships are loaded safely and operate within their structural and stability safety limitations.

For more information, please use above contact information.

This release is issued for public information and notification purposes only.

U.S. Equivalency to SOLAS Regulation VI/2

Pursuant to Regulation I/5 of SOLAS, the United States has determined that the regulatory regime in the United States for providing verified weights of containers to ship Masters is equivalent to the requirements provided for by SOLAS Regulation VI/2.

SOLAS regulation VI/2.5 requires the verified weight of containers to be provided and signed for by the shipper. In the United States, national regulations provide for other entities within the container export chain, in combination with the shipper, to provide and sign for the verified container weight. This provides the needed flexibility for all entities in this dynamic business to work together to efficiently ensure ship's Masters are provided accurate verified container weights, as required by SOLAS VI/2, to enable them to make certain the ship is loaded safely and will operate in accordance with structural and stability limits as required by SOLAS Chapter II-1 and Chapter IX.

The United States Coast Guard, as a Flag State and Port State authority, will continue to ensure that Masters of ships loading containers in the United States are provided accurate container weights as required by SOLAS VI/2.