

# **The Impact of Implementation of Verified Gross Mass (VGM)**

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## **Abstract**

Every year, a large number of containers are damaged or lost overboard as a result of stow collapse due to overweight containers. Incorrectly declared container weights make it difficult to plan the safe stowage of a ship, endanger a ship's stability and place pressure on the ship's structure. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) in collaboration with industry representatives has therefore adopted specific rules as part of the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention. On 1st July 2016, the SOLAS amendment becomes law rendering it illegal to ship a container without a valid Verified Gross Mass (VGM).

The purpose of the (VGM) requirement is to obtain an accurate gross weight of packed containers to reduce accidents caused by wrongly declared container weights. The regulation is globally binding for all signatories of the SOLAS convention (in total 171 countries). Main reason for the change of the SOLAS Convention is that there is currently no rule or process to ensure that the weight being provided for loading is accurate, leading to huge risks to workforce, vessels, terminals and equipment.

This paper discusses the importance of the VGM requirement to avoid accidents caused by miss-declared weights. The Egyptian port authorities should take steps toward implementing the SOLAS Convention amendments due to the existence of important ports such as Port Said and El Sokhna. They should be provided with the necessary equipment for weighing containers before loading.

**Keywords:** Miss-declared container weight, container loss, shipping, weight verification, SOLAS amendments, IMO guidelines, marine safety, marine accidents, weighing methods, weighing equipment, ecological impacts, marine environment