

15 April 2016

## LPC ADVISORY

### NOTICE FROM PORTS' WORKING GROUP ON VERIFIABLE GROSS MASS - CONTAINER WEIGHT VERIFICATION

As part of the international requirement under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), and the amendments made to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention, as a condition for loading a packed container onto a ship for export, all containers now require a verified weight. The shipper is responsible for the verification of the container's weight, also known as Verified Gross Mass (VGM).

New Zealand ports have been working towards providing a simple and consistent process for managing the requirements of the upcoming Verified Gross Mass regulations.

The objective is a nationally uniform process for collecting and managing the required information to ensure smooth and efficient flow of containerised cargo.

To date, this is what has been determined:

1. The shipper is responsible for providing the VGM.
2. All export-bound containers from road, rail or coastal transshipment vessels must have the VGM information **before they are received onto a port container terminal**. No VGM, no entry.
3. Coastal containers via LoLo vessel handled through a port container terminal will have the same rules as above.
4. Does not apply to coastal RORO vessels (inter-island).
5. Where a rail siding or packing operation on port is leased/operated by a third party, different rules for acceptance may apply.
6. Ports are preparing to make online pre-advising portals available for all shippers to provide information in order to meet this requirement. Some already have this option available. Most, if not all, will also have B2B electronic services available for shippers that prefer to send VGM pre-advice in this manner as well.
7. Once the container is gated in by the terminal, the VGM information will be sent via standard CODECO EDI messaging to the corresponding shipping line.
8. At the same time, a new VERMAS EDI message will be created and sent to shipping lines in a standardised format for verification purposes.
9. There will be a change in cargo cut-offs associated with VGM information having to be available at the time the vessel is planned, with six hours prior to vessel start being the proposed cut-off. Note: VGM and related data changes prior to this time but already on terminal will be subject to individual commercial agreements by individual terminals.
10. Ports in general will not be providing weighing services. Some related inland terminals may offer a service prior to transferring containers to a port terminal.
11. Ports will be amending their standard terms and conditions to provide that the shipper, by ticking the pre-advice box, certifies that the weight is a Gross Verified Mass weight and is calculated in accordance with either [Method 1](#) or [Method 2](#), and that the person is a deemed "authorised signatory" of the shipper for the purposes of responsibility under the new SOLAS protocols and the Maritime New Zealand Rule 24B - Carriage of Cargo.

The legislation takes effect from 1 July 2016, however changes in process to ensure compliance must be operating by 15 June at the latest to ensure vessels transiting during that period are not held up due to a lack of VGM information if loading is delayed beyond 1 July. Specific questions relating to the VGM processes and rules can be addressed to [lctenquiries@lpc.co.nz](mailto:ictenquiries@lpc.co.nz)

Further updates will be provided in a timely manner.

Regards,

**SIMON MUNT**  
Marketing Manager