



Kiribati Ship Registry

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MARINE CIRCULAR 6/2025

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FOR : Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Recognized Organizations, Flag State Inspectors

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES ON VERIFIED GROSS MASS (VGM) OF A CONTAINER CARRYING CARGO

REFERENCES :

- (a) MSC.1/Circ.1475, Guidelines Regarding the Verified Gross Mass of a Container Carrying Cargo
- (b) SOLAS Chapter VI Regulation 2, Cargo information
- (c) International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, as amended (CSC)

DEFINITIONS :

The following abbreviations stand for:

- "CSC" - International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, as amended
- "MSC" – Maritime Safety Committee
- "SOLAS" – International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended
- "VGM" – Verified Gross Mass

The following terms shall mean:

- "Administration" – means the Kiribati Ship Registry
- "Container" – has the same meaning as the term "container" in the CSC and means an article of transport equipment which includes tank-containers, flat-racks, bulk containers, etc.
- "Gross Mass" – means the combined mass of a container's tare mass and the masses of all packages and cargo items, including pallets, dunnage and other packing material and securing materials packed into the container.
- "Shipper" – 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.
- "Terminal Representative" – means a person acting on behalf of a legal entity or person engaged in the business of providing wharfage, dock, stowage, warehouse, or other cargo handling services in connection with a ship.

APPLICATION :

1. The SOLAS requirements to verify the gross mass of a packed container apply to all containers to which the CSC applies, and which are to be stowed onto a ship subject to SOLAS VI/2.
2. The requirement does not apply to the following:
 - 2.1. Containers carried on roll-on / roll-off (**Ro-Ro**) ships engaged on short international voyages where they remain on a chassis or trailer driven on and off the ship; or
 - 2.2. Offshore containers handled in accordance with specific offshore regulations.

PURPOSE :

To provide the procedures and requirements on the implementation of SOLAS VI/2 concerning the VGM of packed containers loaded on board Kiribati-flagged ships, which entered into force on 1 July 2016.

CONTENTS :

1. Methods for Obtaining VGM

The shipper is responsible for obtaining and providing the VGM of a packed container using one of the following methods:

- 1.1. Method 1:
Weighing the packed and sealed container using calibrated and certified weighing equipment.
- 1.2. Method 2:
Weighing all individual packages and cargo items, including pallets, dunnage, and other packing and securing materials, and adding the tare mass of the container.

2. Documentation

- 2.1. The shipper shall communicate the VGM to the ship's master and the terminal representative in sufficient time for inclusion in the vessel's stowage plan.
- 2.2. The VGM declaration must include:
 - 2.2.1. The unique container number;
 - 2.2.2. The VGM; and
 - 2.2.3. The name and signature of the authorized person responsible for verification.
- 2.3. Transmission of VGM data should be done through the shipping documentation system or other approved electronic communication platforms.

3. Equipment

The scale, weighbridge, lifting equipment or other devices used to verify the gross mass of the container, in accordance with either Method No.1 or Method No.2 as mentioned above, should meet the applicable accuracy standards and requirements of the State in which the equipment is being used.

4. Enforcement

- 4.1. A packed container for which the VGM has not been declared shall **not be loaded** onto a ship to which SOLAS applies.
- 4.2. If discrepancies are found between the declared and actual gross mass, the terminal or master may require the container to be re-weighed prior to loading.

5. Contingency

- 5.1. If a container arrives at the terminal without a VGM, the master (or representative) and the terminal shall get the VGM on the shipper's behalf by weighing the packed container at the terminal to avoid delays, otherwise these containers shall not be loaded.
- 5.2. The obtained VGM shall be applied to prepare the ship's loading plan.
- 5.3. Whether and how to do this should be agreed between the commercial parties including the apportionment of the costs involved.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1. Shippers shall ensure that the VGM is determined and declared before the container is delivered to the terminal.
- 6.2. Masters and agents shall ensure that only containers with declared VGM are included in the ship's stowage plan.
- 6.3. Terminal representative shall ensure that no packed container without a VGM is loaded onto any SOLAS-regulated ship.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Registrar
Kiribati Ship Registry