



10th June 2016

Container weight rules for safe and clean seas

From July 1, 2016, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) will implement changes to regulations for container weight verifications in the shipping industry, requiring shippers to provide a verified gross mass (VGM) for containers. These changes reflect amendments to the International Safety of Life at Sea Convention, approved by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). To implement the new international requirements, AMSA has amended Marine Order 42 (Cargo, stowage and securing).

Under the changes, the shipper is required to provide a signed VGM to the terminal and the master of a vessel or their representative, in advance of a container being loaded. Providing a VGM for a container allows the master of a vessel to plan ship loading, so that the ship is stable, hull strength and stack weights are not exceeded and lashing arrangements are effective.

AMSA Chief Executive Officer Mick Kinley said the need for accurate weight declarations is a critical safety issue.

“Incorrectly declared weights can result in container collapse, personal injury and damage to equipment,” Mr Kinley said.

“These amendments to the International Safety of Life at Sea Convention will improve safety in global shipping and AMSA is pleased to be playing its part in ensuring a safe industry for all.”

AMSA consulted with industry during March and April, which contributed to development of these amendments. It is important to note that Australian legislation has required shippers to provide an accurate gross mass on maritime shipping documents since 1994. For this reason, many shippers will already comply with requirements for verified gross mass.

AMSA will initially take an educative approach to achieve compliance with SOLAS container weight amendments from the July 1 implementation date. Further information and relevant standards are available on the AMSA website.

www.amsa.gov.au/vessels/ship-safety/cargoes-and-dangerous-goods