



Important Information on VGM for U.S. Exports

(Morristown, NJ)...Hamburg Süd, as a member of the Ocean Carrier Equipment Management Association (OCEMA) has been actively involved in working with all stakeholders to develop an implementation guideline and “best practice” to manage the application of the Verified Gross Mass (VGM) reporting requirement under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

Today we would like to update you on the latest development in a Q&A format. OCEMA, in close cooperation with government agencies, shippers, ocean terminals and other participants has developed a recommended “*Best Practice*” including the terminal weighing approach for the acceptance and transmission of VGM data. We have added further information which we hope will be useful.

Question: *What is the gist of the “best practice” and how does it benefit me?*

Answer: *The U.S. Coast Guard in its Maritime Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB) 009/016 announced that the Marine Terminal Operators’ (MTO) weighing equipment may be used to determine the verified gross weight and that such weight information can be used to comply with SOLAS requirements.*

Question: *Will the Marine Terminal Operator supply the weight to Hamburg Süd?*

Answer: *Yes, the MTO will supply the VGM data to Hamburg Süd and Hamburg Süd will submit the VGM to the vessel operator.*

Question: *Using the terminal weighing approach, does the shipper still have to provide a VGM certificate?*

Answer: *By making use of the terminal weighing approach the shipper is deemed to have appointed the Marine Terminal Operator to weigh the container and to provide the gross mass to Hamburg Süd as a VGM equivalent on shippers’ behalf. The shipper does not have to provide a separate VGM certificate.*

Question: *If I do not want to use the terminal weighing approach can I still use the Method 1 or Method 2 as stipulated in the SOLAS Regulation?*

Answer: *Yes, the shipper may choose to submit the VGM directly to the carrier.*

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Question: *Does the shipper have to appoint the Marine Terminals Operator to act as an agent.*

Answer: *Hamburg Süd has filed in its ocean tariff a provision stating that by making use of the terminal weighing approach the shipper is deemed to have appointed the terminal operator. No additional action on part of the shipper is required.*

Question: *For U.S. export rail cargo that moves directly (on dock) to the marine terminal how is the VGM information being captured?*

Answer: *Hamburg Süd will use the weight submitted by the motor carrier who delivers the container to the inland rail ramp. Under the Intermodal Safe Container Transportation Act the motor carrier is required to provide this information and Hamburg Süd will use this data for the VGM submission.*

Question: *Is the “terminal weighing approach” available in all U.S. and Canadian ports?*

Answer: *The “terminal weighing approach” is available at all terminals (excluding Port Hueneme, CA) Hamburg Süd calls at in the continental United States. It is not available in Hawaii nor in the U.S. territories and possessions.*

Canada requires the shipper to submit the VGM information to the ocean carrier, i.e., the “terminal weighing approach” is not available. Shippers are encouraged to use the Hamburg Süd website to submit the VGM information electronically.

Question: *Where can I find additional information?*

Answer: *For the U.S. Coast Guard ruling go to www.uscg.mil/msib/docs/009_16_4-28-2016.pdf
For the OCEMA “best practices” go to www.ocema.org/VGM_SOLAS.html*

Please contact your Hamburg Süd representative with any questions that you may have.

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