

Fact sheet 1

Verification of the weight of packed containers (VGM)

– Method 1, weighing of the packed container by means of a suitable weight

From 1 July 2016, all export containers to be loaded on board a ship must be fitted with a so-called "verified weight" – VGM (Verified Gross Mass).

It is possible to establish the VGM by means of two methods: 1) Weighing by means of "a suitable weight" or 2) calculation according to a "certified method".

This fact sheet describes method 1 – "a suitable weight". See a separate fact sheet for method 2.

What: Method 1. The shipper can use a "suitable weight" to weigh the entire container. This can for example be either a weighbridge or handling equipment with a built-in weighing function. The weighing equipment must be certified in at least class IV for non-automatic weights or at least class Y(b) for automatic weights.

Please observe that, unless the shipper owns a suitable weight, weighing in accordance with method 1 will typically be a commercial service to be offered by a third party. If this is the case, communication of the VGM and any fee for the weighing will be agreed by the parties.

How: The method depends on the specific equipment. In the following, two alternatives are described: A) Weighing by means of a weighbridge and B) weighing by means of handling equipment at the arrival at the port terminal. These two alternatives are, however, hardly the only ones available.

A: Weighing by means of a weighbridge

A container on a chassis frame or a trailer can be weighed together with the vehicle. Subsequently, a calculation will be made whereby the vehicle's registered weight as well as its fuel tank, etc. will be deducted. When two twenty-foot containers are being transported by the same tractor, this method can be carried out only if two weighings take place, at least one of which is only with one container.

B: Weighing by means of handling equipment upon arrival in the port terminal

A container can be weighed at the arrival in the terminal by means of the relevant handling equipment (for example a reach stacker or straddle carrier with certified weighing equipment), which is to lift the container of the means of transport in all circumstances.

A loading crane in the port cannot be used as a suitable weight in connection with the loading of the ship since the terminal operator must not initiate the loading until a VGM is available.

The regulations contain an interim arrangement. From 1 July 2016 and one year onwards, it is possible to use weighing equipment that is not certified or which is less accurate. It must,

however, be ensured that it is possible to establish the VGM at +/- one tonne from the actual weight. This can provide some flexibility.

Of what must you be especially aware?

If the weighing is not carried out by the shipper/shipping agent, the possibility is of course first and foremost dependent on whether the service can be offered. All communication must be agreed by the parties. In practice, it will therefore depend on the local conditions when and how the shipper/shipping agent is to report the VGM prior to the arrival in the port and/or the loading of the ship.

For additional information, please contact the Faroese Maritime Authority by telephone +298 35 56 00, or by e-mail: fma@fma.fo, or visit our webpage: www.fma.fo.