

What is VGM?

From the 1st July 2016 all packed (FCL) containers must have a Verified Gross Mass (VGM) supplied to allow the container to be loaded to a vessel.

Why is a VGM required?

In essence this new regulation is to increase safety. Inaccurately declared container weights impact the stability of vessels, trucks and handling equipment.

Who has implemented this regulation?

This is a new international regulation that has been introduced by the International Maritime Organisation as part of the SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) regulations.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) will be overseeing the regulations for the UK.

Whose responsibility is it to provide the VGM details?

It is the Shipper's responsibility to provide the VGM information.

Can I guess the VGM?

No. The SOLAS regulations prescribe two methods by which the Shipper may obtain the VGM of a packed container.

Method 1: Weighing the packed container using calibrated and certified weighing equipment (e.g. weighbridges, load cell sensing technologies etc.)

Method 2: Weighing all packages and cargo items, including the mass of pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container and adding the tare mass of the container to the sum of the single masses, using the certified method approved by the UK competent authority, that is the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) or its authorised body.

What happens if a VGM is not supplied?

The terminal operator are not authorised to load your container to a vessel without a declared VGM.

Is a VGM required for Transshipment containers?

No. All packed containers will need a declared VGM to allow the terminal operator to load the container from the 1st July 2016. This means the VGM information has already been supplied against the import record on loading at the previous port.

Of course there will be a cross-over when an import container is not subject to a VGM but this will be covered by the MCA's "light touch" enforcement of the SOLAS regulations which will be in place for the first three months from 1st July 2016.

How do I supply a VGM to the terminal operator?

CNS offers a solution for declaring a VGM at our container terminals with an electronic pre-notification for each laden export container.

There are a number of ways to supply the VGM depending on your requirements.

- Shipping Lines can declare the VGM through EDI
- Shipping Lines can provide VGM through the CNS Compass application
- Shippers / Agents / Forwarders (VGM Billing A/C) can provide VGM through the CNS Compass application

Agents and Freight Forwarders with an existing badge code for CNS Compass will be able to access the VGM functionality in CNS Compass. Shippers who want to use the functionality for the verified gross mass need a one-time registration with CNS Compass to have access to this functionality.

I don't have a VGM?

For DP World Southampton, London Container Terminal and London Gateway you are able to request them to weigh your laden container on arrival.

There are a number of ways to request a terminal VGM

- Shipping Lines can request the terminal to weigh through EDI
- Shipping Lines can request the terminal to weigh through the CNS Compass application
- Shippers / Agents / Forwarders (VGM Billing A/C) can request the terminal to weigh through the CNS Compass application

Agents and Freight Forwarders with an existing badge code for CNS Compass will be able to access the VGM functionality in CNS Compass. Shippers who want to use the functionality for the verified gross mass need a one-time registration with CNS Compass to have access to this functionality.

What are the minimum requirements for VGM?

When submitting your VGM information you are required to supply the Verified Gross Mass, Authorised person and reference.

How much is access to CNS for VGM functionality?

If you only require access to the VGM functionality within CNS Compass there will be no administration fees for this as it is covered within the terminal weighing fees.

What are the terminal weighing fees for VGM?

Please check the individual terminal's website for further information.

How will I be charged?

You will be charged on a monthly basis by CNS on behalf of our terminals. This means you must be a CNS contracted customer, otherwise the charges will automatically default to your Shipping Line.

I've supplied my VGM to my Shipping Line, will I still be charged?

This depends if your Shipping Line have nominated the charges to your CNS organisation code or if you have self-nominated a container.

How do I know if I will get VGM charges as VGM Billing A/C?

You will get any associated VGM charges if you have self-nominated an export laden container.

If a Shipping Line has nominated a container to your CNS organisation code you will receive notification this has been completed and any associated VGM charges will be for your account.

If you self-nominate a container the Shipping Line will receive notification that you are taking the associated VGM charges.

How do I know if I will get VGM charges as a Shipping Line?

Any containers you have not nominated will automatically be for your account. Please ensure you use valid CNS Organisation codes within your COPARN message (when nominating to a VGM Billing A/C) as we will not be rejecting (if invalid) but leaving this field blank.

On vessel departure we will also be issuing an auto-report to the Shipping Lines stating which containers have had VGM details applied but no VGM Billing A/C set. This report is for information only as these details cannot be changed once a container has loaded.

Can I self-nominate against a Booking Reference?

No. When supplying VGM details they must be applied against a container number.

Booking references and their associated container numbers often change so it could lead to a discrepancy with your weight details. Therefore, if VGM weight information is supplied to a Booking reference, this information could be removed when a container number is applied or amended. The container number amendments will not affect the VGM option you have selected.

A Shipping Line can nominate a Booking reference to you (prior to a container number being assigned) and this will allow you access to the VGM details. To search for Booking references please use the Unit Search option under the Maritime Export menu.

It is worth noting a Booking reference is not used operationally by the terminals. This means no VGM details are issued to the terminal until a container number is assigned.

What happens if I have been nominated by mistake?

Please liaise directly with your Shipping Line to ensure this information is corrected.

What happens if I have self-nominated a container by mistake?

Please email helpdesk@csonline.net advising the CNS helpdesk of your query (please include the container number) and they will check your details and amend, if required.

Can a Shipping Line still provide VGM details if a laden container is nominated to another account?

Yes. The overall control of the container will be with the Shipping Line therefore, they can provide, amend and request a terminal to weigh a container but charges will be issued to the VGM Billing A/C.

I am the VGM Billing A/C where do I enter my VGM details?

Within the VGM Details screen, please select your **VGM Weighing Option**

1. VGM will be provided (SLVGM)
2. Terminal to Weigh and provide VGM (TLVGM)

If option 1 is selected, please enter your VGM details into the **Shipping Line VGM** field, Authorised person and Reference. Any associated information can also be applied within this screen.

If option 2 is selected, you will also need to enter Authorised person and Reference.

Please note: You will also need to accept the Terms and Conditions before submitting this information.

What is a VGM cut-off?

To allow the terminal operators to plan the vessels correctly with the right information, the VGM must be supplied 24 hours prior to vessel arrival. If VGM details have not been applied at this point and the container is arrived then the terminal will automatically use the terminal VGM (TLVGM).

Therefore against each vessel the terminal will assign a VGM cut-off date and time. Once this date has past and depending on the unit status this will determine what you are allowed to input or amend.

VGM Cut-Off Set?	Unit Arrived?	Provide VGM	Update/Amend VGM
NO	NO	✓	✓
NO	YES	✓	✗
YES	NO	✓	✓
YES	YES	✗	✗

The VGM Billing A/C have provided the VGM details, as a Shipping Line will I get confirmation once applied?

Yes. When the VGM Billing A/C has updated the VGM details into CNS Compass the Shipping Line will receive a VERMAS message.

The Terminal are weighing the container on my behalf when will I get confirmation of the VGM?

There are a number of ways you can receive confirmation of the terminal VGM (TLVGM).

A VERMAS will be issued to the Shipping Line and VGM Billing A/C –

- if the Terminal weigh the container on your behalf
- if no SLVGM has been supplied by VGM cut-off
- if the TLVGM is used due to the 5% discrepancy

A Shipping Line will also get confirmation of the terminal VGM (TVGM) in the following instances –

- If SLVGM has been provided, prior to arrival, VGM details will be included within their CODECO (Gate-In) message
- VGM details will also be included within the COARRI (Load) message – of course, container will not be loaded if a VGM has not been supplied
- When TLVGM is being used (VERMAS)

Has my container had a VGM applied?

At DP World Southampton, London Container Terminal and London Gateway, the container will be subject to a VGM hold in Compass until a VGM weight has been supplied (either SLVGM or TLVGM).

For all terminals, we suggest the Shipping Lines use the Full Manifest report against the appropriate export voyage to see whether a VGM has been applied and a VGM Billing A/C has been set.