

## **Guidelines on the Verification of Gross Mass of a Container with Cargo Packed in Hong Kong**

### **Part I Preliminary**

#### **1. Long Title**

These Guidelines are stipulated according to the new requirements of the SOLAS Chapter VI on the verification of the gross mass of a container carrying cargo and aims at enhancing the safety management of containers carrying cargo (hereinafter “packed containers”) in Hong Kong.

#### **2. Application**

The methodology is applicable to all the packed containers regulated by International Convention for Safe Containers (CSC) and the packed containers to be suitably loaded onboard a vessel to which SOLAS Chapter VI applies with effect from 1 July 2016.

#### **3. Regulatory Organization**

Marine Department of the Government of the HKSAR (“MD”) is the authority regulates the container mass verification within the territory of Hong Kong. The regulatory work includes the following:-

- (i) to establish legislation in respect of captioned SOLAS requirement,
- (ii) to enforce the legislation,
- (iii) to register shippers<sup>1</sup> operating with submitted container mass verification procedures,
- (iv) to maintain a register of registered shippers,
- (v) to maintain a list of authorized weighing scales (weighbridges) companies, and
- (vi) to carry out random audit inspection.

### **Part II Verification of Container Mass**

#### **4. Core Principles**

Shipper is responsible to obtain and record the verified gross mass of the packed

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<sup>1</sup> *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.

container in documentary format.

In case any container comprises more than one shipper's cargo, the entity consolidates, seals and delivers the container to the carrier shall be responsible for the verification of container mass, including pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container.

The Master of carrier or his representative and the terminal's representative shall be provided with the container gross mass figure before container loading commences.

## **5. Methods in Verification of Packed Container Mass**

Shipper may opt for either one method below for mass verification of a packed container:

Method 1: weighing the packed container using the authorized weighing scales companies for weighing;

Method 2: weighing all packages and cargo items, including 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 mass using a certified method<sup>2</sup> approved by the Marine Department in which packing of the container was completed.

## **6. Documentation**

The verified gross mass obtained in accordance with (5) of these Guidelines shall be declared in the shipping document. The declaration may be submitted to the carrier as a part of the loading instruction or an independent proof document. The declaration shall be signed by the shipper's authorized person. The signature may be in the form of electronic.

## **7. Shipper's Declaration**

In the shipping document as per (6) of these Guidelines, the shipper shall make a declaration by incorporating below content.

For gross mass obtained by Method 1, the declaration shall consist of the content hereunder:

"Shipper's declaration: the gross mass of the packed container declared in the

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<sup>2</sup> Shipper will have to provide details of the weighing method for approval by Marine Department in the registration process. For containers of which packing were completed outside of Hong Kong, MD accepts the competent authority of the State in which packing of the container was completed as the approving body.

shipping document was obtained in accordance with Method 1 stipulated in SOLAS Chapter VI Regulation 2 by means of the authorized weighing scales (weighbridges)”, followed by signature of shipper.

For gross mass obtained by Method 2, the declaration shall consist of the content hereunder:

“Shipper’s declaration: the gross mass of the packed container declared in the shipping document was obtained in accordance with Method 2 stipulated in SOLAS Chapter VI Regulation 2. The procedure of this method has been approved by MD with registration number. 00000.” and followed by signature of shipper.

#### **8. Submission of Information**

Prior to shipping the container to the terminal’s facilities, the shipper shall submit the shipping document with verified gross mass as per (6) of this method statement to the terminal and shipping line by means of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) or Electronic Data Processing (EDP) transmission for the purpose of formulation of stowage plan.

When the packed container reaches the terminal’s facilities, shipping line shall confirm with the terminal for the availability of verified gross mass figures.

#### **9. Weighing Device**

Verification of gross mass through Method 1 is to be done by the authorized weighing scales (weighbridges) enlisted in MD’s web-page.

*(To be enlisted in MD’s webpage, authorized weighing scale operators are required to submit weighing scale annual calibration report.)*

#### **10. Shipment and Transshipment of Multi-modal Containers**

If a container is shipped to a terminal via land transportation, railway, or non-convention vessels, that unverified packed container shall not be loaded onboard a SOLAS-compliance vessel unless verified mass of the packed container has been obtained in accordance with the verification methods as per (5) or, direct weighing of the packed containers at the authorized weighing scales through the arrangement of the Master or terminal for the efficient cargo operation.

Re-verification is not required for containers in transshipment.

#### **11. Deviation in Gross Mass Figures**

The verified gross mass figure shall prevail if it is different from the figure declared prior to verification.

The verified gross mass figure obtained by weighing equipment in terminal shall prevail if it is different from the verified figure obtained before the container reaches terminal.

The verified gross mass figure obtained by MD in situ as a means of random check shall prevail if it is different from the verified figure obtained by weighing equipment in terminal.

Tolerance of +/-5% between the verified gross mass declared by the shipper and the verified gross mass obtained by MD, carrier or terminal shall be acceptable.

#### **12. Overweighed Container**

The gross mass of a packed container shall not exceed the *maximum operating gross mass* stamped on the container's safety approval plate issued in accordance with the requirements of amended CSC (and section 10 of Cap. 506). Any overweighed container shall not be allowed to be loaded onboard.

#### **13. Unverified Container**

If the shipper cannot provide the verified gross mass information upon a container's arrival at the terminal, that container shall not be loaded onboard until verification of container mass is completed. The shipper may delegate Master or his representative and terminal's representative to carry out verification in the terminal or other places. The verified gross mass obtained in this way can be employed for preparation of stowage plan.

### **Part III Registration of Shippers adopting Method 2**

#### **14. Terms of Registration**

Shipper adopts Method 2 to obtain the verified container mass is required to submit its procedure for approval by MD. Shipper is liable to the practicality of the procedure, the accuracy of the calculated mass, the record of the verification process, and the maintenance of the records. Shipper is liable to update any change in their procedure and equipment. MD is not liable to warrant the

accuracy of the verified container mass declared by the registered shippers.

### **15. Application of Registration**

- (i) (Companies using method 1 do not need registration)

Shipper adopts Method 2 shall provide the following information during their applications of registration to MD.

- (i) Business Registration License;
- (ii) The location of carrying out the mass verification (in particular, if differs from the address on BR Certificate);
- (iii) Organization Chart;
- (iv) Procedure of container mass verification;
- (v) Identity post titles carrying out verification including internal auditing staff, if any;
- (vi) Identity post title(s) authorized to sign the shipper's declaration;
- (vii) Safety management policy in handling packed container; and
- (viii) Training received by the persons engaged in the container mass verification.

### **16. Completing the Registration**

After received the application of shipper, MD shall scrutinize the documents and perform a preliminary assessment of the practicality of the submitted container mass verification procedure. If the submission is found in order, MD shall issue a confirmation of registration together with the registration number to the shipper.

MD has the right to inspect and witness shipper's conduction of the procedure before granting the registration.

## **Part IV Supervision and Inspection**

### **17. Supervision and Inspection**

MD may exercise the power to (i) enter the companies to check the documents or records confirming their compliance with either Method 1 or Method 2 as per (5); and (ii) weigh packed container by making use of weighing equipment if found necessary.