



VIRGINIA PORT AUTHORITY

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DISCLAIMER: This Operational Policy is provided as a convenience to our customers. Please note that it is not a legally binding document. For legal terms please refer to VIT's Schedule of Rates published at www.portofvirginia.com/tools/rate-tariff-information/

OPERATIONAL POLICY – Weighing of export containers for use to ensure compliance with SOLAS Regulation VII/2.

The Port of Virginia **will** continue to accept containers without a VGM via the gate and rail after July 1, 2016, when the SOLAS container weight rule begins.

Per the SOLAS regulations, the Verified Gross Mass (**VGM**) must be received by the marine terminals before any container can load to a vessel.

The default method for VIT's obtaining the VGM will be for VIT to continue weighing loaded export containers pursuant to OSHA requirements, and that weight (the "terminal weight") will be used as the VGM. That weight will also be made available to the ship line, as it is now.

Alternatively, if the ship line does not want to use the default method for the VGM, and desires to send the VGM to VIT, then the ship line must so inform VIT via email. Under this alternative, the VGM can be sent before or after the container arrives on-terminal, and this weight will be the only weight used in order to stow the containers to a vessel. The ship line must reconcile differences between the terminal weight and other weights prior to sending the VGM to VIT. The Port of Virginia has implemented the World Shipping Council's VERMAS EDI message format for receiving the VGM of the containers. The VGM must be received not later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to vessel loading, or the container will not be loaded, and demurrage, roll charges, and other charges will apply. If the vessel loading is delayed, then the cutoff will be adjusted.

VIT can only accept only one of the two alternatives per ship line for obtaining the VGM; for example, a ship line cannot choose a different method for providing VGM on a container-by-container basis. Note that a ship line might use a different method for obtaining the VGM than its VSA partners.

The ship line will be sent a 322 EDI message when the inbound gate transaction is completed, as well as when a container off the rail is checked into the yard. The 322 message is the same message format that has been sent historically when these functions are completed, and as before it will contain the terminal weights that the ship lines may use at their discretion to comply with SOLAS VGM requirements.

Upon entry to the terminals via gate or rail, the containers without VGMs will not be segregated unless the need arises on an exception basis. This means that the trucking community will be directed to the same transfer zones as they are today. The terminal weights for breakbulk/out-of-gauge (OOG) containers will be determined based on the weight of the container obtained when in-gated and/or weights provided

by the shipper, and the VGM will be entered into the terminal operating system pursuant to one of the two alternatives described above.

When a container is loaded to a vessel, a 322 EDI message is sent as it has been sent historically except that the weight field will now contain the VGM.

Below is a summary of the aforementioned process:

1. CONTAINERS THAT ARRIVE AT THE PORT OF VIRGINIA'S FACILITIES WITH OR WITHOUT A VERIFIED GROSS WEIGHT (**VGM**) WILL BE ACCEPTED.
2. THESE CONTAINERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE WEIGHED BY THE TERMINAL'S SCALES LOCATED AT ALL PORT OF VIRGINIA MARINE TERMINALS (INLCUDING THE VIRGINIA INLAND PORT AND THE RICHMOND MARINE TERMINAL).
3. THE TERMINAL OPERATOR SHALL CALCULATE THE GROSS WEIGHT OF THE CONTAINER DURING THE IN-GATE WEIGHING PROCESS ACCORDING TO THE CURRENT METHOD OF WEIGHING. THIS WEIGHT WILL BE USED AS THE VGM UNLESS THE SHIP LINE CHOOSES TO PROVIDE THE VGM TO VIT.
4. IF THE SHIP LINE CHOOSES TO PROVIDE THE VGM TO VIT, THEN CONTAINERS WILL BE PLACED ON AN AUTOMATIC VESSEL HOLD ONCE ON TERMINAL IF THE SHIP LINE HAS NOT SUBMITTED THE VGM. THE HOLD WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY RELEASED ONCE THE VGM IS PROVIDED. THE SHIP LINE SHALL SEND THE VGM TO VIT VIA ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE (EDI) USING THE **VERMAS** PLATFORM BY VESSEL CUTOFF. NO OTHER EDI MESSAGE FORMAT IS SUPPORTED FOR THE RECEIPT OF VGM DATA. CONTAINERS WILL NOT LOAD TO THE VESSEL IF THE VGM IS NOT RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE VGM CUTOFF -24 HOURS. PRIOR TO SUBMITTING THE VGM TO VIT, THE SHIP LINE MUST RESOLVE ALL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TERMINAL WEIGHT AND WEIGHTS SUBMITTED BY THE SHIPPER.
5. IF CONTAINERS DO NOT LOAD THE VESSEL DUE TO LACK OF VGM, THE SHIP LINES AND OTHER RESPONSIBLE PARTIES SHALL BE LIABLE TO VIT FOR ANY AND ALL APPLICABLE CHARGES.
6. SHIP LINES CHOOSING THE OPTION TO PROVIDE THE VGM TO VIT, MUST DO SO VIA E MAIL. THE MESSAGE MUST SAY, "**I/WE (SHIP LINE NAME) WILL PROVIDE THE VERIFIED GROSS MASS FOR ALL CONTAINERS THAT ENTER VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL TERMINALS FACILITIES.**" THIS E MAIL MUST BE SENT TO VIT CUSTOMER SERVICE AT POVCustomerService@vit.org
7. THE OPTION AS DESCRIBED IN #6 SHALL BE AVAILBLE NO EARLIER THAN JULY 8, 2016. VIT HAS AN EARLIEST RECEIVE DATE (ERD) OF 7 DAYS, UNDERSTANDING THAT UNITS MAY HAVE ARRIVED PRIOR TO JULY 1, 2016 WITHOUT A VGM.

8. ANY QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO VIT CUSTOMER SERVICE:
 - a. PHONE: 1-757-440-7160
 - b. EMAIL: POVCustomerService@vit.org

The legal terms of this process can be found in The Port of Virginia Schedule of Rates (SOR), Item 411, Weighing of Export Containers. The SOR can be located on The Port of Virginia website:

<http://www.portofvirginia.com/tools/rate-tariff-information/>