POSITION PAPER #2
JANUARY 2015

IMO RULING RE MANDATORY VERIFICATION OF AN EXPORT
CONTAINERS VERIFIED GROSS MASS

Situation

Amendments to SOLAS, Chapter VI, Regulation 2 and the associated IMO Guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo, was adopted at the 94th MSC session in November 2014 for entry into force on 1 July 2016.

Maritime NZ as representatives for the New Zealand government has confirmed that New Zealand will comply with the rule change.

This regulation amendment requires mandatory verification of the gross mass of a container prior to loading on vessels. Although some exemptions are allowed (see below)

The regulation provides for 2 methods to verify the gross weight of a container, namely:

1. Weighing the packed container using calibrated and certified equipment; or
2. Weighing all packages and cargo items, including pallets, dunnage and other securing material to be packed in the container and adding the tare weight of the container to the sum of the single weights, using a certified method approved by the competent authority of the State in which packing of the container was completed.

Consideration

Summary of proposed rule change

The Shipper is responsible for verifying the gross mass on all containers destined for export

Both of the allowed methods are to include all items inside the container including dunnage and securing systems

The Shipper is responsible for ensuring the verified gross mass is communicated in shipping documents sufficiently in advance to the carrier and port to be used in the preparation of the ship stowage plan

And critically

In the absence of a verified gross mass the container shall not be loaded onto the ship.

Exclusions to the rule

Imports, on the basis that the shippers as the exporter has the responsibility for complying

Transhipments, as the container requires verification at the first port of loading

Bulk cargoes, the rule applies only to containerised cargo

RORO Vessels undertaking "short" international voyages

A 5% margin of error applies between the declared and verified gross mass

POSITION PAPER #1
THE NEW ZEALAND
SHIPPERS COUNCIL

Proposed amendments to the Commerce Act

NZSC requirements

Now that NZ has formally adopted this ruling we need to prepare for the introduction of the ruling on 1 July 2016. Failure to develop approved systems and processes allowed for under method 2 in time for 1 July 2016 will result in unnecessary delays and costs across the supply chain.

The key actions required are:

1. Confirmation of which NZ agency will be responsible to implementing the proposed legislative and procedural changes.

2. Development of an implementation plan that provides a roadmap and ensures NZ shippers are able to comply with the ruling in a timely manner.

3. Agreement on the definition of a "certified and approved method"

4. Agreement on which NZ agency will be the competent authority.

5. All parties in the information chain including Shippers, Carriers, Ports and NZ agencies to work collaboratively to develop the necessary changes to systems and processes.

NZSC Position

The Shippers Council supports this initiative to improve the safety of cargo and workers across the supply chain.

We support the proposals from the IMO to improve the safety of ship, and safety off workers both aboard ships and ashore, the safety of cargo and overall safety at sea.

The Council is aware that it is the responsibility of shippers to ensure that an accurate measurement of a containers weight is provided to carriers in a timely manner.

The Council has been and will continue to engage with all relevant NZ regulatory agencies to ensure a smooth and efficient introduction of the IMO rules including scoping and defining "approved systems" to calculate a containers gross mass.

We are keen to hear your views and that of your peers. If you have any feedback, insights or questions regarding the current legislative programme please get in touch