



SOLAS / VGM

From July 1 2016, in line with IMO's amendment of the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention, shippers will be required to provide a verified weight prior to a shipping container being loaded to a ship.

Shippers are legally required to provide a Verified Gross Mass (VGM) for any laden container being shipped from the Port. If the shipper is unable to provide a VGM, The Bristol Port Company is looking to offer a weighing solution.

The main principles connected to the shipment of containers, and supply of VGMs, at The Bristol Port Company are as follows:

- Without a valid VGM, the container will not be loaded to ship.
- Shippers are strongly urged to have a VGM in place (via either Method 1 or 2) by 1st July 2016.
- If the Shipper is unable to provide a VGM, The Bristol Port Company can determine a Terminal VGM but this has both cost and time implications.
- Payment terms in relation to invoices for the determination of Terminal VGM services are 14 days. Failure to make payment within that period will entitle The Bristol Port Company to withdraw the offer of this service and containers may not be loaded to vessel.
- Shipping lines have been fully consulted and endorse these principles.
- For the month of July (2016) The Bristol Port Company has agreed, in consultation with the shipping lines, not to charge for the determination of a Terminal VGM to allow shippers some grace in putting procedures in place. Thereafter, full rates will apply.

For rates and charge information please see the [Schedule of SOLAS / VGM charges](#) ^[1].

Each dock at Bristol (Royal Portbury Dock and Avonmouth Dock) has a different approach to providing a VGM weighing solution in line with their respective terminal designs. These approaches are described in the tabbed sections below.

- [Royal Portbury Dock](#)
- [Avonmouth Dock](#)
- [Important Notes](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [Charges](#)

The Bristol Port Company has installed weighing equipment onto its reach stackers, in compliance with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) *Method 1* requirement.

At any time prior to 24 hours before arrival, shippers can provide a VGM, electronically through the port community system, Destin8, to The Bristol Port Company.

On arrival at the container terminal, the terminal will check if a VGM has been received.

If there is a VGM in place, the container will be taken into the terminal ready for export.

If there is no VGM in place then, as part of the standard operating procedure, the containers will be weighed using the equipment on the terminal reach stackers with a *Terminal Verified Gross Mass* (TVGM) captured, which TVGM as determined by the equipment will be transmitted to the Shipping Line via Destin8. Shippers have up until 24 hours prior to scheduled vessel arrival to provide a VGM. If at this point there is no VGM available then the TVGM as determined above will be allocated against the container and transmitted to the Shipping Line via Destin8.

Shippers who rely upon the TVGM for supplying the information will then be liable for a charge as shown on the charge sheet. These charges will be invoiced to the export declarant in the port community system, Destin8. If it is not shown here, the invoice party will be as supplied by the Shipping Line.

Attention is also drawn to the **Important Notes** which apply in relation to the provision by shippers of VGMs, the provision of container weighing service and the determination of TVGMs at Royal Portbury Dock.

Containers requiring a *Terminal Verified Gross Mass* (TVGM) will need to use the port weighbridges. These weighbridges are approved to "Weights and Measures" standards.

At any time prior to 24 hours before arrival, shippers can provide a VGM, electronically through the port community system, Destin8, to The Bristol Port Company.

Shippers who have provided, or intend to provide a VGM, within the required timeframe should send their container directly to the terminal to be lifted into the yard. Any containers delivered this way, and for which no VGM is provided within the required timeframe will be liable to additional charges incorporating the additional lifts required to pull the container out prior to shipping.

Shippers who require their containers to be weighed should send their container to the weighbridge to be weighed into the port.

Weighbridge hours as at 01/07/2016 are **0700-1630, Monday to Thursday**, and **0700-1530 on Friday but are subject to change**. Shippers should be aware that the container weighing service will not be available outside the working hours from time to time of the weighbridge.

The method of working will be that hauliers must pre-register their *Mass-In-Running-Order* (MIRO) for their vehicle/trailer with the container terminal. The MIRO that should be supplied will be the mass of the vehicle and its trailer, with its fuel tanks filled to at least 90% of capacity and should include the mass of the driver and all equipment and standard running tools/spares etc. A pro-forma registration form can be downloaded by following this [link](#) [2], alternatively it is available from the container terminal.

A register of hauliers and their vehicles/trailers with applicable registered MIROs will be maintained at the terminal and the process can be advised by speaking with the terminal manager.

Where a haulier has not pre-registered a MIRO, the Bristol Port Company may in its discretion agree to accept a MIRO supplied by that haulier, provided the haulier completes the pro-forma registration form and provides evidence which the Bristol Port Company considers acceptable to support the stated MIRO, in which case the MIRO supplied may be treated by the Bristol Port Company as having been registered by the haulier for the purpose of future provision of container weighing services. If no acceptable MIRO is supplied, the Bristol Port Company may refuse to provide the container weighing services and/or determine the TVGM.

The declaration and accuracy of the MIRO is the responsibility of the haulier and any errors or omissions must be advised to the terminal at the earliest possible opportunity. The Bristol Port Company is unable to, and is not obliged to, verify or make any enquiry into the accuracy of the MIRO supplied and this must be kept up to date by the Haulage firm / Shipping line. The Bristol Port Company will be entitled to rely on the MIRO supplied from time to time in respect of any vehicle/trailer using the container weighing services.

Where a shipper requires a TVGM, and the haulier has supplied a MIRO, the driver should enter the port via the weighbridge to get a gross weight and then report to the container terminal where the MIRO will be deducted to determine the TVGM which will then be transmitted to the Shipping Line via Destin8.

Shippers should avoid, wherever possible, delivering two laden 20' containers on the same vehicle as this will incur extra delay and cost. Where this is unavoidable the haulier should report to the terminal to have one container lifted into the terminal before weighing the other and then returning to the terminal to lift back the second container for it to be weighed.

Attention is also drawn to the **Important Notes** which apply in relation to the provision by shippers of VGMs, the provision of container weighing service and the determination of TVGMs at Avonmouth Dock.

No container will be loaded onto a vessel unless in accordance with the procedures described either the shipper has provided its VGM or its TGVM has been determined. Shippers are responsible for the accuracy of each VGM provided and accept that the Port is unable to, and is not obliged to, verify or make any enquiry into its accuracy.

To comply with the SOLAS regulations the Terminal VGM, on containers weighed prior to a shipper provided VGM being received, will be used where there is a weight discrepancy of more than 500kg or 5% (whichever is larger). The Shipper and Shipping Line will be advised and a non-refundable weigh charge will be raised against the shipper.

The accurate and timely provision of the information required by, and compliance with, the

procedures described in order to determine a TGVM remains the responsibility of the shipper, haulier and/or Shipping Line. The Bristol Port Company accepts no liability or responsibility for, or for the consequences of, any inaccuracy in the determined TGVM (including but not limited to those resulting from inaccuracies in any MIRO) nor for, or for the consequences of, any failure to load any container or any delays in loading or departure of vessels resulting from the absence of an acceptable MIRO, the operation of the above procedures and/or compliance with SOLAS requirements, except in each case to the extent that the same arises from any negligence by The Bristol Port Company in performing the applicable container weighing services described.

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Avonmouth operations manager: **Nick Day** - nick.day@bristolport.co.uk [4]

Technical support: **IT Department** - it@bristolport.co.uk [5]

The Bristol Port Company telephone number: +44 (0)117 982 0000

Please see the [Schedule of SOLAS / VGM Charges](#) [1].

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[2] <http://www.bristolport.co.uk/about-us/resources/quick-download-documents/vgm-miro-registration-form>

[3] <mailto:chris.browne@bristolport.co.uk?subject=SOLAS%2FVGM%20Query>

[4] <mailto:nick.day@bristolport.co.uk>

[5] <mailto:it@bristolport.co.uk?subject=SOLAS%20%2F%20VGM>