

AgTC urges U.S. terminals to adopt favorable VGM methods

The agriculture shipper advocate praised container weighing methods recently outlined by the Ocean Carrier Equipment Management Association and G6 Alliance carriers, saying terminals nationwide should adopt similar methods.

By [Eric Johnson](#) | Monday, June 27, 2016

The Agriculture Transportation Coalition (AgTC) said Monday it supports an approach to comply with soon-to-be-enforced container weighing rules that would see terminal scale weights for locally received cargo to be considered in compliance.

The approach, outlined by the Ocean Carrier Equipment Management Association (OCEMA) June 17, would see terminal scale weights effectively become an equivalent method for complying with the verified gross mass rule, which goes into effect July 1. AgTC also pointed to communication from the G6 Alliance last week that weights collected at its affiliated terminals would be considered in compliance with the VGM rule, which is an amendment to an existing Safety of Life at Sea convention.

The group, which represents U.S.-based agriculture exporters, has been the most vocal opponent of the way the VGM rule has been implemented. The group has argued that existing weight data already puts exporters in compliance with the rule, which is designed to allow vessel and marine terminal operators to better plan ship stowage to avoid accidents at sea.

AgTC said Monday that terminals nationwide should adopt the methods for complying with the VGM rule that OCEMA and the G6 carriers outlined.

“The G6 announcement calls for terminal scale weights for all locally received cargo to be received and accepted by the carriers as the VGM equivalent, with the expectation that the terminals will facilitate this process,” the AgTC aid. “This method complies with the US Coast Guard Equivalency set forth in the Marine Safety Information Bulletin of April 28, 2016, stating that for purposes of determining VGM, current terminal weighing equipment/practices used to comply with Federal and/or State laws, including the Intermodal Safe Container Transportation Act and 29 CFR 1918.85(b), are acceptable for SOLAS compliance.”

The AgTC lauded the G6 Alliance carriers - comprised of APL, Hapag-Lloyd, OOCL, MOL, NYK Line and Hyundai Merchant Marine - for using the shippers' certification of cargo weights tendered to the railroad, as required by the Intermodal Safe Container Transportation Act, to satisfy the VGM requirement.

“The carriers will marry these shippers' weights with the associated container tare weights pulled from the carriers' own equipment fleet registers, to arrive at the VGM, which will be electronically transmitted to the terminal by the ocean carrier,” the AgTC said.