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## solas: saves lives? causes ulcers?

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*MSK Client Alert*

May 31, 2016

On July 1, 2016, the Safety of Life at Sea ("SOLAS") requirement for shippers to provide steamship lines with the verified gross mass ("VGM") of each shipment takes effect internationally.

While under development at the International Maritime Organization for years, these requirements caught many in the U.S. by surprise last summer when the deadline was emphasized. Perhaps equally surprising was the response of the U.S. Coast Guard, the agency with enforcement jurisdiction. Coast Guard management has been publicly quoted as saying the SOLAS VGM requirements are not mandatory under U.S. law! Rather, they are simply one business means to achieve compliance. U.S. terminals have been weighing export containers for OSHA compliance reasons for years, but the same is not true in other countries.

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