

Reality of Container Weighing in the Real World

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Public Weighbridges

- There are 17 public weighbridges in the greater Brisbane area (from Gold Coast to Sunshine Coast and including Toowoomba) approx 6 of these would actually be available for public use (source National Measurement Institute)
<http://www.measurement.gov.au/TradeMeasurement/Licensees/Pages/PublicWeighbridgeLicensees.aspx>
- There are were 565,262 TEU exported from Port of Brisbane in the last 12 months. Source Port of Brisbane Trade Report
<https://www.portbris.com.au/PortBris/media/General-Files/MTR/2016/Feb2016MonthlyTradeReport.pdf>

Numbers

Commodity	TEU last 12 months	Option 1	Option 2
Empty	248,475		
Meat products	65,714	X	
Cotton	17,350		X
Paper & Wood Pulp	26,200		X
Timber	11,691	X	
F.A.K	28,150	X	
Agricultural Seed	46,198		X
Export Other	316,807	X	X
Totals	565,282		

Now some assumptions based on these numbers

Assumptions

- Given the numbers above if we assume approx 50% of the Export other containers will be done in option 1 this leaves 248,151 TEU requiring option 2 VGM weighing.
- Further extrapolation of the numbers would suggest that Paper, Cotton and Seed are weighed at company owned weighbridge facilities so this leaves 158,403 TEU to be weighed or 13,200 per month spread across 6 available weighbridges or around 2200 per month each.

Problems

- Obviously the numbers above take into account assumptions. Having said this it is obvious there is no way the available weighbridges will be able to handle the traffic and given an accurate weight relies on weighing the vehicle twice you can see just how unlikely this is and just how costly this will be on industry and customers.

Solutions

- In order to manage the numbers of TEU requiring option 2 VGM reporting I feel it is reasonable to open up the provision of this to shippers who can properly demonstrate the ability to weigh containers with a reasonable degree of accuracy. In the opinion of AIMA the tolerance for this should be set at 3 increments of measure or 300kg +/-.

- Most vehicle mounted weighing devices can operate within this tolerance. In our own testing we have achieved on average 100kg +/- but have seen some variation particularly where unbalanced loads are found.
- The ability to demonstrate a management plan, yearly calibration of devices and audit process (association monitoring or the like) will be critical.
- AIMA is planning to include this as part of its regular audit process of association compliance for our members.

Conclusions

- Take approximately 14 vessels per month loading the 2200 TEU with option 2 VGM and assume a positive error of 300kg each.
- This will result in a potential overload per vessel of 47 tonne.
- This result is acceptable, far more acceptable than some of our major trading partners. UK and Netherlands have declared required accuracy at 5% (source Mover magazine) with other countries still to release their final numbers

Common Sense

- Given the VGM needs to be declared but will not be verified by any official body is it not better to have a realistic tolerance that can be achieved without the massive cost of trying to use trade approved measures or requiring shippers to provide false information regarding the accuracy of their weighing equipment.
- Conroy Removals has assessed the cost to it, if forced to utilize trade approved weighbridge facilities to be approx \$100,000 per annum

Notes

- This report is based on Brisbane results. That is where I live. It is also relevant in the other main port areas just as well so I did not feel the need to show examples of other ports to make the points.
- Numbers are based on information source in the public domain and as such I have relied on their accuracy.