

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact

Kim B. Shedd, Cobalt Commodity Specialist
National Minerals Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-4974, Fax: (703) 648-7757
Email: ksheddd@usgs.gov

Annie Hwang (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7952
Fax: (703) 648-7975
Email: ahwang@usgs.gov

Internet: <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/>

COBALT IN DECEMBER 2015

On the basis of preliminary data, U.S. cobalt consumption in 2015 was 4% more than consumption during 2014. The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in 2015 was slightly more than that imported during 2014. The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals in 2015 was 15% less than that exported during 2014.

Prices

Monthly average cobalt prices decreased for the fifth consecutive month. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in December, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	9.50–12.50	10.50
LME cash mean ²	10.32–11.25	10.90

¹Source: Platts Metals Week, minimum 99.8% cobalt cathode.

²London Metal Exchange, mean of the cash buyer and cash seller price, minimum 99.3% cobalt briquettes, cathode, ingot, or rounds (converted from dollars per metric ton and rounded to the nearest cent).

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TABLE 1
REPORTED CONSUMPTION AND STOCKS OF COBALT MATERIALS¹

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	Consumption, U.S. industry ^{p, 2}	U.S. industry ^{p, 2}	U.S. Government ^{3, 4}	Stocks, end of period		
				LME ^{3, 5}		Total
				U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
2014:						
December	710	954	301	9	480	489
January–December ⁶	8,230	954	301	9	480	489
Year ⁷	8,560 ^r	984	301	9	480	489
2015:						
January	747	913	301	9	471	480
February	714	903	301	8	470	478
March	726	927	301	8	463	471
April	711	931	301	8	457	465
May	717	939	301	8	443	451
June	718	947	301	8	345	353
July	711	956	301	23	423	446
August	692	937	301	110	418	528
September	707	933	301	110	448	558
October	725	937	301	110	448	558
November	706	924	301	125	441 ^r	566 ^r
December	708	925	301	165	465	630
January–December	8,580	925	301	165	465	630

^pPreliminary. ^rRevised.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Data for cobalt metal, metal powder, oxide and other chemical compounds, and scrap reported by U.S. cobalt processors and consumers. Includes estimates.

³Cobalt metal.

⁴Data from Defense Logistics Agency Strategic Materials.

⁵London Metal Exchange.

⁶U.S. industry data based on monthly reports.

⁷U.S. industry data include annual reports.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF COBALT, BY COUNTRY¹

(Metric tons, gross weight of material, except as noted)

Period and country of origin	Metals ²		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds ³		Total cobalt content for the period ⁵	Cobalt content, year to date ^{5, 6}
	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
2014:								
December	505	\$16,000	147	\$3,620	164	\$1,600	660	11,400
January–December	9,020	270,000	2,420	57,700	1,830	19,500	11,400	XX
2015:								
January	1,070	27,800	106	2,570	196	2,400	1,220	1,220
February	574	18,000	145	3,560	353	4,080	801	2,020
March	1,140	34,500	203	4,740	243	3,010	1,370	3,390
April	804	24,100	127	2,820	215	1,810	964	4,350
May	565	16,300	181	4,150	327	3,970	815	5,170
June	785	23,300	210	4,440	212	2,290	1,000	6,170
July	845	24,800	110	2,590	107	1,110	958	7,130
August	843	25,000	144	3,440	182	1,750	1,000	8,130
September	661	19,900	154	3,620	107	939	803	8,940
October	623	18,000	149	3,340	287	1,940	812	9,750
November	650	17,500	110	2,500	261	1,440	800	10,500
December:								
Australia	55	1,340	--	--	--	--	55	600
Austria	1	67	--	--	--	--	1	5
Belgium	2	49	55	1,240	--	--	42	453
Brazil	--	--	--	--	1	15	(7)	230
Canada	7	339	--	--	--	--	7	385
China	171	4,510	--	--	60	578	189	1,940
Czech Republic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	(7)
Finland	51	1,350	24	462	64	705	89	1,130
France	1	57	--	--	--	--	1	29
Germany	4	139	--	--	--	--	4	83
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	37
Ireland	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Italy	2	87	(7)	2	--	--	2	13
Japan	60	1,540	--	--	--	--	60	1,160
Korea, Republic of	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	16
Madagascar	84	2,160	--	--	--	--	84	840
Morocco	30	661	--	--	--	--	30	472
New Caledonia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6
Norway	58	1,340	--	--	--	--	58	1,730
Peru	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	66
Russia	77	1,900	--	--	--	--	77	835
Singapore	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	(7)
South Africa	68	1,660	--	--	--	--	68	501
Sweden	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	9
Uganda	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	26
United Kingdom	2	68	33	708	16	238	31	493
Zambia	42	900	--	--	--	--	42	308
Total	714	18,200	112	2,410	141	1,540	840	11,400
January–December	9,270	267,000	1,750	40,200	2,630	26,300	11,400	XX

XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Unwrought cobalt, excluding alloys; includes cobalt cathode and cobalt metal powder; may include intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy.

³Includes cobalt acetates, cobalt carbonates, cobalt chlorides, and cobalt sulfates.

⁴Customs value.

⁵Estimated from gross weights.

⁶May include revisions to previously published data.

⁷Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ADDITIONAL COBALT MATERIALS, BY COUNTRY¹

(Metric tons, gross weight of material, except as noted)

Period and country of origin	Unwrought cobalt alloys		Cobalt waste and scrap		Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles	
	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)
2014:						
December	233	\$6,710	92	\$1,300	17	\$2,230
January–December	1,040	33,400	1,130	17,200	224	22,500
2015:						
January	35	1,180	62	1,000	21	1,980
February	97	3,030	45	553	9	1,340
March	117	4,150	120	1,790	21	2,170
April	132	3,880	60	558	23	2,240
May	112	3,770	69	1,020	13	1,860
June	83	2,960	56	801	10	1,920
July	37	1,360	82	1,210	23	2,260
August	104	3,610	82	1,410	13	1,380
September	108	3,920	66	873	24	1,850
October	95	2,960	53	903	12	1,450
November	97	2,990	57	1,000	19	1,870
December:						
Belgium	7	205	--	--	(3)	3
Canada	193	3,960	3	24	20	878
China	--	--	--	--	(3)	22
France	--	--	15	293	(3)	14
Germany	1	80	--	--	3	453
Ireland	--	--	18	270	--	--
Japan	(3)	6	1	6	(3)	36
Mexico	--	--	(3)	4	(3)	3
Norway	1	42	--	--	--	--
Taiwan	--	--	3	64	(3)	2
United Kingdom	34	1,700	20	290	1	36
Total	236	5,990	60	951	24	1,450
January–December	1,250	39,800	812	12,100	211	21,800

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Customs value.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. EXPORTS OF COBALT MATERIALS¹

(Metric tons, gross weight of material, except as noted)

Period	Unwrought cobalt, powders, matte, waste and scrap ²		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds ³		Total cobalt content for the period ⁵	Cobalt content, year to date ^{5, 6}
	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
2014:								
December	385	\$8,330	7	\$127	6	\$58	392	4,500
January–December	4,070	102,000	536	5,720	184	3,420	4,500	XX
2015:								
January	315	7,300	--	--	20	180	319	319
February	337	8,710	32	560	20	170	365	685
March	332	9,450	97	592	(7)	3	403	1,090
April	308	8,640	1	44	38	322	318	1,400
May	238	7,260	1	28	19	158	243	1,650
June	382	9,310	4	103	--	--	385	2,030
July	295	6,810	32	584	6	30	319	2,350
August	295	5,870	8	334	--	--	300	2,650
September	277	5,630	1	28	29	182	284	2,940
October	223	5,160	15	354	26	189	240	3,180
November	302	5,530	1	57	4	16	304	3,480
December	322	7,020	--	--	19	150	327	3,810
January–December	3,630	86,700	192	2,680	180	1,400	3,810	XX

XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²May include other intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy and unwrought cobalt alloys.

³Cobalt acetates and cobalt chlorides.

⁴Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

⁵Estimated from gross weights.

⁶May include revisions to previously published data.

⁷Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
U.S. EXPORTS OF WROUGHT COBALT, COBALT ORE,
AND CONCENTRATES¹

(Metric tons, gross weight of material, except as noted)

Period	Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles		Cobalt ore and concentrates	
	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)
2014:				
December	156	\$9,140	140	\$228
January–December	1,790	106,000	714	1,610
2015:				
January	154	8,960	--	--
February	202	11,100	--	--
March	152	9,450	--	--
April	155	9,130	--	--
May	156	8,680	1	6
June	144	8,660	--	--
July	170	9,540	3	18
August	176	9,830	--	--
September	166	9,090	--	--
October	142	8,470	--	--
November	124	7,550	1	11
December	143	7,710	--	--
January–December	1,890	108,000	6	35

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.