



Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN MAY 2018

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in January through May 2018 was 17% more than that imported during the same period in 2017 (table 2). The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals in January through May 2018 was nearly two times more than that exported during the same period in 2017 (table 4).

Prices

In May, the monthly average Platts Metals Week U.S. spot cobalt price was \$43.90 per pound, slightly more than that in

April 2018 and 71% higher than that in May 2017. The monthly average London Metal Exchange, Ltd. cash price was \$40.91 per pound, essentially unchanged from that in April 2018 and 65% higher than that in May 2017.

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TABLE 1
REPORTED CONSUMPTION AND STOCKS OF COBALT MATERIALS[§]

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	Consumption, U.S. industry ^{p, 2}	Stocks, end of period				
		U.S. industry ^{p, 2}	U.S. Government ^{3, 4}	LME ^{3, 5}		Total
				U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
2017:						
May	734	937	301	188	557	745
June	731	929	301	193	548	741
July	728	939	301	191	503	694
August	732	966	302	191	553	744
September	731	978	302	183	622	805
October	724	985	302	167	583	750
November	701	977	302	163	562	725
December	705	996	302	160	420	580
January–May	3,660 *	937 *	301	188	557	745
January–December ⁶	8,710	996	302	160	420	580
2018:						
January	717	1,000	302	159	385	544
February	697	1,010	302	159	360	519
March	746	962	302	141	397	538
April	742	934	302	141	446	587
May	NA	NA	302	139	471	610
January–May	NA	NA	302	139	471	610

^pPreliminary. NA Not available.

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.

*Corrections posted on February 7, 2019.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF COBALT, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

Period and country or locality of origin	Metals ²		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds ³		Total cobalt content for the period ⁵ (metric tons)	Cobalt content, year to date ^{5,6} (metric tons)
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
2017:								
May	535	\$25,600	227	\$7,890	215	\$2,370	764	5,010
June	977	50,300	106	3,930	316	3,750	1,160	6,160
July	756	39,400	141	5,540	175	2,770	917	7,080
August	569	31,300	202	8,180	297	3,660	800	7,880
September	788	45,300	139	5,970	234	2,500	963	8,840
October	875	51,900	104	4,670	187	2,730	1,000	9,850
November	1,090	63,800	250	10,900	187	3,450	1,340	11,200
December	507	28,300	201	9,330	218	3,430	723	11,900
January–May	3,960 ^r	155,000 ^r	972	28,100	1,080	11,900	5,010 ^r	XX
January–December	9,530	465,000	2,120	76,600	2,690	34,200	11,900	XX
2018:								
January	1,150	70,900	135	6,220	345	4,790	1,350	1,350
February	902	62,500	176	9,700	271	2,970	1,110	2,470
March	782	47,500	304	17,000	933	6,980	1,280	3,750
April	922	71,600	149	8,700	454	4,900	1,180	4,930
May:								
Australia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	482
Belgium	4	406	63	3,430	--	--	49	276
Brazil	--	--	--	--	53	208	14	107
Canada	128	11,900	--	--	--	--	128	813
China	79	6,780	42	2,470	18	755	117	686
Finland	46	4,010	24	1,410	131	1,960	113	756
France	(7)	17	--	--	--	--	(7)	8
Germany	5	246	--	--	--	--	5	19
Hong Kong	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	25
Japan	127	9,940	(7)	3	--	--	127	907
Madagascar	84	7,940	--	--	--	--	84	231
Morocco	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	110
Norway	219	9,150	--	--	--	--	219	911
Russia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	123
South Africa	32	354	--	--	--	--	32	156
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7
United Kingdom	5	411	43	2,640	23	137	42	239
Other	2	113	--	--	(7)	4	2	4
Total	731	51,300	172	9,950	225	3,070	933	5,860
January–May	4,490	304,000	936	51,600	2,230	22,700	5,860	XX

^rRevised. 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 COUNTRY OR LOCALITY¹

Period and country or locality of origin	Unwrought cobalt alloys		Cobalt waste and scrap		Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)
2017:						
May	26	\$1,150	163	\$2,480	19	\$2,210
June	31	1,300	139	1,980	14	2,650
July	12	530	153	2,820	6	1,570
August	12	484	102	1,580	24	2,510
September	24	1,140	119	1,750	20	2,680
October	45	2,110	181	2,790	13	2,780
November	27	1,260	103	1,100	20	3,040
December	50	2,270	124	2,060	15	2,750
January–May	216	9,350	627 ^r	9,170 ^r	96	12,500
January–December	418	18,400	1,550	23,300	208	30,500
2018:						
January	42	2,040	198	3,090	19	3,330
February	63	3,230	161	2,780	22	2,870
March	38	2,070	258	3,650	41	4,760
April	45	2,550	164	3,760	21	2,600
May:						
Austria	--	--	--	--	5	569
Belgium	5	331	--	--	1	78
Canada	--	--	10	115	4	965
China	--	--	4	192	1	146
Finland	1	97	--	--	--	--
France	--	--	17	398	4	1,050
Germany	--	--	--	--	1	115
Hungary	--	--	--	--	(3)	3
India	--	--	--	--	(3)	13
Ireland	1	28	95	640	(3)	157
Israel	--	--	2	18	--	--
Italy	--	--	--	--	(3)	2
Japan	--	--	34	671	1	150
Korea, Republic of	--	--	1	31	--	--
Norway	59	2,470	--	--	22	919
Sweden	--	--	--	--	(3)	4
Switzerland	--	--	--	--	(3)	4
Taiwan	--	--	3	64	(3)	3
Tunisia	--	--	11	91	--	--
United Kingdom	19	1,230	30	974	13	672
Vietnam	--	--	--	--	(3)	2
Total	85	4,150	207	3,190	51	4,850
January–May	273	14,000	988	16,500	154	18,400

^rRevised. -- 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

Period	Unwrought cobalt, powders, matte, waste and scrap ²		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds ³		Total cobalt content for the period ⁵ (metric tons)	Cobalt content, year to date ^{5,6} (metric tons)
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
2017:								
May	589	\$12,000	40	\$305	36	\$532	626	2,230
June	398	7,530	5	139	19	281	406	2,640
July	486	9,650	9	313	4	66	494	3,130
August	347	8,490	4	138	19	277	354	3,480
September	368	10,100	13	576	19	20	382	3,870
October	485	13,600	7	235	19	281	494	4,360
November	841	11,200	4	169	20	295	849	5,210
December	507	11,600	11	507	19	330	520	5,730
January–May	2,100	45,000	147	1,010	85	964	2,230	XX
January–December	5,540	117,000	200	3,090	205	2,510	5,730	XX
2018:								
January	308	8,990	1	58	19	280	314	314
February	973	11,800	19	353	16	276	991	1,300
March	1,310	17,700	4	190	--	--	1,310	2,610
April	530	16,200	5	290	38	555	543	3,160
May	990	22,000	7	412	21	833	1,000	4,160
January–May	4,110	76,700	37	1,300	94	1,940	4,160	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.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

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

Period	Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles		Cobalt ore and concentrates	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ² (thousands)
2017:				
May	70	\$7,600	132	\$533
June	104	8,610	--	--
July	79	7,860	1	5
August	115	9,010	6	30
September	98	9,000	1	5
October	107	8,340	--	--
November	85	10,200	--	--
December	94	10,400	3	7
January–May	504	38,800	242	993
January–December	1,190	102,000	253	1,040
2018:				
January	98	9,690	--	--
February	99	10,100	(3)	4
March	88	10,700	--	--
April	70	6,970	(3)	3
May	69	8,500	--	--
January–May	425	46,000	(3)	7

-- Zero.

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

²Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.