

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN DECEMBER 2018

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in 2018 was slightly less than imports during 2017 (table 2). The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt (metal, metal powders, waste and scrap, and mattes and other intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy) and chemicals (acetates, chlorides, and oxides and hydroxides) in 2018 was 26% more than exports during 2017. In 2018, exports of unwrought cobalt, cobalt waste and scrap, and cobalt acetates were higher than those in 2017 (table 4).

Prices

In December, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price decreased by 15% from that in November 2018 and was 13% lower than that in December 2017. The monthly average LME cash mean price increased by 4% from that in November 2018 and was 24% lower than that in December 2017. The following

listed prices are for cobalt metal in December, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	29.00–35.00	30.75
LME cash mean ²	Not available	24.90

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 ²	Stocks, end of period				
		U.S. industry ²	U.S. Government ^{3, 4}	LME ^{3, 5}		Total
				U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
2017:						
December	705	996	302	160	420	580
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
June	NA	NA	302	135	501	636
July	NA	NA	302	131	520	651
August	NA	NA	302	131	559	690
September	NA	NA	302	131	592	723
October	NA	NA	302	130	611	741
November	NA	NA	302	130	585	715
December	NA	NA	302	130	733	863
January–December	NA	NA	302	130	733	863

²Preliminary. 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.

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:								
December	507	\$28,300	201	\$9,330	218	\$3,430	723	11,900
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	731	51,300	172	9,950	225	3,070	933	5,860
June	767	54,700	122	7,620	832	5,400	1,100	6,960
July	577	43,000	133	7,820	204	1,170	731	7,690
August	674	48,400	56	2,880	35	484	724	8,410
September	604	38,500	122	6,680	551	3,850	851	9,260
October	968	63,900	112	5,170	338	3,590	1,140	10,400
November	461	29,200	102	5,930	385	3,030	640	11,000
December:								
Australia	--	--	1	27	--	--	1	579
Belgium	7	673	20	988	--	--	22	496
Brazil	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	172
Canada	324	19,400	--	--	--	--	324	1,820
China	15	1,090	67	2,800	70	1,550	89	1,320
Finland	27	1,550	24	977	33	514	54	1,740
France	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15
Germany	5	260	1	50	--	--	5	46
Hong Kong	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	46
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15
Italy	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10
Japan	25	1,720	--	--	--	--	25	1,760
Korea, Republic of	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	9
Madagascar	63	4,650	--	--	--	--	63	798
Morocco	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	210
Norway	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,490
Russia	147	9,800	--	--	--	--	147	544
South Africa	9	64	--	--	--	--	9	292
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	22
United Kingdom	1	43	--	--	--	--	1	394
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	13
Total	622	39,300	112	4,840	104	2,060	738	11,800
January–December	9,160	621,000	1,700	92,600	4,680	42,300	11,800	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.

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:						
December	50	\$2,270	124	\$2,060	15	\$2,750
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	85	4,150	207	3,190	51	4,850
June	38	2,480	212	3,860	24	3,350
July	26	1,770	226	4,080	24	4,050
August	25	1,720	179	2,880	23	2,830
September	24	1,580	186	2,890	32	3,620
October	41	2,380	264	4,170	35	3,880
November	53	3,560	165	3,360	39	4,990
December:						
Belgium	12	737	10	378	--	--
Canada	--	--	17	86	4	1,190
Finland	2	312	--	--	--	--
France	(3)	29	5	151	1	456
Ireland	--	--	57	479	(3)	18
Japan	(3)	5	4	66	1	34
Korea, Republic of	--	--	3	90	1	49
Netherlands	--	--	5	157	(3)	11
Norway	62	2,590	--	--	(3)	64
Romania	--	--	38	592	--	--
Taiwan	--	--	3	116	(3)	4
Tunisia	--	--	10	83	(3)	25
United Kingdom	9	659	60	1,160	15	1,440
Other	--	--	--	--	2	727
Total	85	4,330	212	3,360	23	4,020
January–December	565	31,900	2,430	41,100	355	45,100

-- 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:								
December	507	\$11,600	11	\$507	19	\$330	520	5,730
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
June	336	12,000	5	180	1	12	340	4,500
July	605	19,100	12	686	12	35	616	5,110
August	626	19,700	2	83	59	851	642	5,760
September	359	14,200	6	346	42	666	374	6,130
October	311	11,400	2	74	39	496	322	6,450
November	284	11,700	3	64	11	61	289	6,740
December	447	13,100	2	73	22	422	453	7,190
January–December	7,080	178,000	69	2,810	279	4,490	7,190	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:				
December	94	\$10,400	3	\$7
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	--	--
June	109	11,800	2	83
July	92	9,850	35	302
August	85	9,340	--	--
September	91	10,600	18	160
October	92	11,900	--	--
November	147	14,000	(3)	11
December	129	13,700	--	--
January–December	1,170	127,000	55	562

-- 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.