

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN MARCH 2019

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals during the first quarter of 2019 was 11% less than that imported during the same period in 2018 (table 2). The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals during the first quarter of 2019 was 54% less than that exported during the same period in 2018 (table 4).

Prices

In March, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price decreased by 21% from that in February and was 64% lower than that in March 2018. The monthly average LME cash mean price decreased slightly from that in February and was 65% lower than that in March 2018. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in March, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	13.00–20.00	14.88
LME cash mean ²	13.38–14.74	14.00

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 STOCKS OF COBALT METAL, END OF PERIOD

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	U.S. Government ²	LME ¹		Total
		U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
2018:				
March	302	141	397	538
April	302	141	446	587
May	302	139	471	610
June	302	135	501	636
July	302	131	520	651
August	302	131	559	690
September	302	131	592	723
October	302	130	611	741
November	302	130	585	715
December	302	130	733	863
2019:				
January	302	184	781	965
February	302	204	779	983
March	302	204	761	965

¹London Metal Exchange.

²Data from Defense Logistics Agency Strategic Materials.

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)		
2018:								
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	622	39,300	112	4,840	104	2,060	738	11,800
January–March	2,830	181,000	615	33,000	1,550	14,700	3,750	XX
January–December	9,160	621,000	1,700	92,600	4,680	42,300	11,800	XX
2019:								
January	852	48,000	116	3,880	119	2,040	978	978
February	824	41,400	116	2,630	268	4,670	998	1,980
March:								
Australia	25	879	--	--	--	--	25	25
Belgium	--	--	22	974	(7)	7	16	75
Brazil	--	--	--	--	25	109	7	7
Canada	207	8,080	--	--	--	--	207	623
China	9	569	37	997	31	358	44	283
Finland	27	1,030	26	666	88	1,580	78	294
France	(7)	9	--	--	(7)	3	(7)	3
Germany	3	199	--	--	--	--	3	12
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	12
Japan	156	5,770	--	--	(7)	4	156	321
Korea, Republic of	--	--	18	261	--	--	13	38
Madagascar	315	15,500	--	--	--	--	315	441
Morocco	20	691	--	--	--	--	20	60
Norway	346	12,800	--	--	--	--	346	807
Russia	130	4,700	--	--	--	--	130	195
South Africa	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	76
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10
United Kingdom	1	68	(7)	3	14	372	7	60
Other	(7)	3	--	--	--	--	(7)	1
Total	1,240	50,300	102	2,900	159	2,430	1,370	3,340
January–March	2,920	140,000	334	9,410	546	9,140	3,340	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 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)
2018:						
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	85	4,330	212	3,360	23	4,020
January–March	143	7,340	617	9,510	83	11,000
January–December	565	31,900	2,430	41,100	355	45,100
2019:						
January	29	1,920	173	1,990	42	5,410
February	59	3,490	179	2,520	24	3,350
March:						
Belgium	8	383	--	--	(3)	21
Canada	1	94	9	77	5	1,460
China	--	--	5	244	1	329
France	(3)	32	12	201	7	690
Germany	(3)	13	5	114	1	216
India	--	--	1	29	5	139
Ireland	--	--	66	639	--	--
Japan	--	--	2	25	1	55
Korea, Republic of	--	--	1	14	--	--
Norway	52	2,170	--	--	(3)	37
Singapore	--	--	8	129	--	--
Switzerland	--	--	1	2	(3)	8
Taiwan	--	--	3	116	--	--
Tunisia	--	--	6	49	--	--
United Kingdom	23	1,340	27	769	23	1,900
Other	--	--	--	--	(3)	45
Total	85	4,040	144	2,410	43	4,890
January–March	173	9,450	496	6,910	109	13,600

-- 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)		
2018:								
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–March	2,590	38,500	25	601	35	556	2,610	XX
January–December	7,080	178,000	69	2,810	279	4,490	7,190	XX
2019:								
January	266	9,190	3	126	22	416	273	273
February	518	15,900	4	84	20	258	525	798
March	413	14,300	1	49	6	69	415	1,210
January–March	1,200	39,400	8	259	48	743	1,210	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)
2018:				
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–March	285	30,500	(3)	4
January–December	1,170	127,000	55	562
2019:				
January	111	12,200	16	103
February	102	11,300	--	--
March	105	13,300	8	264
January–March	318	36,800	24	367

-- 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.