

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## COBALT IN MAY 2019

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in May 2019 was 53% more than that imported in May 2018. For the first five months of 2019, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was 7% more 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 in May 2019 was 61% less than that exported in May 2018 and during the first five months of 2019, the amount exported was 51% less than that exported during the same period in 2018 (table 4).

2018. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in May, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot <sup>1</sup>	15.00–17.00	15.80
LME cash mean <sup>2</sup>	15.20–15.65	15.53

<sup>1</sup>Source: Platts Metals Week, minimum 99.8% cobalt cathode.

<sup>2</sup>London 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).

## Prices

In May, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price decreased slightly from that in April and was 64% lower than that in May 2018. The monthly average LME cash mean price increased slightly from that in April and was 62% lower than that in May

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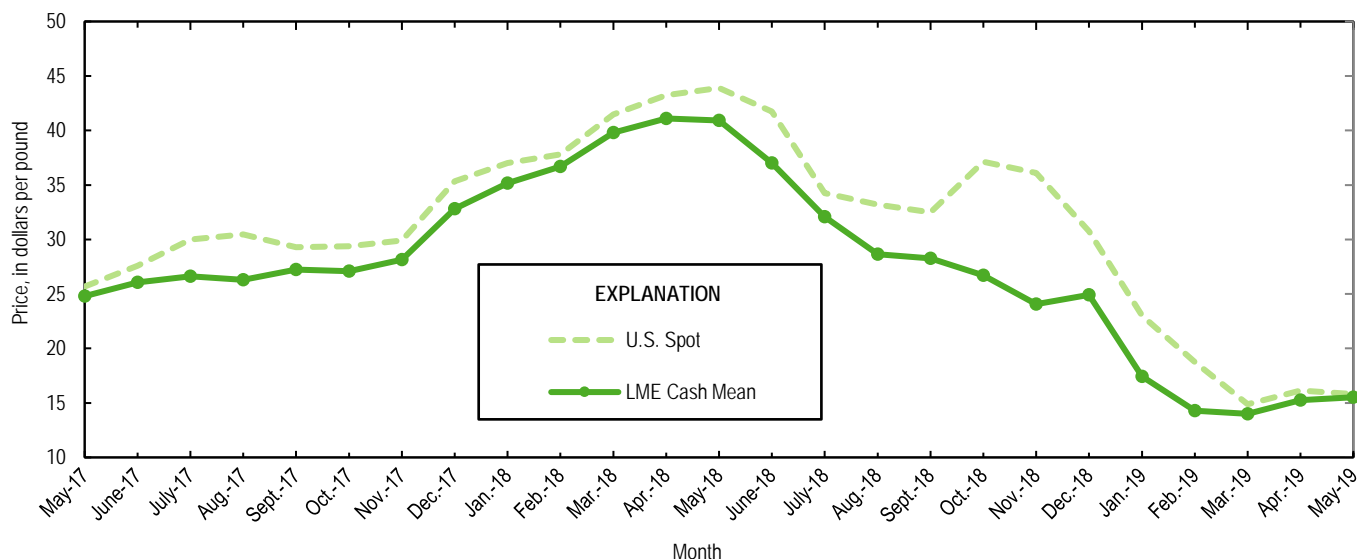


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for May 2017 through May 2019. Sources: Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.\*

\*Corrections posted on June 16, 2020.

TABLE 1  
REPORTED STOCKS OF COBALT METAL, END OF PERIOD

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	U.S. Government <sup>2</sup>	LME <sup>1</sup>		Total
		U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
2018:				
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
April	302	204	700	904
May	302	200	661	861

<sup>1</sup>London Metal Exchange.

<sup>2</sup>Data from Defense Logistics Agency Strategic Materials.

TABLE 2  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF COBALT, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY<sup>1</sup>

Period and country or locality of origin	Metals <sup>2</sup>		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds <sup>3</sup>		Total cobalt content for the period <sup>5</sup> (metric tons)	Cobalt content, year to date <sup>5, 6</sup> (metric tons)
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>4</sup> (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>4</sup> (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>4</sup> (thousands)		
2018:								
May	745	\$51,800	172	\$9,950	207	\$2,660	939	5,870
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	8,420
September	604	38,500	122	6,680	551	3,850	851	9,270
October	968	63,900	112	5,170	353	4,000	1,150	10,400
November	462	29,100	102	5,930	385	3,030	640	11,100
December	622	39,300	103	4,250	86	1,780	727	11,800
January–May	4,500 <sup>r</sup>	304,000	936	51,600	2,210 <sup>r</sup>	22,300 <sup>r</sup>	5,870	XX
January–December	9,170	621,000	1,690	92,000	4,660	42,000	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	1,240	50,300	102	2,900	159	2,430	1,370	3,340
April	1,260	48,400	161	3,960	239	3,630	1,470	4,810
May:								
Australia	311	12,600	--	--	--	--	311	492
Belgium	2	90	48	1,360	--	--	36	174
Brazil	--	--	--	--	49	463	16	23
Canada	231	7,790	--	--	--	--	231	1,090
China	1	10	54	1,490	8	91	42	337
Finland	29	940	38	923	212	2,090	121	553
France	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5
Germany	3	160	--	--	--	--	3	17
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	12
Japan	124	4,250	--	--	--	--	124	528
Korea, Republic of	--	--	17	173	--	--	12	52
Madagascar	52	2,200	--	--	--	--	52	596
Morocco	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	80
Norway	154	5,770	--	--	--	--	154	1,300
Russia	284	8,880	--	--	--	--	284	675
South Africa	22	163	--	--	--	--	22	137
Taiwan	1	54	--	--	3	28	2	12
United Kingdom	2	76	33	787	13	165	30	163
Other	--	--	--	--	2	40	1	2
Total	1,220	43,000	190	4,740	286	2,880	1,440	6,250
January–May	5,400	231,000	685	18,100	1,070	15,600	6,250	XX

<sup>r</sup>Revised. XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Includes cobalt acetates, cobalt carbonates, cobalt chlorides, and cobalt sulfates.

<sup>4</sup>Customs value.

<sup>5</sup>Estimated from gross weights.

<sup>6</sup>May 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 LOCALITY<sup>1</sup>

Period and country or locality of origin	Unwrought cobalt alloys		Cobalt waste and scrap		Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousands)
2018:						
May	85	\$4,150	207	\$3,190	37	\$4,260
June	38	2,480	212	3,860	24	3,360
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	3,550	165	3,360	39	4,990
December	85	4,330	212	3,360	23	4,020
January–May	273	14,000	988	16,500	140 <sup>r</sup>	17,800 <sup>r</sup>
January–December	565	31,900	2,430	41,100	341	44,600
2019:						
January	29	1,920	173	1,990	42	5,410
February	59	3,490	179	2,520	24	3,350
March	85	4,040	144	2,410	43	4,890
April	38	2,870	253	3,430	34	4,490
May:						
Belgium	3	94	4	190	(3)	3
Canada	(3)	55	26	759	6	1,830
France	1	159	15	666	6	624
Germany	--	--	(3)	2	4	190
India	--	--	--	--	3	52
Ireland	--	--	63	480	(3)	3
Netherlands	--	--	10	351	--	--
Russia	--	--	20	679	--	--
Switzerland	--	--	4	6	(3)	9
Taiwan	--	--	3	116	(3)	12
Tunisia	--	--	11	103	(3)	12
United Kingdom	13	827	(3)	3	19	1,380
Other	(3)	5	1	8	3	398
Total	18	1,140	156	3,360	41	4,510
January–May	228	13,500	905	13,700	184	22,700

<sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Customs value.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4  
U.S. EXPORTS OF COBALT MATERIALS<sup>1</sup>

Period	Unwrought cobalt, powders, matte, waste and scrap <sup>2</sup>		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds <sup>3</sup>		Total cobalt content for the period <sup>5</sup> (metric tons)	Cobalt content, year to date <sup>5, 6</sup> (metric tons)
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>4</sup> (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>4</sup> (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>4</sup> (thousands)		
2018:								
May	760	\$16,400	7	\$412	21	\$833	770	3,930
June	336	12,000	5	180	1	12	340	4,270
July	605	19,100	12	686	12	35	616	4,880
August	626	19,700	2	83	59	851	642	5,530
September	360	14,200	6	346	42	666	374	5,900
October	312	11,400	2	74	39	496	322	6,220
November	284	11,700	3	64	11	61	289	6,510
December	447	13,000	2	73	22	422	453	6,960
January–May	3,880 <sup>r</sup>	71,200 <sup>r</sup>	37	1,300	94	1,940	3,930 <sup>r</sup>	XX
January–December	6,850	172,000	69	2,810	279	4,490	6,960	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
April	424	10,800	4	207	16	157	431	1,650
May	285	9,430	3	74	46	287	299	1,940
January–May	1,910	59,600	16	540	110	1,190	1,940	XX

<sup>r</sup>Revised. XX Not applicable.

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

<sup>2</sup>May include other intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy and unwrought cobalt alloys.

<sup>3</sup>Cobalt acetates and cobalt chlorides.

<sup>4</sup>Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

<sup>5</sup>Estimated from gross weights.

<sup>6</sup>May include revisions to previously published data.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5  
U.S. EXPORTS OF WROUGHT COBALT, COBALT ORE,  
AND CONCENTRATES<sup>1</sup>

Period	Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles		Cobalt ore and concentrates	
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousands)
2018:				
May	69	\$8,500	--	--
June	109	11,800	2	\$83
July	92	9,850	35	302
August	85	9,370	--	--
September	91	10,600	18	160
October	92	11,900	--	--
November	147	14,000	(3)	11
December	124	13,400	--	--
January–May	425	46,000	(3)	7
January–December	1,160	127,000	55	562
2019:				
January	111	12,200	16	103
February	102	11,300	--	--
March	105	13,300	8	264
April	151	13,300	--	--
May	117	12,600	(3)	6
January–May	586	62,700	24	373

<sup>1</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.