

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN APRIL 2019

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in April 2019 was 24% more than that imported in April 2018. For the first four months of 2019, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was slightly 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 in April 2019 was 21% less than that exported in April 2018 and during the first four months of 2019, the amount exported was 48% less than that exported during the same period in 2018 (table 4).

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

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	15.00–17.00	16.13
LME cash mean ²	13.83–15.99	15.24

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).

Prices

In April, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price increased by 8% from that in March and was 63% lower than that in April 2018. The monthly average LME cash mean price increased by 9% from that in March and was 63% lower than that in April

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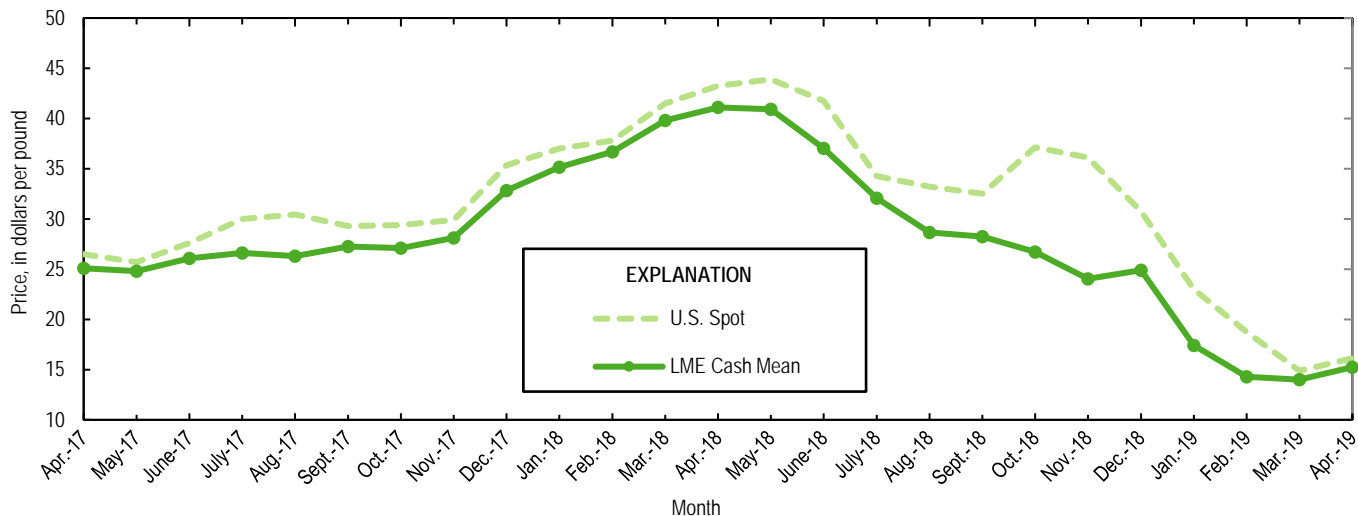


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for April 2017 through April 2019. Sources: Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.*

*Corrections posted on June 16, 2020.

TABLE 1
 REPORTED STOCKS OF COBALT METAL, END OF PERIOD

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	U.S. Government ²	LME ¹		Total
		U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
2018:				
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
April	302	204	700	904

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:								
April	922	\$71,600	149	\$8,700	454	\$4,900	1,180	4,930
May	745 ^r	51,800 ^r	172	9,950	207 ^r	2,660 ^r	939 ^r	5,870 ^r
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 ^r
September	604	38,500	122	6,680	551	3,850	851	9,270 ^r
October	968	63,900	112	5,170	353 ^r	4,000 ^r	1,150 ^r	10,400
November	462 ^r	29,100 ^r	102	5,930	385	3,030	640	11,100 ^r
December	622	39,300	103 ^r	4,250 ^r	86 ^r	1,780 ^r	727 ^r	11,800
January–April	3,760	252,000	764	41,700	2,000	19,600	4,930	XX
January–December	9,170 ^r	621,000	1,690 ^r	92,000 ^r	4,660 ^r	42,000 ^r	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:								
Australia	156	11,500	--	--	--	--	156	181
Belgium	--	--	81	1,940	16	81	63	138
Brazil	--	--	--	--	(7)	4	(7)	7
Canada	238	8,140	--	--	--	--	238	861
China	8	426	(7)	5	9	201	12	295
Finland	54	1,950	18	499	185	3,100	138	432
France	1	101	--	--	--	--	1	5
Germany	3	162	--	--	--	--	3	14
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	12
Japan	83	3,140	--	--	--	--	83	404
Korea, Republic of	(7)	3	3	77	--	--	2	40
Madagascar	103	3,460	--	--	--	--	103	544
Morocco	20	603	--	--	--	--	20	80
Norway	340	10,400	--	--	--	--	340	1,150
Russia	196	7,190	--	--	--	--	196	391
South Africa	39	567	--	--	--	--	39	115
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	10
United Kingdom	23	712	59	1,430	29	240	74	134
Other	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
Total	1,260	48,400	161	3,960	239	3,630	1,470	4,810
January–April	4,180	188,000	495	13,400	785	12,800	4,810	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)
2018:						
April	45	\$2,550	164	\$3,760	21	\$2,600
May	85	4,150	207	3,190	37 ^r	4,260 ^r
June	38	2,480	212	3,860	24	3,360 ^r
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 ^r	165	3,360	39	4,990
December	85	4,330	212	3,360	23	4,020
January–April	188	9,890	781	13,300	103	13,600
January–December	565	31,900	2,430	41,100	341 ^r	44,600 ^r
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:						
Belgium	1	52	3	29	(3)	42
Canada	(3)	2	3	19	3	994
Costa Rica	--	--	17	159	--	--
Finland	2	306	--	--	--	--
France	1	86	22	386	7	1,360
India	--	--	--	--	6	152
Ireland	--	--	76	478	(3)	10
Japan	--	--	13	304	2	155
Netherlands	--	--	6	142	--	--
Norway	--	--	--	--	2	142
Romania	--	--	38	551	--	--
Taiwan	--	--	3	116	(3)	7
Tunisia	--	--	8	77	(3)	11
United Kingdom	34	2,420	65	1,160	11	1,010
Other	(3)	5	(3)	4	2	606
Total	38	2,870	253	3,430	34	4,490
January–April	211	12,300	749	10,300	143	18,100

^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)		
2018:								
April	530	\$16,200	5	\$290	38	\$555	543	3,160
May	760 ^r	16,400 ^r	7	412	21	833	770 ^r	3,930 ^r
June	336	12,000	5	180	1	12	340	4,270 ^r
July	605	19,100	12	686	12	35	616	4,880 ^r
August	626	19,700	2	83	59	851	642	5,530 ^r
September	360 ^r	14,200	6	346	42	666	374	5,900 ^r
October	312 ^r	11,400	2	74	39	496	322	6,220 ^r
November	284	11,700	3	64	11	61	289	6,510 ^r
December	447	13,000 ^r	2	73	22	422	453	6,960 ^r
January–April	3,120	54,700	30	891	73	1,110	3,160	XX
January–December	6,850 ^r	172,000 ^r	69	2,810	279	4,490	6,960 ^r	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
January–April	1,620	50,200	13	466	64	900	1,650	XX

^rRevised. XX Not applicable.

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:				
April	70	\$6,970	(3)	\$3
May	69	8,500	--	--
June	109	11,800	2	83
July	92	9,850	35	302
August	85	9,370	--	--
September	91	10,600	18	160
October	92	11,900	--	--
November	147	14,000	(3)	11
December	124	13,400	--	--
January–April	356 [†]	37,500	(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	--	--
January–April	469	50,100	24	367

[†]Revised. -- 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.