

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN NOVEMBER 2019

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in November 2019 was 61% more than that imported in November 2018. For the first 11 months of 2019, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was 12% 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 November 2019 was 7% less than that exported in November 2018 and during the first 11 months of 2019, the amount exported was 44% less than that exported during the same period in 2018 (table 4).

lower than that in November 2018. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in November, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	17.00–18.00	17.50
LME cash mean ²	15.99–15.99	15.99

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 November, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price decreased by 5% from that in October and was 52% lower than that in November 2018. The monthly average LME cash mean price essentially unchanged from that in October and was 39%

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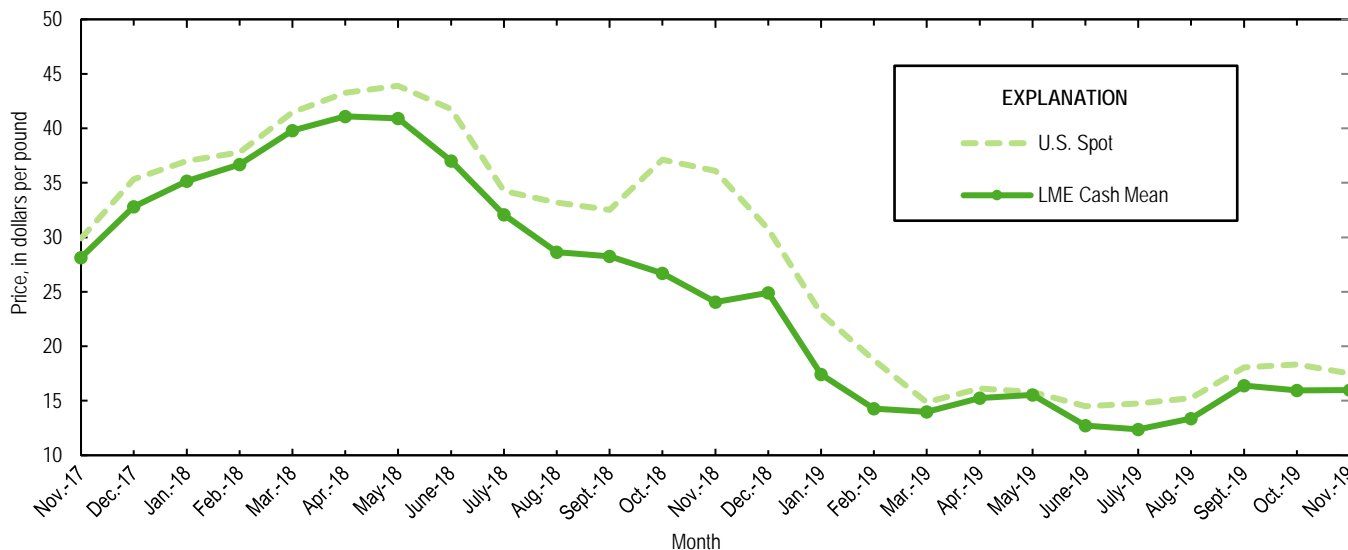


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for November 2017 through November 2019. Sources: Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.*

*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:				
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
June	302	200	659	859
July	302	191	649	840
August	302	191	645	836
September	302	191	643	834
October	302	111	600	711
November	302	111	576	687

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:								
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–November	8,550 ^r	582,000 ^r	1,580	87,700	4,570	40,200	11,100	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	1,220	43,000	190	4,740	286	2,880	1,440	6,250
June	558	17,800	123	3,000	141	1,190	687	6,940
July	1,030	34,000	181	4,350	115	1,580	1,200	8,130
August	602	17,700	119	2,670	88	1,120	718	8,850
September	1,400	47,500	123	3,110	191	1,930	1,550	10,400
October	783	27,700	198	5,150	152	1,640	976	11,400
November:								
Australia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	647
Belgium	7	372	83	2,480	--	--	66	440
Brazil	20	710	--	--	20	273	26	76
Canada	152	5,860	--	--	--	--	152	2,160
China	6	198	--	--	3	15	6	403
Finland	3	128	29	820	199	2,620	94	1,110
France	1	34	--	--	--	--	1	9
Germany	3	141	--	--	--	--	3	54
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	12
Japan	138	4,910	--	--	--	--	138	1,190
Korea, Republic of	--	--	17	197	--	--	12	106
Madagascar	126	4,570	--	--	--	--	126	1,090
Mexico	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20
Morocco	40	1,500	--	--	--	--	40	219
Norway	239	9,110	--	--	--	--	239	2,970
Russia	45	1,630	--	--	--	--	45	1,200
South Africa	50	377	--	--	--	--	50	283
Taiwan	--	--	18	513	--	--	13	56
United Kingdom	1	40	19	590	5	102	17	345
Other	1	34	--	--	4	95	2	6
Total	829	29,600	167	4,600	231	3,110	1,030	12,400
January–November	10,600	405,000	1,600	41,000	1,990	26,200	12,400	XX

¹Revised. XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

³Unwrought cobalt, excluding alloys; includes cobalt cathode and cobalt metal powder; may include intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy.

⁴Includes cobalt acetates, cobalt carbonates, cobalt chlorides, and cobalt sulfates.

⁵Customs value.

⁶Estimated from gross weights.

⁷May 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)
2018:						
November	53	\$3,550	165	\$3,360	39	\$4,990
December	85	4,330	212	3,360	23	4,020
January–November	479 ^r	27,500	2,220	37,700	318 ^r	40,600 ^r
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	18	1,140	156	3,360	41	4,510
June	21	1,550	145	1,460	47	4,480
July	34	2,430	223	2,420	55	4,630
August	39	2,470	171	2,440	23	3,190
September	22	1,510	155	1,880	67	4,860
October	16	875	158	2,120	47	4,980
November:						
Belgium	4	139	5	246	(3)	2
Canada	(3)	35	1	20	3	1,060
China	--	--	9	4	3	288
France	--	--	18	541	14	1,190
Germany	--	--	(3)	3	2	170
Ireland	--	--	64	284	--	--
Japan	--	--	6	54	1	116
Taiwan	--	--	6	232	(3)	31
Tunisia	--	--	10	95	--	--
United Arab Emirates	--	--	4	72	--	--
United Kingdom	17	1,070	68	1,400	18	1,520
Other	--	--	--	--	3	94
Total	21	1,240	192	2,950	43	4,480
January–November	381	23,500	1,950	27,000	465	49,300

^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:								
November	284	\$11,700	3	\$64	11	\$61	289	6,510
December	447	13,000	2	73	22	422	453	6,960
January–November	6,400 ^r	159,000 ^r	67	2,740	257	4,070	6,510	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
June	252	9,180	7	90	10	208	259	2,200
July	214	8,870	44	658	19	170	250	2,450
August	398	10,700	4	115	--	--	401	2,850
September	237	8,370	2	55	26	316	244	3,100
October	262	9,760	5	215	38	487	274	3,370
November	267	8,380	(7)	13	--	--	267	3,640
January–November	3,530	115,000	78	1,690	203	2,370	3,640	XX

^rRevised. 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.

⁷Less than ½ unit.

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:				
November	147	\$14,000	(3)	\$11
December	124	13,400	--	--
January–November	1,040	114,000 ^r	55	562
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
June	109	11,400	(3)	5
July	102	11,300	--	--
August	127	13,700	--	--
September	139	12,400	(3)	10
October	229	17,200	(3)	4
November	242	18,700	--	--
January–November	1,530	147,000	25	392

^rRevised. -- 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.