

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN JULY 2020

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in July 2020 was 30% less than that imported in July 2019. For the first 7 months of 2020, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was 13% less than that imported during the same period in 2019 (table 2). The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals in July 2020 was 7% more than that exported in July 2019 and during the first 7 months of 2020, the amount exported was 11% less than that exported during the same period in 2019 (table 4).

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

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	13.50–14.40	13.93
LME cash mean ²	12.93–13.18	12.95

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 July, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price decreased by 6% from that in June 2020 and from that in July 2019. The monthly average LME cash mean price decreased slightly from that in June and was 5% higher than that in July 2019. The

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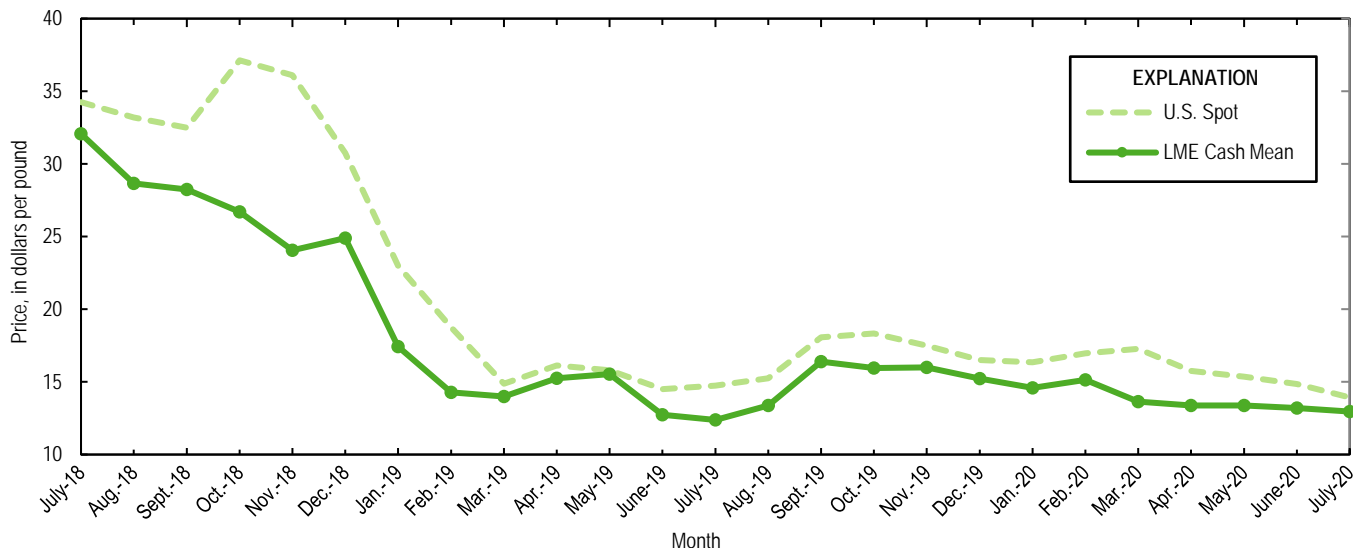


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for July 2018 through July 2020. Sources: Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.

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	
2019:				
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
December	302	102	583	685
2020:				
January	302	95	555	650
February	302	94	551	645
March	302	92	551	643
April	302	91	513	604
May	302	89	513	602
June	302	89	513	602
July	302	82	513	595

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)		
2019:								
July	1,030	\$33,900	181	\$4,350	115	\$1,580	1,200	8,200
August	674	20,100	119	2,670	88	1,120	790	8,990
September	1,420	48,300	123	3,110	191	1,930	1,570	10,600
October	779	27,800	198	5,150	152	1,640	973	11,500
November	829	29,600	167	4,600	231	3,110	1,030	12,600
December	1,210	42,500	102	2,740	103	1,370	1,320	13,900
January–July	7,030 ^r	285,000 ^r	999 ^r	26,000 ^r	1,340 ^r	18,700 ^r	8,200 ^r	XX
January–December	11,900	453,000	1,710	44,300	2,110	27,900	13,900	XX
2020:								
January	1,670	62,300	141	3,560	147	1,330	1,820	1,820
February	803	27,300	112	2,850	76	768	906	2,720
March	1,080	40,600	160	3,810	203	2,360	1,260	3,980
April	927	32,200	103	2,780	279	2,880	1,090	5,070
May	459	15,000	128	3,310	317	4,010	665	5,740
June	446	13,400	60	1,460	164	1,770	539	6,280
July:								
Australia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	729
Belgium	--	--	22	570	--	--	16	167
Brazil	--	--	--	--	2	35	1	49
Canada	142	4,530	--	--	--	--	142	1,220
China	5	109	--	--	5	63	6	90
Finland	74	2,570	51	1,150	76	1,130	140	702
France	2	162	--	--	--	--	2	5
Germany	5	229	--	--	3	17	5	27
Japan	91	3,100	--	--	--	--	91	1,010
Korea, Republic of	--	--	5	144	--	--	3	25
Madagascar	42	1,460	--	--	--	--	42	397
Mexico	20	591	--	--	--	--	20	61
Morocco	72	2,150	--	--	--	--	72	212
Netherlands	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	14
Norway	208	6,290	--	--	--	--	208	1,550
Russia	44	1,310	--	--	--	--	44	502
South Africa	17	125	--	--	--	--	17	100
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	38
United Kingdom	3	169	24	606	25	163	27	216
Other	--	--	1	59	--	--	1	6
Total	725	22,800	103	2,530	112	1,410	838	7,120
January–July	6,110	214,000	807	20,300	1,300	14,500	7,120	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.

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)
2019:						
July	34	\$2,430	223	\$2,420	55	\$4,640
August	39	2,470	171	2,440	23	3,180
September	22	1,510	155	1,880	41	4,150
October	16	875	158	2,130	47	4,980
November	21	1,240	192	2,950	43	4,480
December	40	2,280	152	2,170	52	5,320
January–July	231 [†]	15,200 [†]	1,270	17,300 [†]	286	31,700 [†]
January–December	369	23,600	2,100	28,900	491	53,800
2020:						
January	12	738	180	1,620	37	4,360
February	36	1,650	69	769	30	3,570
March	40	1,890	248	2,240	49	5,880
April	49	2,570	167	1,830	31	4,230
May	30	1,390	146	1,640	22	3,660
June	3	146	65	288	20	3,230
July:						
Belgium	1	17	4	146	(3)	7
Canada	--	--	12	13	2	651
China	--	--	4	26	2	597
France	--	--	17	319	7	1,080
Ireland	--	--	5	4	(3)	9
Tunisia	--	--	10	105	--	--
United Kingdom	9	406	32	600	7	437
Other	1	37	4	38	3	647
Total	10	460	88	1,250	21	3,430
January–July	180	8,850	962	9,630	211	28,400

[†]Revised. -- 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)		
2019:								
July	214	\$8,870	44	\$658	19	\$170	250	2,520
August	398	10,700	4	115	--	--	401	2,920
September	248	8,830	2	55	26	316	256	3,170
October	260	9,650	5	215	38	487	272	3,450
November	267	8,330	(7)	13	--	--	267	3,710
December	361	11,000	1	25	(7)	4	361	4,070
January–July	2,440 ^r	79,700 ^r	67	1,290	139	1,560	2,520 ^r	XX
January–December	3,970	128,000	79	1,710	203	2,370	4,070	XX
2020:								
January	335	11,900	8	326	32	93	349	349
February	301	8,930	14	489	3	39	311	660
March	248	8,320	7	249	65	292	268	928
April	351	8,700	3	109	39	340	363	1,290
May	260	9,310	9	380	51	2,060	279	1,570
June	398	8,350	8	329	29	174	411	1,980
July	248	7,250	8	230	59	266	268	2,250
January–July	2,140	62,800	57	2,110	278	3,270	2,250	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)
2019:				
July	102	\$11,300	--	--
August	127	13,700	--	--
September	141	12,600	(3)	\$10
October	229	17,200	(3)	4
November	242	18,700	--	--
December	208	16,700	77	211
January–July	797	85,500	24	378
January–December	1,750	164,000	102	603
2020:				
January	107	11,800	150	515
February	128	14,900	--	--
March	123	13,700	--	--
April	100	10,600	(3)	6
May	109	11,500	--	--
June	97	11,000	--	--
July	96	11,200	--	--
January–July	760	84,800	150	521

-- 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.