

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## COBALT IN OCTOBER 2020

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in October 2020 was 63% less than that imported in October 2019. For the first 10 months of 2020, the amount of cobalt contained in imports was 26% 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 October 2020 was slightly more than that exported in October 2019 and during the first 10 months of 2020, the amount exported was 12% less than that exported during the same period in 2019 (table 4).

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

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot <sup>1</sup>	15.40–15.90	15.65
LME cash mean <sup>2</sup>	14.74–15.39	15.07

<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 October, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price was essentially unchanged from that in September and was 15% lower than that in October 2019. The monthly average LME cash mean price was essentially unchanged from that in September and was 6% lower than that in October 2019. The

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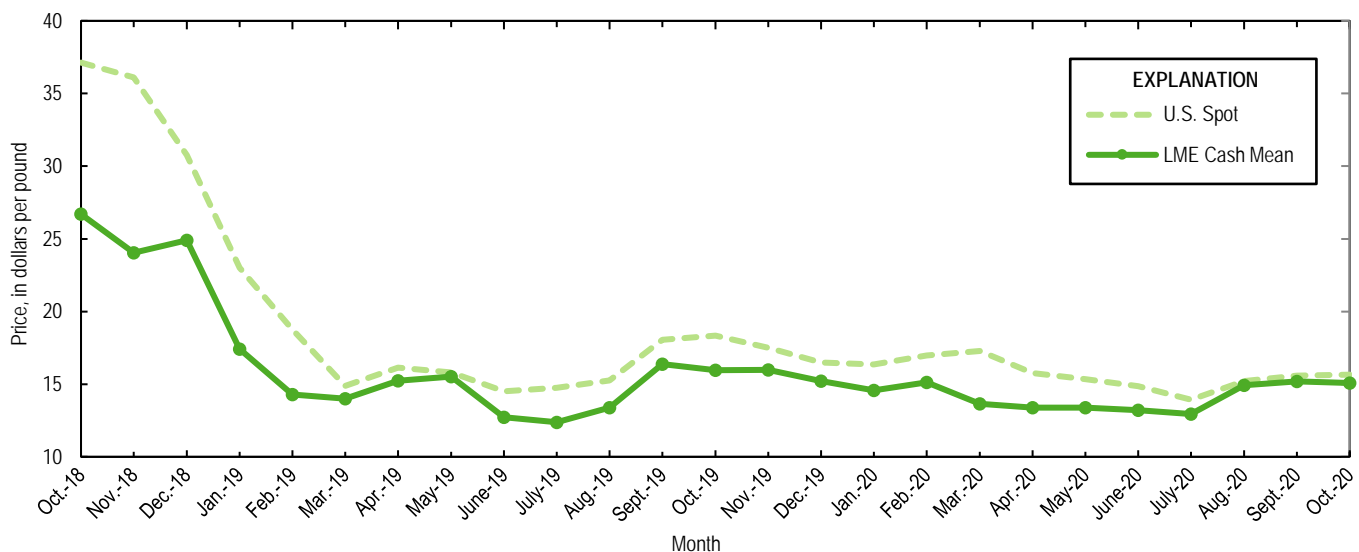


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for October 2018 through October 2020. Sources: Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.

TABLE 1  
REPORTED STOCKS OF COBALT METAL, END OF PERIOD

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	U.S. Government <sup>2</sup>	LME <sup>1</sup>		Total
		U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
<b>2019:</b>				
October	302	111	600	711
November	302	111	576	687
December	302	102	583	685
<b>2020:</b>				
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
August	302	82	373	455
September	302	82	369	451
October	302	82	369	451

<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)		
2019:								
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–October	9,910 <sup>r</sup>	381,000 <sup>r</sup>	1,440 <sup>r</sup>	37,000 <sup>r</sup>	1,770 <sup>r</sup>	23,400 <sup>r</sup>	11,500 <sup>r</sup>	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	725	22,800	103	2,530	112	1,410	838	7,120
August	450	13,100	30	737	168	2,220	536	7,650
September	325	10,100	175	3,570	244	2,960	537	8,190
October:								
Australia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	737
Belgium	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	181
Brazil	--	--	--	--	30	194	9	66
Canada	171	5,620	--	--	(7)	2	171	1,690
China	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	95
Finland	23	837	23	535	112	1,200	76	1,010
France	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7
Germany	11	524	--	--	--	--	11	49
Japan	51	1,740	--	--	--	--	51	1,190
Korea, Republic of	(7)	2	--	--	--	--	(7)	25
Madagascar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	397
Mexico	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	62
Morocco	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	264
Netherlands	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	14
Norway	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,550
Russia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	693
South Africa	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	168
Taiwan	--	--	12	183	7	94	11	61
United Kingdom	6	379	26	583	8	117	27	288
Other	(7)	17	(7)	21	--	--	1	6
Total	263	9,130	61	1,320	157	1,610	357	8,550
January–October	7,150	246,000	1,070	25,900	1,870	21,300	8,550	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.

<sup>7</sup>Less than ½ unit.

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)
2019:						
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–October	308 <sup>r</sup>	20,100 <sup>r</sup>	1,750 <sup>r</sup>	23,800 <sup>r</sup>	396 <sup>r</sup>	44,000 <sup>r</sup>
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	10	460	88	1,250	21	3,430
August	12	472	128	1,800	14	2,150
September	22	937	39	509	31	3,640
October:						
Belgium	1	40	--	--	--	--
Canada	--	--	17	96	2	647
China	(3)	3	--	--	2	525
France	--	--	17	263	7	1,010
Germany	--	--	(3)	3	2	318
Japan	--	--	9	34	(3)	5
United Kingdom	(3)	4	9	147	9	601
Other	--	--	--	--	(3)	98
Total	1	46	52	544	22	3,210
January–October	216	10,300	1,180	12,500	278	37,400

<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)		
2019:								
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–October	3,340 <sup>r</sup>	109,000 <sup>r</sup>	78	1,670	203	2,370	3,450 <sup>r</sup>	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
August	271	6,610	11	262	9	23	281	2,530
September	231	6,300	3	131	31	232	240	2,770
October	269	8,650	2	86	20	52	275	3,050
January–October	2,910	84,300	73	2,590	338	3,570	3,050	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>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.

<sup>7</sup>Less than ½ unit.

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)
2019:				
October	229	\$17,200	(3)	\$4
November	242	18,700	--	--
December	208	16,700	77	211
January–October	1,290	129,000	25	392
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	--	--
August	100	9,650	--	--
September	108	10,400	--	--
October	167	14,300	--	--
January–October	1,140	119,000	150	521

-- 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.