

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

Kim B. Shedd, Cobalt Commodity Specialist
 National Minerals Information Center
 U.S. Geological Survey
 989 National Center
 Reston, VA 20192
 Telephone: (703) 648-4974, Fax: (703) 648-7757
 Email: kshedd@usgs.gov

Annie Hwang (Data)
 Telephone: (703) 648-7952
 Fax: (703) 648-7975
 Email: ahwang@usgs.gov

Internet: <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic>

COBALT IN JANUARY 2021

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in January 2021 was 5% more than that imported during December 2020 and 63% less than that imported during January 2020 (table 2). The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals in January 2021 was 89% more than that exported during December 2020 and 16% more than that exported in January 2020 (table 4).

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	16.00–19.10	17.75
LME cash mean ²	14.97–18.71	17.10

¹Source: S&P Global 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 January, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price increased by 12% from that in December 2020 and was 9% higher than that in January 2020. The monthly average London Metal Exchange (LME) cash mean price increased by 18% from that in December 2020 and was 17% higher than that in January 2020. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in January, in dollars per pound.

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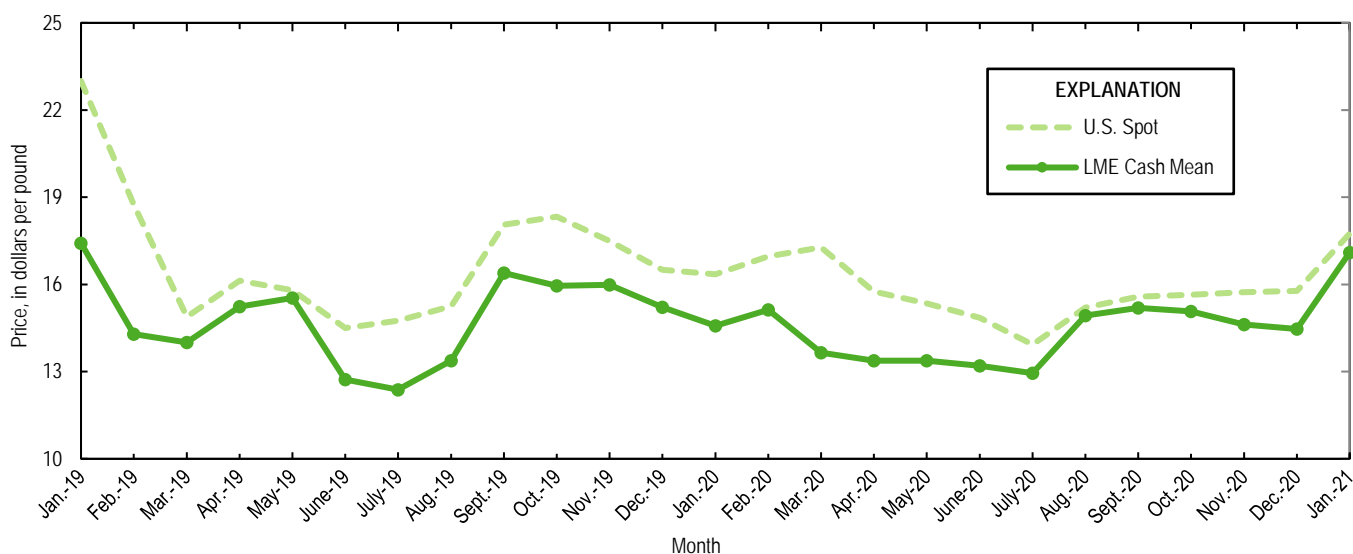


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for January 2019 through January 2021. Sources: S&P Global Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.

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	
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
August	302	82	373	455
September	302	82	369	451
October	302	82	369	451
November	302	82	369	451
December	302	82	369	451
2021, January	302	73	353	426

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 (metric tons)
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
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	263	9,130	61	1,320	157	1,610	357	8,550
November	446	14,100	91	2,270	129	1,370	552	9,100
December	546	22,100	100	2,370	84	875	642	9,740
January–December	8,140	282,000	1,260	30,600	2,080	23,600	9,740	XX
2021, January:								
Australia	--	--	6	188	--	--	4	4
Belgium	4	155	39	1,100	--	--	31	31
Brazil	--	--	--	--	36	330	10	10
Canada	53	1,940	--	--	--	--	53	53
Finland	32	1,120	37	980	161	1,930	115	115
Germany	5	246	--	--	--	--	5	5
Japan	134	4,710	--	--	--	--	134	134
Madagascar	15	513	--	--	--	--	15	15
Morocco	22	571	--	--	--	--	22	22
Norway	208	6,730	--	--	--	--	208	208
Russia	13	632	--	--	--	--	13	13
South Africa	19	144	--	--	--	--	19	19
Taiwan	--	--	12	325	--	--	9	9
United Kingdom	1	99	43	988	3	37	33	33
Other	1	66	1	15	3	69	3	3
Total	507	16,900	137	3,600	204	2,370	674	674

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.

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)
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	1	46	52	544	22	3,210
November	10	421	116	1,620	23	3,380
December	46	2,100	132	1,100	18	3,670
January–December	272	12,800	1,430	15,200	319	44,400
2021, January:						
Belgium	(3)	3	4	175	(3)	31
Canada	20	649	12	65	2	628
China	--	--	1	4	2	386
France	--	--	22	521	8	542
Germany	--	--	13	10	2	245
Japan	--	--	12	68	(3)	2
Taiwan	--	--	6	232	(3)	47
United Kingdom	33	1,570	14	248	4	437
Other	(3)	4	1	7	3	213
Total	53	2,230	84	1,330	20	2,530

-- 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 (metric tons)
	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Gross weight (metric tons)	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
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
November	157	6,680	(6)	11	38	254	166	3,210
December	213	6,090	1	31	--	--	213	3,420
January–December	3,280	97,100	74	2,630	376	3,830	3,420	XX
2021, January:	403	11,200	1	29	--	--	403	403

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.

⁶Less 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)
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	--	--
November	112	10,700	--	--
December	135	12,600	--	--
January–December	1,380	143,000	150	521
2021, January:	87	10,100	--	--

-- 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.