

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 SEPTEMBER 2019

The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in September 2019 was 82% more than that imported in September 2018. For the first nine 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 September 2019 was 35% less than that exported in September 2018 and during the first nine months of 2019, the amount exported was 47% less than that exported during the same period in 2018 (table 4).

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

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	17.00–19.00	18.06
LME cash mean ²	15.65–16.90	16.39

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 September, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price increased by 18% from that in August and was 44% lower than that in September 2018. The monthly average LME cash mean price increased by 22% from that in August and was 42% lower

List services and web feed subscribers are the first to receive notification of USGS minerals information publications and data releases. For information on how to subscribe, go to <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic/minerals-information-publication-list-services>.

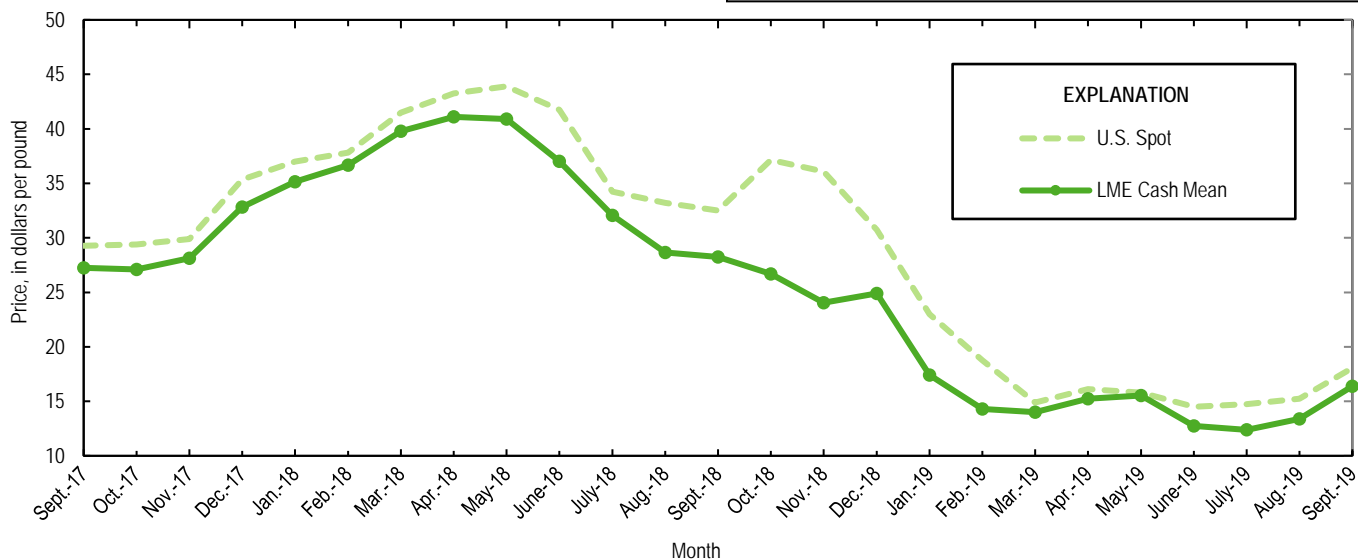


Figure 1. Average U.S. spot prices and LME cash mean prices for September 2017 through September 2019. Sources: Platts Metals Week and London Metal Exchange.*

*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:				
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
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

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:								
September	604	\$38,500	122	\$6,680	551	\$3,850	851	9,270
October	968	63,900	112	5,170	353	4,000	1,150	10,400
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–September	7,120 ^r	489,000 ^r	1,370	76,600	3,830 ^r	33,200 ^r	9,270 ^r	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:								
Australia	26	2,220	--	--	--	--	26	647
Belgium	6	318	55	1,450	3	24	46	314
Brazil	--	--	--	--	14	236	5	42
Canada	155	5,970	--	--	--	--	155	1,840
China	1	34	10	314	19	136	13	385
Finland	32	861	23	533	143	1,420	93	848
France	(7)	6	--	--	--	--	(7)	8
Germany	9	310	--	--	--	--	9	41
India	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	12
Japan	161	5,340	--	--	--	--	161	913
Korea, Republic of	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	84
Madagascar	84	2,560	--	--	--	--	84	856
Mexico	20	623	--	--	--	--	20	20
Morocco	49	1,770	--	--	--	--	49	179
Norway	660	20,900	--	--	--	--	660	2,570
Russia	186	6,400	--	--	6	15	187	1,060
South Africa	7	53	--	--	--	--	7	233
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	25
United Kingdom	3	112	35	812	4	48	29	313
Other	(7)	4	--	--	2	50	1	4
Total	1,400	47,500	123	3,110	191	1,930	1,550	10,400
January–September	8,980	348,000	1,230	31,200	1,610	21,500	10,400	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:						
September	24	\$1,580	186	\$2,890	32	\$3,620
October	41	2,380	264	4,170	35	3,880
November	53	3,550	165	3,360	39	4,990
December	85	4,330	212	3,360	23	4,020
January–September	386	21,600	1,790	30,200	244 ^r	31,700 ^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:						
Belgium	3	91	--	--	(3)	7
Canada	--	--	13	26	3	1,010
China	--	--	8	7	1	376
France	--	--	6	232	7	624
Germany	1	59	--	--	6	402
India	--	--	6	24	2	27
Ireland	--	--	38	419	--	--
Japan	--	--	11	126	--	--
Norway	--	--	--	--	27	872
Taiwan	--	--	6	232	(3)	7
Tunisia	--	--	9	88	--	--
United Kingdom	19	1,360	59	721	20	1,460
Other	--	--	--	--	(3)	68
Total	22	1,510	155	1,880	67	4,860
January–September	345	21,400	1,600	21,900	375	39,800

^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:								
September	360	\$14,200	6	\$346	42	\$666	374	5,900
October	312	11,400	2	74	39	496	322	6,220
November	284	11,700	3	64	11	61	289	6,510
December	447	13,000	2	73	22	422	453	6,960
January–September	5,800 ^r	136,000 ^r	62	2,600	207	3,510	5,900 ^r	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
January–September	3,010	96,700	74	1,460	165	1,880	3,100	XX

¹Revised. XX Not applicable. -- Zero.

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

³May include other intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy and unwrought cobalt alloys.

⁴Cobalt acetates and cobalt chlorides.

⁵Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

⁶Estimated from gross weights.

⁷May 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:				
September	91	\$10,600	18	\$160
October	92	11,900	--	--
November	147	14,000	(3)	11
December	124	13,400	--	--
January–September	801	87,600	55	551
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
January–September	1,060	112,000	25	388

-- 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.