

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN MARCH 2016

U.S. cobalt consumption during January through March 2016 was slightly less than consumption during the same period in 2015. The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals in January through March 2016 was 17% less than that imported during the same period in 2015. The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals in January through March 2016 was 8% less than that exported during the same period in 2015.

Prices

In March, the monthly average U.S. spot cobalt price increased for the third consecutive month. The monthly average LME cash mean price increased for the first time since July 2015. The following listed prices are for cobalt metal in March, in dollars per pound.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	10.60–11.80	11.21
LME cash mean ²	10.02–10.68	10.49

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).

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TABLE 1
REPORTED CONSUMPTION AND STOCKS OF COBALT MATERIALS¹

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	Consumption, U.S. industry ^{p,2}	Stocks, end of period					Total
		U.S. industry ^{p,2}	U.S. Government ^{3,4}	LME ^{3,5}			
				U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse		
2015:							
March	714	926	301	8	463	471	
April	719	907	301	8	457	465	
May	717	910	301	8	443	451	
June	719	912	301	8	345	353	
July	727	917	301	23	423	446	
August	709	919	301	110	418	528	
September	697	911	301	110	448	558	
October	724	912	301	110	448	558	
November	725	886	301	125	441	566	
December	713	912	301	165	465	630	
January–March	2,150 ^r	926	301	8	463	471	
January–December ⁶	8,600	912	301	165	465	630	
2016:							
January	715	916	301	169	450	619	
February	709	947	301	169	445	614	
March	705	981	301	193	458	651	
January–March	2,130	981	301	193	458	651	

^pPreliminary. ^rRevised.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Data for cobalt metal, metal powder, oxide and other chemical compounds, and scrap reported by U.S. cobalt processors and consumers. Includes estimates.

³Cobalt metal.

⁴Data from Defense Logistics Agency Strategic Materials.

⁵London Metal Exchange.

⁶U.S. industry data based on monthly reports.

TABLE 2
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF COBALT, BY COUNTRY¹

(Metric tons, gross weight of material, except as noted)

Period and country of origin	Metals ²		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds ³		Total cobalt content for the period ⁵	Cobalt content, year to date ^{5,6}
	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
2015:								
March	1,140	\$34,500	203	\$4,740	243	\$3,010	1,370	3,390
April	804	24,100	127	2,820	215	1,810	964	4,350
May	565	16,300	181	4,150	327	3,970	815	5,170
June	785	23,300	210	4,440	212	2,290	1,000	6,170
July	845	24,800	110	2,590	107	1,110	958	7,130
August	843	25,000	144	3,440	182	1,750	1,000	8,130
September	661	19,900	154	3,620	107	939	803	8,940
October	623	18,000	149	3,340	287	1,940	812	9,750
November	650	17,500	110	2,500	261	1,440	800	10,500
December	714	18,200	112	2,410	141	1,540	840	11,400
January–March	2,780	80,200	454	10,900	792	9,490	3,390	XX
January–December	9,270	267,000	1,750	40,200	2,630	26,300	11,400	XX
2016:								
January	612	14,200	100	1,980	104	1,340	720	720
February	1,050	23,100	171	3,010	106	1,160	1,210	1,930
March:								
Australia	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	186
Austria	(7)	6	--	--	--	--	(7)	(7)
Belgium	(7)	9	46	929	--	--	33	114
Brazil	--	--	--	--	5	47	1	5
Canada	150	3,870	--	--	9	13	152	467
China	2	64	50	915	78	475	62	184
Finland	57	1,490	18	310	34	759	85	202
France	18	622	--	--	--	--	18	18
Germany	2	202	--	--	--	--	2	25
Ireland	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	(7)
Italy	(7)	14	--	--	--	--	(7)	(7)
Japan	264	5,740	--	--	--	--	264	387
Korea, Republic of	(7)	3	--	--	(7)	3	(7)	1
Kuwait	--	--	--	--	11	258	5	5
Madagascar	42	1,010	--	--	--	--	42	210
Morocco	10	219	--	--	--	--	10	70
Netherlands	--	--	--	--	18	99	5	5
Norway	24	884	--	--	--	--	24	372
Russia	56	1,200	--	--	--	--	56	182
Singapore	(7)	6	--	--	--	--	(7)	24
South Africa	55	1,320	--	--	--	--	55	98
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
United Kingdom	(7)	11	59	1,110	14	210	48	92
Zambia	40	810	--	--	--	--	40	180
Total	720	17,500	173	3,260	170	1,860	903	2,830
January–March	2,380	54,700	444	8,260	381	4,360	2,830	XX

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 COUNTRY¹

(Metric tons, gross weight of material, except as noted)

Period and country of origin	Unwrought cobalt alloys		Cobalt waste and scrap		Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles	
	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)
2015:						
March	117	\$4,150	120	\$1,790	21	\$2,170
April	132	3,880	60	558	23	2,240
May	112	3,770	69	1,020	13	1,860
June	83	2,960	56	801	10	1,920
July	37	1,360	82	1,210	23	2,260
August	104	3,610	82	1,410	13	1,380
September	108	3,920	66	873	24	1,850
October	95	2,960	53	903	12	1,450
November	97	2,990	57	1,000	19	1,870
December	236	5,990	60	951	24	1,450
January–March	249	8,360	227	3,350	51	5,480
January–December	1,250	39,800	812	12,100	211	21,800
2016:						
January	82	2,600	43	698	10	1,590
February	109	3,460	58	793	13	1,550
March:						
Australia	9	181	--	--	--	--
Belgium	21	496	--	--	(3)	23
Canada	37	768	6	58	4	761
China	--	--	--	--	2	277
France	(3)	3	11	184	(3)	11
Germany	(3)	12	(3)	4	1	107
Hungary	--	--	--	--	(3)	3
India	--	--	--	--	(3)	6
Ireland	--	--	23	346	(3)	65
Italy	--	--	2	41	(3)	13
Japan	--	--	20	260	--	--
Mexico	--	--	(3)	3	(3)	11
Norway	1	42	--	--	--	--
Singapore	--	--	2	32	--	--
Switzerland	--	--	--	--	(3)	6
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	(3)	10
United Kingdom	24	1,250	18	224	3	148
Total	91	2,750	82	1,150	11	1,440
January–March	283	8,810	182	2,640	33	4,580

-- 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

(Metric tons, gross weight of material, except as noted)

Period	Unwrought cobalt, powders, matte, waste and scrap ²		Oxides and hydroxides		Salts and compounds ³		Total cobalt content for the period ⁵	Cobalt content, year to date ^{5,6}
	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)	Quantity	Value ⁴ (thousands)		
2015:								
March	332	\$9,450	97	\$592	(7)	\$3	403	1,090
April	308	8,640	1	44	38	322	318	1,400
May	238	7,260	1	28	19	158	243	1,650
June	382	9,310	4	103	--	--	385	2,030
July	295	6,810	32	584	6	30	319	2,350
August	295	5,870	8	334	--	--	300	2,650
September	277	5,630	1	28	29	182	284	2,940
October	223	5,160	15	354	26	189	240	3,180
November	302	5,530	1	57	4	16	304	3,480
December	322	7,020	--	--	19	150	327	3,810
January–March	984	25,500	129	1,150	40	352	1,090	XX
January–December	3,630	86,700	192	2,680	180	1,400	3,810	XX
2016:								
January	305	5,930	7	118	10	43	312	312
February	336	6,600	4	45	33	107	347	659
March	289	6,850	72	236	19	132	345	1,000
January–March	929	19,400	83	399	62	283	1,000	XX

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

(Metric tons, gross weight of material, except as noted)

Period	Wrought cobalt and cobalt articles		Cobalt ore and concentrates	
	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)	Quantity	Value ² (thousands)
2015:				
March	152	\$9,450	--	--
April	155	9,130	--	--
May	156	8,680	1	\$6
June	144	8,660	--	--
July	170	9,540	3	18
August	176	9,830	--	--
September	166	9,090	--	--
October	142	8,470	--	--
November	124	7,550	1	11
December	143	7,710	--	--
January–March	509	29,500	--	--
January–December	1,890	108,000	6	35
2016:				
January	117	6,880	--	--
February	128	7,360	--	--
March	163	9,110	--	--
January–March	408	23,300	--	--

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Free alongside ship (f.a.s.) value.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.