

Mineral Industry Surveys

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COBALT IN FEBRUARY 2012

Preliminary data indicate that U.S. cobalt consumption during January through February 2012 was slightly lower than consumption during the same period in 2011. The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. imports of cobalt metals and chemicals during January through February 2012 was 11% lower than that imported during the same period in 2011. The amount of cobalt contained in U.S. exports of unwrought cobalt and chemicals during January through February 2012 was slightly higher than that exported during the same period in 2011.

Prices

Prices for cobalt metal, in dollars per pound, in February 2012 are listed below.

Type	Price range	Average price
U.S. spot ¹	15.40–16.90	16.28
LME cash mean ²	XX	14.27

XX Not applicable.

¹Source: Platts Metals Week, minimum 99.8% cobalt cathode.

²London Metal Exchange, mean of the cash buyer price and the cash seller and settlement price, minimum 99.3% cobalt briquettes, cathode, ingot, or rounds (converted from dollars per metric ton and rounded to the nearest cent).

TABLE 1
U.S. REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF COBALT MATERIALS¹

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	Metal ²	Oxide and other chemical compounds ³	Scrap	Total
2011:				
February	251	180	219	650
March	422	179	164	765
April	337	174	170	681
May	486	182	173	842
June	572	181	194	948
July	269	176	177	622
August	303	178	170	651
September	294	176	183	653
October	300	182	163	645
November	189	173	253	614
December	267	176	167	610
January–February ^f	494	356	428	1,280
January–December	3,930	2,130	2,240	8,310
2012:				
January	276	176	167	619
February	288	176	167	630
January–February	564	352	333	1,250

^fRevised.

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

²Includes metal powder.

³Data may include other cobalt materials.

TABLE 2
U.S. REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF COBALT, BY END USE¹

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

End use	2011		2012	
	January–February	January–December ^{2,3}	February	January–February
Steel	89 ^f	536	45	89
Superalloys	601 ^f	4,250	294	577
Magnetic alloys	42 ^f	252	21	42
Other alloys ⁴	W	W	W	W
Cemented carbides ⁵	131 ^f	786	65	131
Chemical and ceramic uses ⁶	370 ^f	2,220	183	366
Miscellaneous and unspecified	45 ^f	271	22	45
Total	1,280 ^f	8,310	630	1,250

^fRevised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Miscellaneous and unspecified."

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

²Data based on monthly reports.

³May include revisions to previously published data.

⁴Includes nonferrous alloys, welding materials, and wear-resistant alloys.

⁵Includes diamond tool matrices, cemented and sintered carbides, and cast carbide dies or parts.

⁶Includes catalysts, driers in paints or related usages, feed or nutritive additives, glass decolorizer, ground coat frit, pigments and other uses.

TABLE 3
U.S. REPORTED STOCKS OF COBALT MATERIALS¹

(Metric tons, contained cobalt)

Period	U.S. industry ²				U.S. Government, metal ⁶	LME ³ , metal		Total
	Metal ⁴	Oxide and other chemical compounds ⁵	Scrap	Total		U.S. warehouse	Non-U.S. warehouse	
2011:								
February	W	169	W	501	301	13	219	232
March	W	160	W	554	301	88	210	298
April	W	158	W	614	301	108	283	391
May	W	169	W	597	301	108	255	363
June	W	170	W	601	301	30	219	249
July	W	168	W	620	301	35	227	262
August	W	165	W	643	301	35	262	297
September	W	170	W	627	301	33	264	297
October	W	165	W	593	301	30	293	323
November	W	171	W	596	301	40	279	319
December	W	192	W	615	301	43	261	304
2012:								
January	W	184	W	609	301	26	285	311
February	W	180	W	598	301	20	273	293

W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included in "Total U.S. industry."

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

²Stocks reported by cobalt processors and consumers.

³London Metal Exchange.

⁴Includes metal powder.

⁵Data may include other cobalt materials.

⁶Data from Defense Logistics Agency, DLA Strategic Materials; uncommitted material only.

TABLE 4
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)		
2011:								
February	812	\$31,500	158	\$4,670	219	\$3,020	1,000	2,030
March	876	35,400	113	3,630	280	2,560	1,050	3,080
April	502	20,400	189	3,930	280	3,990	735	3,820
May	575	22,000	284	6,880	117	1,490	815	4,630
June	715	27,800	207	4,860	144	2,030	918	5,550
July	305	12,200	281	5,430	247	2,890	586	6,140
August	804	28,600	118	3,030	143	1,600	932	7,070
September	637	22,000	222	5,980	131	1,270	835	7,900
October	773	27,900	288	6,100	161	1,370	1,030	8,930
November	577	18,700	235	4,750	124	1,330	784	9,710
December	632	19,900	294	5,610	105	1,220	878	10,600
January–February	1,620	61,200	361	11,000	461	5,500	2,030	XX
January–December	8,020	296,000	2,590	61,200	2,190	25,300	10,600	XX
2012:								
January	636	20,100	175	3,260	90	662	785	785
February:								
Australia	21	521	--	--	--	--	21	159
Austria	5	295	--	--	--	--	5	5
Belgium	10	314	37	1,070	--	--	37	49
Brazil	90	2,550	--	--	2	34	91	128
Canada	37	1,060	70	997	--	--	87	174
China	172	5,060	23	556	20	373	198	314
Congo (Kinshasa)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	20
Finland	126	4,330	60	1,560	130	1,960	228	268
France	1	39	--	--	--	--	1	6
Germany	(7)	23	--	--	--	--	(7)	1
India	20	626	--	--	5	6	21	38
Japan	26	784	--	--	--	--	26	60
Morocco	10	322	--	--	--	--	10	30
Netherlands	--	--	--	--	19	95	5	5
Norway	94	2,870	--	--	--	--	94	144
Russia	19	574	--	--	--	--	19	92
South Africa	55	2,000	--	--	--	--	55	72
Sweden	2	68	--	--	--	--	2	3
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3
Uganda	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	18
United Kingdom	3	140	12	281	9	200	15	41
Zambia	123	3,900	--	--	--	--	123	191
Total	812	25,500	201	4,470	186	2,670	1,040	1,820
January–February	1,450	45,600	376	7,730	276	3,340	1,820	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 5
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)
2011:						
February	64	\$2,420	35	\$657	26	\$2,240
March	56	2,140	74	1,430	23	2,600
April	44	1,520	119	2,040	21	2,410
May	52	1,990	87	1,200	16	1,820
June	68	2,570	43	891	20	1,950
July	50	1,670	53	938	24	2,230
August	77	2,880	55	996	16	2,400
September	94	3,500	40	519	25	2,530
October	67	2,390	71	1,240	26	2,510
November	63	2,110	47	817	19	2,420
December	81	2,560	44	669	18	2,070
January–February	104	3,960	96	1,340	40	4,080
January–December	754	27,300	730	12,100	247	27,000
2012:						
January	82	2,680	67	1,080	36	1,900
February:						
Austria	(3)	5	--	--	--	--
Belgium	--	--	7	185	--	--
Canada	56	1,790	2	58	7	868
China	--	--	--	--	1	155
France	(3)	7	5	53	4	315
Germany	2	159	(3)	5	2	175
Ireland	--	--	14	239	--	--
Japan	(3)	3	--	--	1	121
Mexico	--	--	1	20	--	--
Switzerland	(3)	13	--	--	--	--
Taiwan	--	--	1	24	--	--
Thailand	--	--	9	228	--	--
United Kingdom	14	525	14	297	7	566
Total	73	2,500	54	1,110	22	2,200
January–February	155	5,180	122	2,190	59	4,100

-- 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 6
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)		
2011:								
February	217	\$6,840	6	\$187	32	\$350	229	493
March	414	9,120	40	184	34	405	451	944
April	228	7,950	49	958	42	417	273	1,220
May	340	9,470	(7)	17	25	300	346	1,560
June	204	8,070	18	55	27	312	223	1,790
July	282	9,380	47	120	65	736	332	2,120
August	194	7,440	(7)	20	33	368	202	2,320
September	246	7,550	6	199	14	160	253	2,570
October	225	8,300	71	229	38	413	285	2,860
November	249	6,860	55	246	38	555	298	3,160
December	220	7,460	21	63	2	25	236	3,390
January–February	455	14,600	25	609	86	898	493	XX
January–December	3,060	96,300	332	2,700	403	4,590	3,390	XX
2012:								
January	234	7,450	35	183	19	182	264	264
February	238	8,380	3	81	23	225	246	510
January–February	472	15,800	38	263	42	407	510	XX

XX Not applicable.

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 7
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)
2011:				
February	121	\$7,040	--	--
March	123	7,400	--	--
April	124	7,200	600	\$1,050
May	115	6,560	4	141
June	98	5,960	3	119
July	128	7,340	40	163
August	98	6,260	2	4
September	111	6,670	--	--
October	117	7,370	38	42
November	99	5,920	--	--
December	123	7,780	--	--
January–February	224	13,400	20	50
January–December	1,360	81,800	707	1,570
2012:				
January	118	7,190	(3)	4
February	125	8,450	5	68
January–February	244	15,600	5	72

-- 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.