

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## MAGNESIUM IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2018

U.S. magnesium exports in the first quarter of 2018 were 9% less than exports in the fourth quarter of 2017 and 41% less than those in the first quarter of 2017. Mexico (43%), Canada (28%), and Brazil (13%) were the principal destinations. Exports of metal and semifabricated products increased by 53% and 11%, respectively, but alloys and scrap decreased by 25% and 3%, respectively, compared with exports in the fourth quarter 2017. Compared with those in the first quarter of 2017, exports of metal, alloys, and scrap decreased by 36%, 50%, and 51%, respectively, but semifabricated products increased by 38% (table 1).

Magnesium imports for consumption in the first quarter of 2018 were 4% more than imports in the fourth quarter of 2017 but 7% less than those in the first quarter of 2017. Imports of alloys and scrap increased by 82% and 3%, respectively, but imports of metal decreased by 11% and semifabricated product imports decreased slightly compared with those in the fourth quarter of 2017. Compared with those in the first quarter of 2017, imports of scrap increased by 28% but metal, alloys, and semifabricated product imports decreased by 23%, 31%, and 30%, respectively. In the first quarter of 2018, magnesium metal accounted for 30% of the imports with Israel (55%), Russia (29%), and Canada (10%) being the leading sources (fig. 1). Scrap accounted for 49% of the imports in the first quarter of 2018, with Canada (39%), Mexico (23%), and the United Kingdom (11%) as the leading sources (table 1).

The U.S. spot Western average price for magnesium was unchanged in the first quarter 2018. The average U.S. spot dealer price for imported magnesium increased slightly during the first quarter 2018. Outside of the United States, average magnesium prices in both China and Europe increased by 4% during the quarter (table 2).

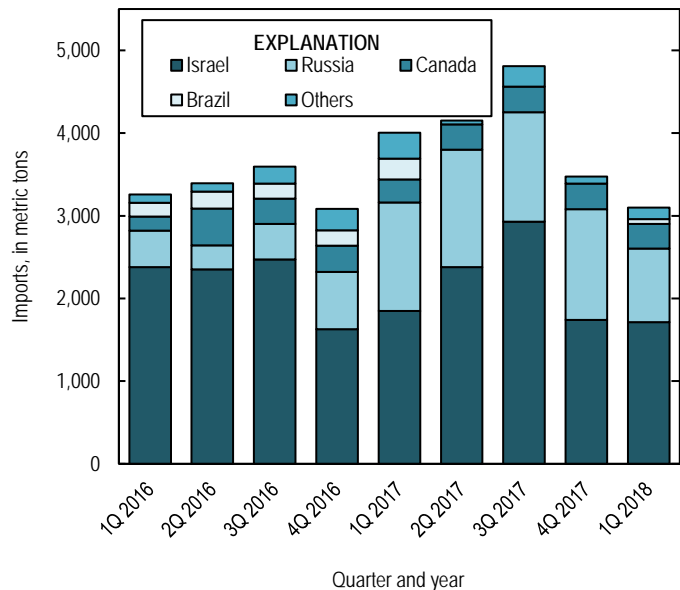


Figure 1. Quarterly imports of magnesium metal from the first quarter 2016 through the first quarter 2018. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

### Update

A fire and explosion took place on May 2 at the Meridian Magnesium Products Co. diecasting plant in Eaton Falls, MI. The fire reportedly started in the scrap remelting area of the plant. Production at the plant was temporarily shut down until repairs were completed, and the shutdown affected some customers. On May 9, Ford Motor Co. announced that production of trucks and sport utility vehicles would be temporarily shut down at its assembly lines in Dearborn, MI, Kansas City, MO, and Louisville, KY. The vehicle assembly line shutdowns lasted for about a week until equipment was repaired at the Meridian plant that enabled Ford's parts to be manufactured (Ford Motor Co., 2018a, b; Matyi, 2018).

## References Cited

- Ford Motor Co., 2018a, Ford restarting F-150, Super duty production ahead of schedule after fire at magnesium parts supplier: Dearborn, MI, Ford Motor Co. press release, May 16, 4 p. (Accessed May 29, 2018, at [http://s22.q4cdn.com/857684434/files/doc\\_news/2018/05/Meridian-Production-Update-Release-FINAL.pdf](http://s22.q4cdn.com/857684434/files/doc_news/2018/05/Meridian-Production-Update-Release-FINAL.pdf).)
- Ford Motor Co., 2018b, Ford takes steps to ensure supply continuity and availability of products for customers despite fire at parts supplier: Dearborn, MI, Ford Motor Co. press release, May 9, 2 p. (Accessed May 29, 2018, at [http://s22.q4cdn.com/857684434/files/doc\\_news/2018/05/ford-takes-steps-to-ensure-supply-continuity-and-availability-of.pdf](http://s22.q4cdn.com/857684434/files/doc_news/2018/05/ford-takes-steps-to-ensure-supply-continuity-and-availability-of.pdf).)
- Matyi, Bob, 2018, Explosions idle part of Michigan mg diecasting plant: Platts Metals Daily, v. 7, no. 87, May 3, p. 1–2.

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TABLE 1  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS OF MAGNESIUM<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons)

	2017	2018			
		January	February	March	January– March
<b>Imports for consumption:</b>					
Metal	16,500	921	1,140	1,040	3,100
Waste and scrap	16,900	1,570	1,720	1,700	4,990
Alloys (magnesium content)	5,290	151	578	719	1,450
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (magnesium content)	3,270	232	212	233	676
Total	41,900	2,870	3,650	3,690	10,200
<b>Exports:</b>					
Metal	1,890	189	200	144	534
Waste and scrap	1,200	66	68	44	178
Alloys (gross weight)	8,900	592	408	459	1,460
Sheet, tubing, ribbons, wire, powder, and other (gross weight)	1,660	147	157	138	442
Total	13,700	995	833	786	2,610

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 2  
MAGNESIUM PRICES, FIRST QUARTER 2018

		Beginning of quarter	End of quarter
U.S. spot dealer import	dollars per pound	1.42–1.46	1.44–1.48
U.S. spot Western	do.	2.10–2.20	2.10–2.20
China	dollars per metric ton	2,320–2,370	2,420–2,460
European free market	do.	2,300–2,400	2,375–2,500
do. Ditto.			

Source: Platts Metals Week.