

MICA (NATURAL), SCRAP AND FLAKE¹

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: Scrap and flake mica production, excluding low-quality sericite, was estimated to be 74,000 tons in 2005. North Carolina accounted for about 27% of U.S. production. The remaining output came from Georgia, South Carolina, and South Dakota. Scrap mica was recovered principally from mica and sericite schist and as a byproduct from feldspar, kaolin, and industrial sand beneficiation. The majority of domestic production was processed into small particle-size mica by either wet or dry grinding. Primary uses were joint compound, oil-well-drilling additives, paint, roofing, and rubber products. The value of 2005 scrap mica production was estimated to be \$12 million. Ground mica sales in 2004 were valued at about \$27 million and were expected to decline in value in 2005. There were eight domestic producers of scrap and flake mica.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005^e
Production: ^{2,3}					
Mine	98	81	79	99	74
Ground	89	99	94	98	80
Imports, mica powder and mica waste	32	38	35	42	44
Exports, mica powder and mica waste	9	10	10	10	9
Consumption, apparent ⁴	121	106	103	132	109
Price, average, dollars per ton, reported:					
Scrap and flake	82	90	213	155	180
Ground:					
Wet	771	960	938	NA	950
Dry	147	180	205	269	270
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine, number ⁵	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Net import reliance ⁶ as a percentage of apparent consumption	19	24	24	25	32

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (2001-04): Canada, 45%; India, 25%; China, 20%; Finland, 6%; and other, 4%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-05
Mica powder	2525.20.0000	Free.
Mica waste	2525.30.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 22% (Domestic), 14% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Domestic production of ground mica decreased in 2005. The decrease primarily resulted from lower production in New Mexico. Production in North Carolina in 2005 was estimated to be much lower than that of 2004, while production in Georgia increased substantially. Canada remained the main source of imported phlogopite mica for the United States. The United States remained a major world producer of scrap and flake mica. Imported mica scrap and flake is primarily used for making mica paper and as a filler and reinforcer in plastics.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves ⁷	Reserve base ⁷
	2004	2005 ^e		
United States ²	99	74	Large	Large
Brazil	4	4	Large	Large
Canada	18	18	Large	Large
France	10	10	Large	Large
India	2	2	Large	Large
Korea, Republic of	34	60	Large	Large
Russia	100	100	Large	Large
Other countries	21	25	Large	Large
World total (rounded)	290	290	Large	Large

World Resources: Resources of scrap and flake mica are available in granite, pegmatite, schist, and clay deposits and are considered more than adequate to meet anticipated world demand in the foreseeable future.

Substitutes: Some of the lightweight aggregates, such as diatomite, perlite, and vermiculite, may be substituted for ground mica when used as a filler. Ground synthetic fluorophlogopite, a fluorine-rich mica, may replace natural ground mica for uses that require the thermal and electrical properties of mica.

^eEstimated. NA Not available.

¹See also Mica (Natural), Sheet.

²Sold or used by producing companies.

³Excludes low-quality sericite used primarily for brick manufacturing.

⁴Based on ground mica.

⁵Total employment at mines and mills where mica was produced and processed, excluding feldspar companies with byproduct production. Employees were not assigned to specific commodities in calculating employment.

⁶Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

⁷[See Appendix C for definitions.](#)