

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 93,000 tons in 2006. North Carolina accounted for about 46% of U.S. production. The remaining output came from Alabama, 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 2006 scrap mica production was estimated to be \$18 million. Ground mica sales in 2005 were valued at about \$47 million and were expected to decline in value in 2006. There were eight domestic producers of scrap and flake mica.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006^e
Production: ^{2,3}					
Mine	81	79	99	78	93
Ground	99	94	98	120	100
Imports, mica powder and mica waste	35	35	42	36	48
Exports, mica powder and mica waste	10	10	10	9	7
Consumption, apparent ⁴	106	103	132	105	133
Price, average, dollars per ton, reported:					
Scrap and flake	90	213	155	247	200
Ground:					
Wet	960	938	NA	704	200
Dry	180	205	269	205	250
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	24	24	25	26	30

Recycling: None.**Import Sources (2002-05):** Canada, 43%; China, 24%; India, 23%; Finland, 5%; and other, 5%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-06
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 increased in 2006. The increase primarily resulted from higher production in Alabama and Georgia. Production in North Carolina in 2006 was estimated to be higher than that of 2005, 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
	2005	2006 ^e		
United States ²	78	93	Large	Large
Brazil	5	4	Large	Large
Canada	18	18	Large	Large
France	10	10	Large	Large
India	4	3	Large	Large
Korea, Republic of	50	40	Large	Large
Russia	100	100	Large	Large
Other countries	29	15	Large	Large
World total (rounded)	290	280	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.](#)