

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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## MARCH 1976

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in March, after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at \$53.9 billion. This adjusted figure was about 3 percent above February 1976 and 17 percent greater than sales for March of last year. The adjusted March estimate, excluding the automotive group, was 3 percent higher than February and 12 percent above March of last year.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores increased 2 percent from February, while sales of nondurable goods stores rose about 3 percent. Compared with sales for March 1975, durable goods stores increased 32 percent, while nondurable goods stores increased 11 percent.

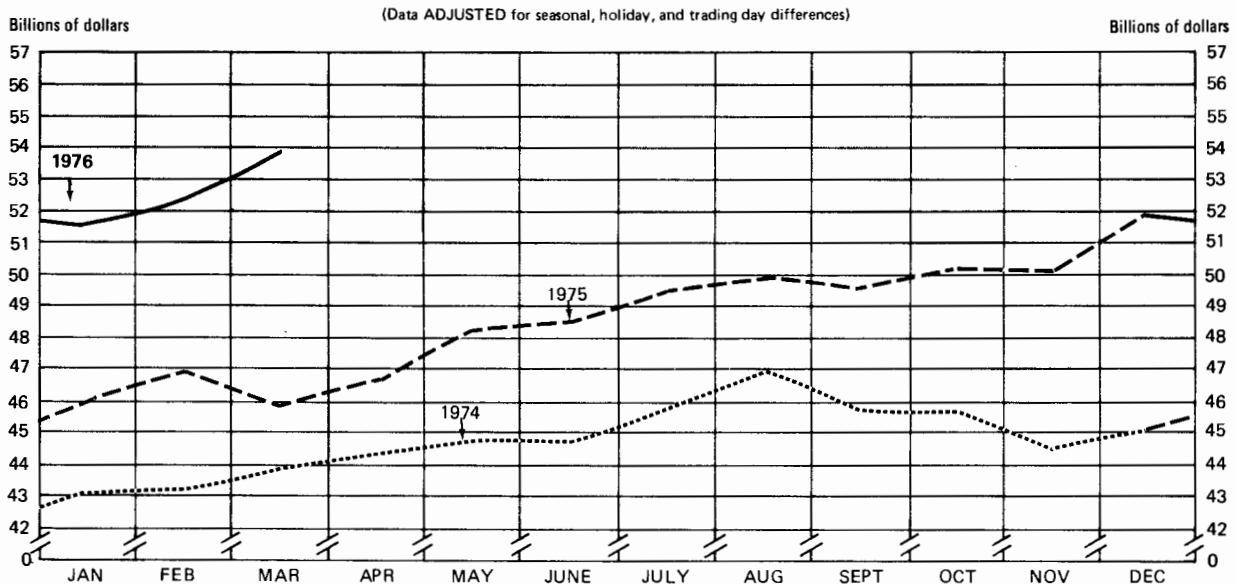
The revised estimate of retail sales for February, based on preliminary results from the full sample of retail stores, were about \$52.3 billion above the advance estimate of \$52.3 billion published earlier. Seasonally adjusted sales for February, as revised, were about 2 percent above January and 12 percent above February 1975. Excluding the automotive group, these estimates were virtually unchanged from January, but were 9 percent over February of last year. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted February sales increased about 1 percent from the previous month and 9 percent from the same month a year ago. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales for February increased 3 percent over January and 18 percent over February of last year.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales for the weeks and part-weeks of the month by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because retailers' weekly records often differ from their monthly records (in reflecting such items as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the advance estimate can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the sub-sample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between advance and full-sample estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from 0 to 2 during the last 12 months with a median value of 1. For individual kind of business groups, these differences tend to be higher.

Preliminary estimates for February 1976 and final estimates for January 1976 based on the full sample will also be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade report for February (BR-76-2). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of the sample design and the techniques used in developing the estimates. In addition, the complete report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

## MONTHLY SALES OF ALL RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Data on retail trade, published in the Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, the Monthly Retail Trade Report, and the Annual Retail Trade Report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402, at \$30.10 per year. Add \$7.55 for each subscription to a foreign address. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Report are available from Subscriber Services Section (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 at 25 cents each.

Table 1. ESTIMATED SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES BY KIND OF BUSINESS

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
	1976			1975		1976			1975	
	Mar. <sup>2</sup> advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. <sup>3</sup> advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.
Retail stores, total.....	52,280	45,091	46,767	44,937	39,802	53,869	52,414	51,592	45,951	46,914
Total (excl. automotive group).....	40,968	36,191	38,468	37,296	32,544	43,346	42,128	41,987	38,590	38,494
Durable goods stores, total.....	18,073	14,677	14,213	13,276	12,279	17,697	17,296	16,730	13,378	14,664
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	34,207	30,414	32,554	31,667	27,523	36,172	33,118	34,862	32,573	32,250
Food stores, total.....	11,410	10,486	11,723	10,706	9,678	11,809	11,402	11,433	10,805	10,643
Grocery stores.....	10,580	9,749	10,983	9,967	9,032	10,952	10,597	10,642	10,058	9,925
Eating and drinking places.....	4,073	3,761	3,889	3,668	3,288	4,310	4,216	4,213	3,821	3,828
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,668	6,165	6,247	7,039	5,524	8,585	8,334	8,022	7,599	7,533
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	7,095	5,670	5,748	6,489	5,036	8,023	7,782	7,443	7,058	7,000
Department stores.....	4,735	3,791	3,918	4,367	3,334	5,424	5,339	5,075	4,852	4,743
Variety stores.....	*	573	555	706	542	*	777	753	739	746
Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	*	419	366	458	385	*	517	524	456	489
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	2,069	1,763	1,976	2,077	1,606	2,400	2,362	2,311	2,099	2,189
Men's, boys' wear stores.....	*	391	461	454	375	*	524	505	506	518
Women's apparel, accessory stores.....	*	703	767	795	626	*	919	906	820	828
Shoe stores.....	*	264	303	349	247	*	363	354	310	344
Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores, total.....	2,315	2,058	2,138	1,971	1,793	2,399	2,326	2,273	2,046	2,051
Furniture, home furnishings stores.....	*	1,201	1,228	1,176	1,079	*	1,357	1,326	1,199	1,235
Household appliance, TV, radio stores.....	*	662	693	605	554	*	745	713	660	633
Household appliance dealers.....	*	389	404	373	342	*	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total.....	2,928	2,379	2,315	2,368	2,059	3,112	3,058	3,117	2,522	2,739
Lumber and other building materials dealers.....	*	1,368	1,323	1,237	1,092	*	1,747	1,748	1,355	1,415
Hardware stores.....	*	396	387	394	347	*	532	507	464	477
Automotive dealers, total.....	11,312	8,900	8,299	7,641	7,258	10,523	10,286	9,605	7,361	8,420
Passenger car, other automotive dealers.....	*	8,249	7,619	6,954	6,693	*	9,438	8,778	6,623	7,675
Passenger car dealers (franchised).....	*	7,210	6,682	5,947	5,865	*	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Tire, battery, accessory dealers.....	*	651	680	687	565	*	848	827	738	745
Gasoline service stations.....	3,751	3,440	3,654	3,424	3,053	3,863	3,822	3,867	3,497	3,465
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,510	1,465	1,481	1,430	1,332	1,580	1,575	1,522	1,488	1,449
Liquor stores.....	*	789	841	837	745	*	922	899	903	882

NOTE: Totals include data for kinds of businesses not shown separately.

<sup>2</sup>Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of businesses.<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See explanatory material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-76-2). <sup>3</sup>Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

Table 2. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading day differences)

Kind of business	Percent change					
	March 1976 advance from--		February 1976 preliminary from--		January 1976 through March 1976 from--	
	Feb. 1976 preliminary	Mar. 1975 final	Jan. 1976 final	Feb. 1975 final	Oct. 1975 through Dec. 1975	Jan. 1975 through Mar. 1975
Total, retail stores.....	+3	+17	+2	+12	+4	+14
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+3	+12	0	+9	+2	+11
Durable goods stores, total.....	+2	+32	+3	+18	+7	+23
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+3	+11	+1	+9	+2	+10
Food stores, total.....	+4	+9	0	+7	+3	+8
Grocery stores.....	+3	+9	0	+7	+2	+8
Eating and drinking places.....	+2	+13	0	+10	+2	+11
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	+3	+13	+4	+11	+1	+11
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	+3	+14	+5	+11	+1	+12
Department stores.....	+2	+12	+5	+13	0	+12
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	+2	+14	+2	+8	+3	+10
Furniture, home furnishings and equipment stores, total.....	+3	+17	+2	+13	+1	+14
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total..	+2	+23	-2	+12	+4	+14
Automotive dealers, total.....	+2	+43	+7	+22	+10	+29
Gasoline service stations.....	+1	+10	-1	+10	+2	+11
Drug and proprietary stores.....	0	+6	+3	+9	0	+7

Table 3. ESTIMATED SALES OF STORES OF FIRMS OPERATING 11 OR MORE RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS: FEBRUARY 1976

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
	1976		1975	1976		1975
	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Feb.	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Feb.
Retail stores, total.....	13,206	14,124	12,047	15,912	15,663	14,661
Food stores, total.....	5,512	6,282	5,192	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Grocery stores <sup>2</sup> .....	5,439	6,212	5,118	5,886	5,871	5,555
General merchandise group with nonstores...	4,830	4,868	4,298	6,612	6,359	5,941
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	4,589	4,650	4,055	6,354	6,084	5,670
Department stores.....	3,378	3,489	2,976	4,751	4,525	4,221
Variety stores.....	457	437	427	631	608	597
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	399	444	380	584	576	567
Shoe stores.....	104	117	107	145	145	154
Drug and proprietary stores.....	574	575	484	649	622	561

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday and trading day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-76-2). NA Not available.

Table 4. ESTIMATED SALES OF RETAIL STORES BY SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS FOR SPECIFIED STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS AND CITIES

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Area	Not adjusted		
	1976		1975
	Feb. preliminary	Jan. final	Feb.
<b>Standard Consolidated Areas<sup>1</sup></b>			
Chicago, Ill.--Northwestern Ind., total.....	1,770	1,868	1,556
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,243	1,304	1,129
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	517	508	459
New York-Northeastern N.J., total.....	2,914	3,175	2,746
Nondurable goods stores.....	2,189	2,442	2,089
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	769	853	742
<b>Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas<sup>1</sup></b>			
Baltimore, Md., GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	102	101	88
Boston, Mass., GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	152	164	144
Chicago, Ill., total.....	1,610	1,667	1,427
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,147	1,202	1,052
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	482	475	435
Cleveland, Ohio, GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	98	99	86
Dallas, Texas, GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	119	127	108
Detroit, Mich., total.....	842	866	735
Nondurable goods stores.....	560	617	502
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	203	212	205
Houston, Texas, GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	139	145	116

Table 4. ESTIMATED SALES OF RETAIL STORES BY SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS FOR SPECIFIED STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS AND CITIES--Continued

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Area	Not adjusted		
	1976		1975
	Feb. preliminary	Jan. final	Feb.
Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas <sup>1</sup> --Con.			
Kansas City, Mo.-Kansas, GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	114	110	97
Los Angeles-Long Beach, Calif., total.....	1,562	1,665	1,372
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,108	1,200	997
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	419	442	367
Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn., GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	116	120	112
New York, N.Y.--Nassau-Suffolk, N.Y., total <sup>3</sup> .....	1,987	2,180	1,899
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,516	1,698	1,452
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	529	589	525
Nassau-Suffolk, N.Y., total <sup>4</sup> .....	553	609	516
Nondurable goods stores.....	393	445	372
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	123	157	121
New York, N.Y., total <sup>5</sup> .....	1,434	1,571	1,383
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,123	1,253	1,080
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	406	432	404
Philadelphia, Pa., total.....	931	990	865
Nondurable goods stores.....	675	742	631
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	235	247	209
Pittsburgh, Pa., total.....	485	494	463
Nondurable goods stores.....	367	388	344
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	135	137	117
St. Louis, Mo.-Ill., total.....	450	467	421
Nondurable goods stores.....	301	323	279
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	108	113	97
San Francisco-Oakland, Calif., total.....	711	740	613
Nondurable goods stores.....	517	554	443
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	176	187	156
Washington, D.C.-Md.-Va., total.....	679	711	622
Nondurable goods stores.....	473	498	431
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	164	166	147
Cities			
Chicago, Ill., total.....	664	670	594
Nondurable goods stores.....	505	510	471
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	264	243	246
Detroit, Mich., total.....	184	195	177
Nondurable goods stores.....	130	146	114
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	37	42	46
Los Angeles, Calif., total.....	537	575	499
Nondurable goods stores.....	401	437	388
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	169	177	161
New York, N.Y., total.....	1,209	1,325	1,173
Nondurable goods stores.....	954	1,065	916
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	351	373	349
Philadelphia, Pa., total.....	332	358	317
Nondurable goods stores.....	259	288	257
GAF <sup>2</sup> .....	100	102	93

<sup>1</sup>Definitions of standard consolidated areas and standard metropolitan statistical areas are shown in the Monthly Retail Trade Report BR-76-2. <sup>2</sup>Stores in the general merchandise, apparel, and furniture and appliance groups; these stores specialize in department store types of merchandise. <sup>3</sup>Formerly New York, N.Y. SMSA. <sup>4</sup>Includes Nassau and Suffolk Counties formerly included in the New York, N.Y., SMSA. <sup>5</sup>Includes New York City, Rockland and Westchester Counties, N.Y.