

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

APRIL 1981

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 2:30 P.M. EDT, TUESDAY, May 12, 1981

CB-81-78

The Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in April, after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at \$86.3 billion. This adjusted figure was about 1 percent below March but 13 percent higher than April a year ago. The adjusted April estimate excluding the automotive group was about 1 percent above March and 12 percent above April last year.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates 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 subsample 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.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores were about 5 percent below March while sales of nondurable goods increased 1 percent. Compared with sales for April 1980, durable goods stores increased 16 percent while nondurable goods stores increased 11 percent.

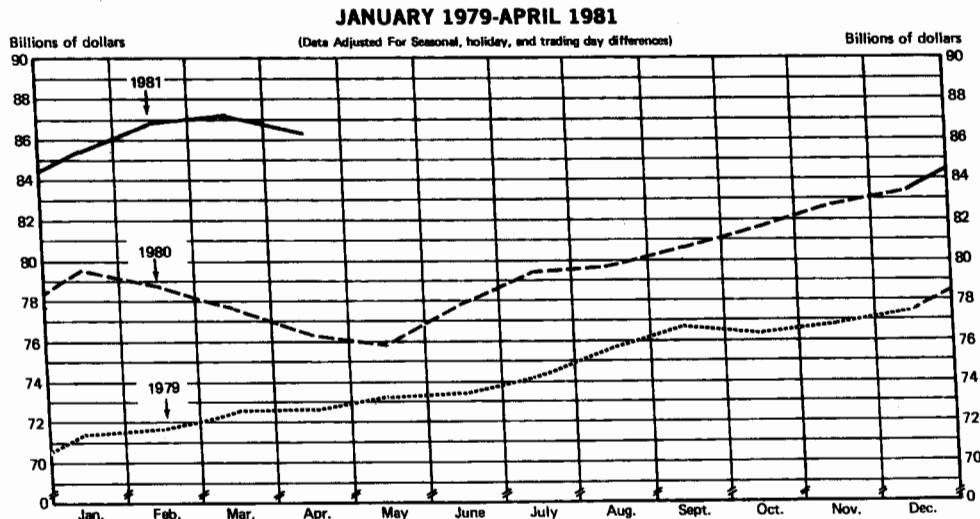
Percentage differences between advance and full-sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -1.1 percent to +1.6 percent with the absolute average about 0.7 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher.

The revised estimate of retail sales for March based on preliminary results from a full sample of retail stores was about \$87.2 billion, \$0.2 billion above the March advance estimate published earlier. Seasonally adjusted preliminary sales for March were little changed from February but 12 percent above March 1980. Excluding the automotive group, retail sales were up 1 percent from February and 11 percent from March 1980. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted March sales were 1 percent above February and 10 percent above the same month a year ago. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales for March were little changed from February but were 17 percent above March 1980.

Preliminary estimates for March 1981 and final estimates for February 1981 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-81-3). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of the sample design, the basis and methodology used in developing revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. In addition, the completed report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for May is scheduled to be released June 11, 1981, at 2:30 p.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES FOR THE UNITED STATES



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The 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, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$25 per year. Add \$6.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 70 cents each.

**Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1981			1980		1981			1980	
		Apr. <sup>2</sup> advance	Mar. prelim.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. <sup>2</sup> advance	Mar. prelim.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.
	Retail trade, total.....	86,274	84,207	74,321	75,154	75,998	86,309	87,174	86,810	76,404	77,603
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	69,879	67,028	59,951	61,559	61,517	71,634	70,991	70,495	63,896	64,086
	Durable goods stores, total.....	28,159	28,095	23,857	23,652	24,160	26,787	28,233	28,328	23,011	24,127
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	4,570	4,048	3,359	3,899	3,532	4,446	4,488	4,596	3,846	3,917
521,3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	2,804	2,360	2,647	2,409	(*)	3,147	3,233	2,715	2,719
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	651	538	647	566	(*)	727	738	614	630
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	16,395	17,179	14,370	13,595	14,481	14,675	16,183	16,315	12,508	13,517
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	(*)	15,585	13,011	12,037	13,125	(*)	14,538	14,603	11,013	12,119
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	13,820	11,711	10,345	11,536	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,594	1,359	1,558	1,356	(*)	1,645	1,712	1,495	1,398
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	3,766	3,710	3,351	3,326	3,406	3,968	3,890	3,888	3,524	3,566
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores....	(*)	2,261	2,020	2,048	2,092	(*)	2,314	2,319	2,109	2,146
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	1,066	976	956	973	(*)	1,161	1,163	1,051	1,056
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	484	430	497	495	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	58,115	56,112	50,464	51,502	51,838	59,522	58,941	58,482	53,393	53,476
53	General merchandise group stores.....	9,775	8,968	7,160	8,614	8,320	10,377	10,301	10,306	9,266	9,361
531	Department stores.....	7,968	7,346	5,783	6,927	6,723	8,477	8,453	8,381	7,489	7,577
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	665	557	712	652	(*)	764	770	726	727
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	957	820	975	945	(*)	1,084	1,155	1,051	1,066
54	Food stores.....	19,456	18,823	17,477	17,223	17,550	19,750	19,506	19,112	17,725	17,666
541	Grocery stores.....	17,974	17,373	16,133	15,951	16,325	18,322	18,059	17,632	16,478	16,456
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,558	8,315	7,616	7,619	7,433	8,662	8,546	8,596	7,727	7,627
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,007	3,446	2,911	3,475	3,281	4,007	3,944	4,022	3,574	3,586
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	534	494	574	546	(*)	639	681	613	613
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,380	1,141	1,337	1,276	(*)	1,530	1,557	1,393	1,366
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	662	567	681	641	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	660	530	697	626	(*)	739	755	648	648
58	Eating and drinking places.....	7,989	7,664	6,742	7,052	6,913	7,933	7,958	7,876	7,102	7,011
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,750	2,680	2,530	2,483	2,447	2,812	2,749	2,768	2,549	2,549
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,261	1,195	1,269	1,273	(*)	1,401	1,404	1,390	1,390
53,56,57, 594,5961 (pt.)	GAF <sup>3</sup> plus mail-order houses (department stores mdse.).....	(*)	18,827	15,852	17,879	17,456	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57, 594	GAF.....	(*)	18,309	15,445	17,465	17,002	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

\*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-81-03.

<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</sup>GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise. Data for mail-order catalog desks located with department stores of some mail-order firms are included in the department store estimates.

**Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States**

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

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Apr. 1981 advance from--		Mar. 1981 preliminary from--		Feb. 1981 through Apr. 1981	
		Mar. 1981 preliminary	Apr. 1980 final	Feb. 1981 final	Mar. 1980 final	Nov. 1980 through Jan. 1981	Feb. 1980 through Apr. 1980
	Retail trade, total.....	-1	+13	0	+12	+3	+12
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+1	+12	+1	+11	+3	+11
	Durable goods stores, total.....	-5	+16	0	+17	+5	+14
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-1	+16	-2	+15	+3	+13
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-9	+17	-1	+20	+7	+15
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+2	+13	0	+9	+1	+10
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+1	+11	+1	+10	+3	+11
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1	+12	0	+10	+3	+10
531	Department stores.....	0	+13	+1	+12	+4	+11
54	Food stores.....	+1	+11	+2	+10	+2	+11
541	Grocery stores.....	+1	+11	+2	+10	+2	+10
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1	+12	-1	+12	+4	+13
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+2	+12	-2	+10	+4	+11
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0	+12	+1	+13	+4	+12
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	+2	+10	-1	+9	0	+10

**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies by Kind of Business for the United States:**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Mar. 1981 preliminary	Feb. 1981 final	Mar. 1980	Mar. 1981 preliminary	Feb. 1981 final	Mar. 1980
	Retail trade, total.....	27,265	23,689	24,933	29,227	29,091	26,100
53	General merchandise group stores.....	7,943	6,268	7,286	9,110	9,076	8,186
531	Department stores.....	6,986	5,491	6,378	8,021	7,958	7,158
533	Variety stores.....	510	416	486	574	585	541
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	447	361	422	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	9,883	9,207	9,126	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	9,743	9,058	9,016	10,128	9,899	8,980
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,215	926	1,117	1,412	1,387	1,213
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	510	384	464	584	573	504
566	Shoe stores.....	307	235	300	337	342	306
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,345	1,226	1,174	1,394	1,390	1,232

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-81-03.)

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