



# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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SEE "NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES" BELOW TABLE 1 ON PAGE 2. THE SALES COMPARISONS IN THIS REPORT ARE BASED ON REVISED DATA.

Advance U.S. retail sales for March, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$91,515 million, 0.3 percent above the revised February level of \$91,197 million and 4.3 percent above a year ago. This is the first monthly increase in total retail sales following three consecutive monthly declines. Excluding the automotive group sales, total sales were down 0.3 percent from February, but were 3.5 percent above March 1982. The January through March sales, excluding the automotive group were 0.7 percent higher than the October through December period and were 3.8 percent higher than the same period last year. The February estimates were revised downward by \$548 million which represented a decrease of 1.2 percent from the previous month but were 3.6 percent above February 1982.

March sales of durable goods increased 1.8 percent from February primarily because of an increase in automotive sales. The automotive group sales of \$15,869 million were 3.5 percent above February and 8.6 percent above the extremely weak sales of March 1982. For the quarter, automotive group sales were down 4.8 percent from the sales in the October through December period, but were 10.5 percent above the January through March 1982 sales.

Non-durable goods sales decreased 0.3 percent from February, but were 3.3 percent above year ago sales. General merchandise group sales were up 1.0 percent from February and 5.5 percent above March 1982. The March increase follows two monthly declines. The January through March sales were 1.6 percent above the previous quarter and 6.2 percent above the comparable period a year ago. Drug store sales increased 1.5 percent from the previous month and were 10.2 percent above year-ago sales.

Gasoline service station sales continued their downward trend reflecting further declines in prices. The March sales were down 3.4 percent from February and were 7.6 percent below previous year sales.

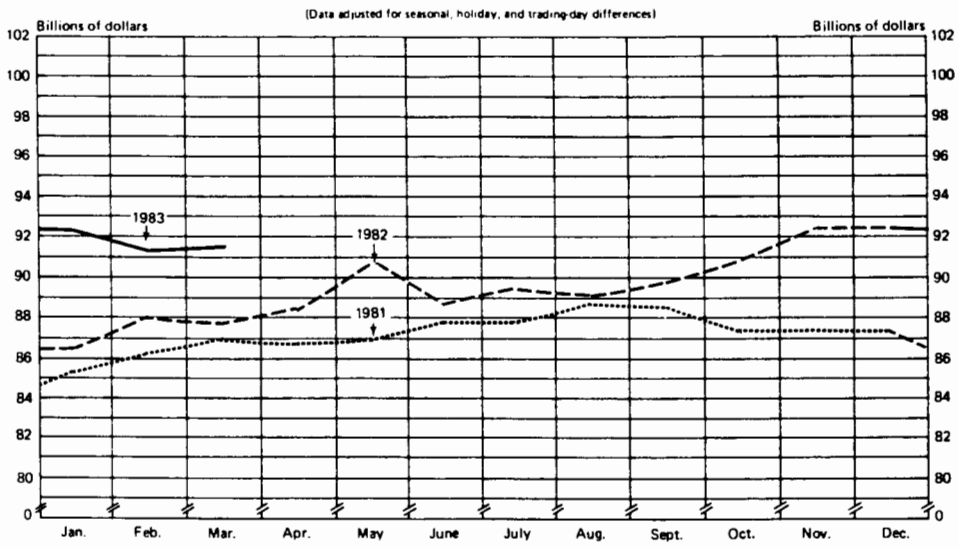
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. 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.

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 -1.7 percent to +1.2 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.6 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 on the last page of this report.

Preliminary estimates for February 1983 and final estimates for January 1983 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for February (BR-83-02). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. The complete report will include additional measures of sampling variability.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for April is scheduled to be released May 11, 1983, at 2:30 p.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1981-March 1983



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U.S. Department of Commerce  
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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 \$39 per year. Add \$9.75 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 \$1.75 each.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted				Adjusted <sup>1</sup>					
		1983			1982		1983			1982	
		Mar. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.
	Retail trade, total.....	91,963	78,898	81,329	86,569	76,211	91,515	91,197	92,295	87,701	88,049
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	73,802	64,521	67,553	70,101	62,809	75,646	75,871	76,316	73,092	73,715
	Durable goods stores, total.....	29,346	23,964	23,808	27,030	22,550	27,758	27,279	28,307	25,973	25,741
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	3,927	3,150	3,261	3,740	2,966	4,195	4,212	4,366	4,032	3,970
521,3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	2,350	2,391	2,544	2,026	(*)	3,138	3,214	2,771	2,709
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	512	564	661	533	(*)	684	710	715	714
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	18,161	14,377	13,776	16,468	13,402	15,869	15,326	15,979	14,609	14,334
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	16,385	12,932	12,292	14,859	12,090	14,064	13,513	14,227	12,955	12,686
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	11,543	11,122	13,210	10,835	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,445	1,484	1,609	1,312	(*)	1,813	1,752	1,654	1,648
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	3,903	3,421	3,639	3,741	3,312	3,962	3,952	4,100	3,858	3,827
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores.....	(*)	1,996	2,117	2,180	1,903	(*)	2,279	2,384	2,202	2,175
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	1,165	1,236	1,236	1,111	(*)	1,382	1,414	1,319	1,318
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	533	558	575	516	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	62,617	54,934	57,521	59,539	53,661	63,757	63,918	63,988	61,728	62,308
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,303	7,803	7,896	9,421	7,431	11,320	11,212	11,313	10,726	10,677
531	Department stores.....	8,479	6,304	6,470	7,751	6,042	9,318	9,110	9,309	8,778	8,731
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	554	541	645	509	(*)	765	747	735	703
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	(*)	945	885	1,025	880	(*)	1,337	1,257	1,213	1,243
54	Food stores.....	21,393	19,312	20,354	20,283	18,762	21,396	21,334	21,115	20,590	20,705
541	Grocery stores.....	20,052	18,130	19,173	18,956	17,494	20,092	20,055	19,868	19,264	19,330
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,872	7,394	8,059	8,465	7,975	7,976	8,261	8,583	8,629	8,91
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,102	3,190	3,496	3,937	3,351	4,251	4,314	4,263	4,354	4,535
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	476	562	549	473	(*)	660	682	665	656
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,238	1,330	1,473	1,253	(*)	1,657	1,656	1,610	1,680
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	599	644	784	681	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	628	696	796	635	(*)	860	822	837	870
58	Eating and drinking places.....	9,656	8,471	8,673	8,449	7,548	9,783	9,782	9,626	8,621	8,726
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,227	2,952	2,975	2,899	2,664	3,283	3,233	3,148	2,979	2,918
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,348	1,386	1,475	1,362	(*)	1,567	1,542	1,609	1,584
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	300	318	425	316	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAP <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	16,809	17,562	19,645	16,417	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

\*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-83-02).

<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>GAP represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

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

**NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES** - The adjusted and unadjusted monthly estimates of retail sales from January 1978 to December 1982 have been revised utilizing the results from the 1981 Annual Retail Trade Survey. The revised estimates and a description of the methodology are contained in the Revised Monthly Retail Sales and Inventories January 1973-December 1982 Report (BR-13-82S), which will be released the week of April 18.

**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)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Mar. 1983 advance from--		Feb. 1983 preliminary from--		Jan. 1983 through Mar. 1983	
		Feb. 1983 prelim.	Mar. 1982 final	Jan. 1983 final	Feb. 1982 final	Oct. 1982 through Dec. 1982	Jan. 1982 through Mar. 1982
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.3	+4.3	-1.2	+3.6	-0.3	+4.8
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-0.3	+3.5	-0.6	+2.9	+0.7	+3.8
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+1.8	+6.9	-3.6	+6.0	-1.5	+8.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.4	+4.0	-3.5	+6.1	+4.5	+6.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+3.5	+8.6	-4.1	+6.9	-4.8	+10.5
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+4.1	+8.6	-5.0	+6.5	-5.4	+10.6
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.3	+2.7	-3.6	+3.3	+1.8	+4.9
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	-0.3	+3.3	-0.1	+2.6	+0.2	+3.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1.0	+5.5	-0.9	+5.0	+1.6	+6.2
531	Department stores.....	+2.3	+6.2	-2.1	+4.3	+2.5	+6.2
54	Food stores.....	+0.3	+3.9	+1.0	+3.0	-0.4	+3.4
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.2	+4.3	+0.9	+3.8	-0.2	+3.9
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-3.4	-7.6	-3.8	-7.3	-4.9	-7.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.5	-2.4	+1.2	-4.9	-1.1	-2.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.0	+13.5	+1.6	+12.1	+4.2	+13.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.5	+10.2	+2.7	+10.8	+5.9	+10.9

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Feb. 1983 prelim.	Jan. 1983 final	Feb. 1982	Feb. 1983 prelim.	Jan. 1983 final	Feb. 1982
	Retail trade, total.....	27,096	28,134	25,997	33,180	33,301	31,752
53	General merchandise group stores.....	7,041	7,122	6,688	10,175	10,356	9,664
531	Department stores.....	6,065	6,223	5,788	8,764	8,967	8,364
533	Variety stores.....	434	423	405	606	598	566
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	542	476	495	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	10,439	11,038	10,086	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	10,293	10,905	9,929	11,323	11,185	10,923
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,187	1,228	1,137	1,748	1,726	1,680
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	518	513	483	758	748	709
566	Shoe stores.....	275	287	252	389	370	357
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,562	1,575	1,374	1,767	1,694	1,554

<sup>1</sup> Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-83-02).

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).

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Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of business	Estimated coefficient of variation in percent of the advance-to-preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.76	-1.73	+1.18	-0.29	0.58
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.7	0.9	0.76	-1.06	+0.89	-0.08	0.50
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.2	2.1	1.50	-3.72	+2.29	-0.21	1.24
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.6	4.2	2.41	-4.69	+4.92	+0.35	2.47
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.7	2.03	-4.53	+2.72	-0.23	1.64
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.1	2.3	1.60	-4.64	+2.98	-0.19	1.81
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.6	6.7	2.75	-2.66	+3.87	+0.24	1.88
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.72	-0.77	+0.86	-0.06	0.56
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.7	0.53	-1.77	+2.19	+0.10	1.08
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.33	-1.31	+2.63	+0.13	0.92
54	Food stores.....	0.7	1.6	1.01	-1.59	+1.41	-0.10	0.68
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.7	0.43	-1.59	+1.44	-0.15	0.72
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.7	1.2	1.00	-3.57	+3.16	-0.10	1.42
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.2	3.0	1.89	-3.64	+8.71	+0.38	2.12
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.5	1.04	-2.99	+3.98	+0.47	1.45
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	2.5	1.05	-1.91	+2.43	-0.20	0.91

<sup>1</sup>The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of January-December 1982.

<sup>2</sup>The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, March 1982-February 1983. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period January-December 1982.

Note: See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

