

Advance Monthly Retail Sales



U.S. Department of Commerce
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

MAY 1991

CB-91-219

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT., Thursday, June 13, 1991

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for May adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$152.5 billion, an increase of 1.0 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) from the previous month and were 2.5 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) above May 1990. Total sales in the March through May period were 1.6 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods increased 1.4 percent ($\pm 3.0\%$) from the previous month.

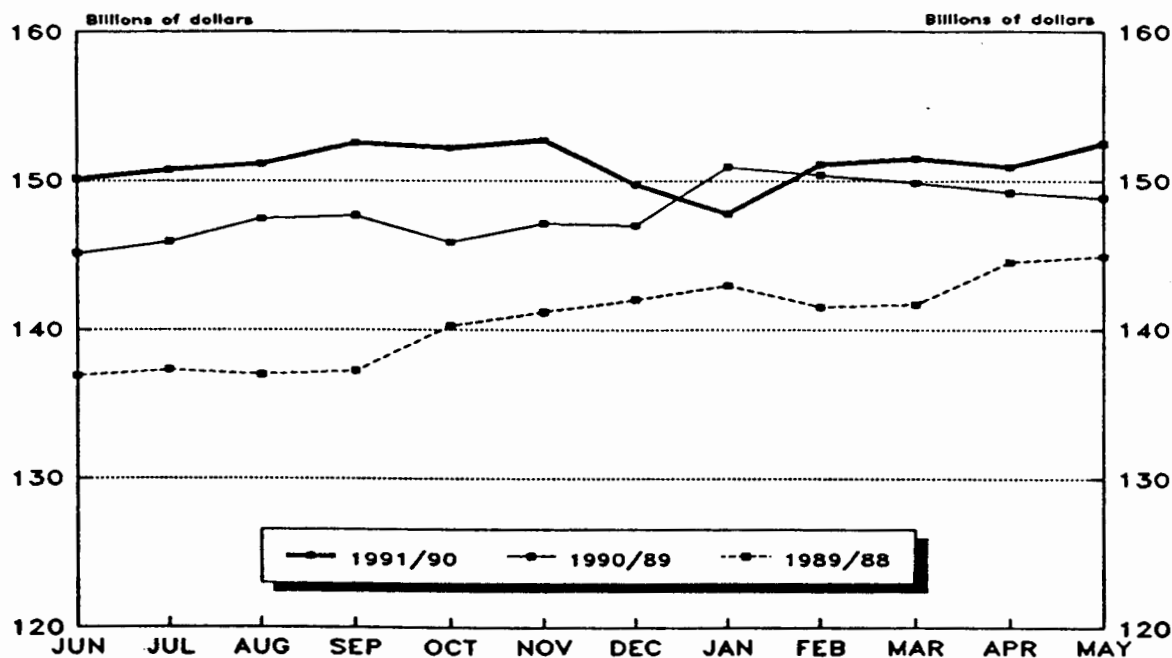
Nondurable goods increased 0.8 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) from the previous month and were 3.7 percent above last year. General merchandise stores were up 5.8 percent from May 1990 while food stores were up 3.7 percent in the same period.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for June is scheduled to be released July 12, 1991 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

June 1988 - May 1991

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Flencykosi, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.
Telephone: (301) 763-5294 or (301) 763-7561.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call (202) 377-1986. The data are also available through the Census Bureau's online information service - CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2564) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, By Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1991			1990		1991			1990	
		May ² adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.	May ² adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May ³	Apr. ⁴
	Retail trade, total.....	159,758	148,324	149,299	155,022	145,803	152,476	150,909	151,467	148,822	149,187
	Total (excl. auto group)...	124,516	115,071	117,108	119,835	112,884	121,053	119,971	120,318	117,304	117,541
	Durable goods, total.....	59,432	55,380	52,909	59,037	54,665	54,454	53,694	53,725	54,315	54,552
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	9,334	8,611	8,876	9,171	7,997	7,850	7,951	7,488	7,652	7,622
521.3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	6,074	4,944	6,369	5,877	(*)	5,785	5,380	5,553	5,566
526	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,183	1,020	1,267	1,144	(*)	1,114	1,110	1,107	1,103
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	35,242	33,253	32,191	35,187	32,919	31,423	30,938	31,149	31,518	31,646
551, 2.5, 6.7, 9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	32,401	30,481	29,734	32,433	30,340	28,750	28,223	28,590	28,932	29,033
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	26,331	25,651	28,188	26,175	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,772	2,457	2,754	2,579	(*)	2,715	2,559	2,586	2,613
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,560	7,159	7,234	7,793	7,317	7,667	7,556	7,536	7,987	7,908
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	4,009	4,002	4,422	4,190	(*)	4,087	4,071	4,361	4,356
5722, 32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,529	2,554	2,762	2,495	(*)	2,767	2,740	2,932	2,835
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	800	754	895	792	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	100,326	92,944	96,390	95,985	91,138	98,022	97,215	97,742	94,507	94,635
53	General merchandise group stores.....	18,038	16,392	16,778	17,153	16,114	18,286	18,151	18,072	17,286	17,497
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	14,567	13,389	13,734	13,700	13,046	14,849	14,762	14,704	13,880	14,104
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	13,829	14,189	14,102	13,475	(*)	15,213	15,159	14,230	14,517
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	533	586	585	602	(*)	598	591	611	6
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	2,470	2,458	2,868	2,466	(*)	2,791	2,777	2,795	2,766
54	Food stores.....	32,559	29,628	31,276	30,950	29,064	31,022	30,754	30,947	29,907	30,154
541	Grocery stores.....	30,542	27,690	29,267	28,910	27,058	29,088	28,784	28,977	27,932	28,156
554	Gasoline service stations.....	11,112	10,346	10,241	10,683	10,046	10,573	10,429	10,701	10,194	10,220
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	8,094	7,494	7,890	7,789	7,660	8,242	8,048	7,856	7,975	7,750
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	730	704	794	751	(*)	787	780	812	780
562, 3.8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,597	2,674	2,816	2,752	(*)	2,742	2,698	2,830	2,802
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,176	2,304	2,173	2,052	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,477	1,629	1,485	1,568	(*)	1,507	1,466	1,449	1,446
58	Eating and drinking places.....	15,938	15,296	15,560	15,736	15,034	15,223	15,404	15,513	15,204	15,110
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,245	5,988	6,298	5,653	5,489	6,183	6,192	6,254	5,625	5,630
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,636	1,716	1,693	1,575	(*)	1,784	1,837	1,685	1,716
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	361	370	381	370	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53, 56, 57 584	GAF ⁴	(*)	35,596	36,726	37,966	35,765	(*)	39,258	39,054	38,891	38,786

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

NA Not available.

¹Revised.

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-91-04.

²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

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

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

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

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change		
		May 1991 advance from--		Apr. 1991 preliminary
		Apr. 1991 preliminary	May 1990 final	Mar. 1991 final
	Retail trade, total.....	+1.0	+2.5	-0.4
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.9	+3.2	-0.3
	Durable goods, total.....	+1.4	+0.3	-0.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-1.3	+2.6	+6.2
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1.6	-0.3	-0.7
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+1.9	-0.6	-1.3
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1.5	-4.0	+0.3
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.8	+3.7	-0.5
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.7	+5.8	+0.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.) ²	+0.6	+7.0	+0.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+0.4
54	Food stores.....	+0.9	+3.7	-0.6
541	Grocery stores.....	+1.1	+4.1	-0.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.4	+3.7	-2.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+2.4	+3.3	+2.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1.2	+0.1	-0.7
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.1	+9.9	-1.0

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Large (Group II) Companies

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted		
		Apr. 1991 preliminary	Mar. 1991 final	Apr. 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	54,958	57,230	53,676
53	General merchandise group stores.....	14,977	15,399	14,746
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	12,998	13,335	12,639
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	13,423	13,776	13,053
533	Variety stores.....	401	450	472
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,578	1,614	1,635
54	Food stores.....	16,486	17,846	16,237
541	Grocery stores.....	16,262	17,570	15,980
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,285	4,616	4,228
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,516	1,601	1,477
566	Shoe stores.....	933	1,046	1,020
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,594	3,864	3,367

NA Not available.

¹Revised.

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all estimates. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-91-04.

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in the report.

Note: The large (Group II) component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments, multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar thresholds).

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Sample Design and Reliability of Data

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.

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 +1.2 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.5 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 below.

Preliminary estimates for April 1991 and final estimates for March 1991 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for April (BR-91-04). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with additional measures of sampling variability.

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					Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change				
		Advance-to-preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter	Range ²		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range ¹		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range ²		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.
		From	To				From	To			
	Retail trade, total.....	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	-1.1	+1.2	+0.2	0.5
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.7	+1.3	+0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total.....	1.8	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.3	-2.5	+2.2	+0.2	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores.....	1.2	2.0	1.7	3.3	2.5	2.5	-3.4	+4.0	+0.4	2.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	2.2	4.1	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	-3.0	+2.6	+0.5	1.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.6	4.1	2.9	4.8	3.9	3.5	-3.2	+2.6	+0.5	1.1
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.8	4.3	2.4	4.5	4.2	3.1	-2.5	+2.3	-0.2	1.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.6	+0.9	+0.2	0.4
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	-1.4	+1.7	+0.1	0.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.9	1.5	1.0	1.7	1.4	1.5	-0.5	+0.6	0.0	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.9	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.5	-0.5	+0.7	0.0	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	1.1	4.7	1.3	3.3	2.6	2.8	-1.4	+1.9	+0.3	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	2.9	2.0	3.0	2.6	2.0	-2.7	+4.8	+0.5	1.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	3.1	2.7	2.7	-0.9	+2.3	+0.3	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.5	3.2	0.8	2.4	1.7	2.0	-3.7	+1.1	+0.1	1.0

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1990 - March 1991.

²The 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, May 1990 - April 1991. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period April 1990 - March 1991.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion of the measures of sampling variability.

