

Advance Monthly Retail Sales



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

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CB-92-143

INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES. The annual revision of the monthly retail sales estimates normally occurring in March, will be published in the press release the week of May 26. The U.S. total and most kinds of retail trade will be revised for the months of January 1989 through April 1992.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT., Wednesday, May 13, 1992

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$158.0 billion, an increase of 0.9 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) from the previous month and were 4.4 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) above April a year ago. Total sales in the February through April period were 4.2 percent ($\pm 1.9\%$) above the same period a year ago. The March from February 1992 percent change was revised from -0.4 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) published in the March advance, to -1.0 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$).

Durable goods increased 1.9 percent ($\pm 3.4\%$) from the previous month and were 8.0 percent above the previous year. Automotive sales were up 9.6 percent from April 1991.

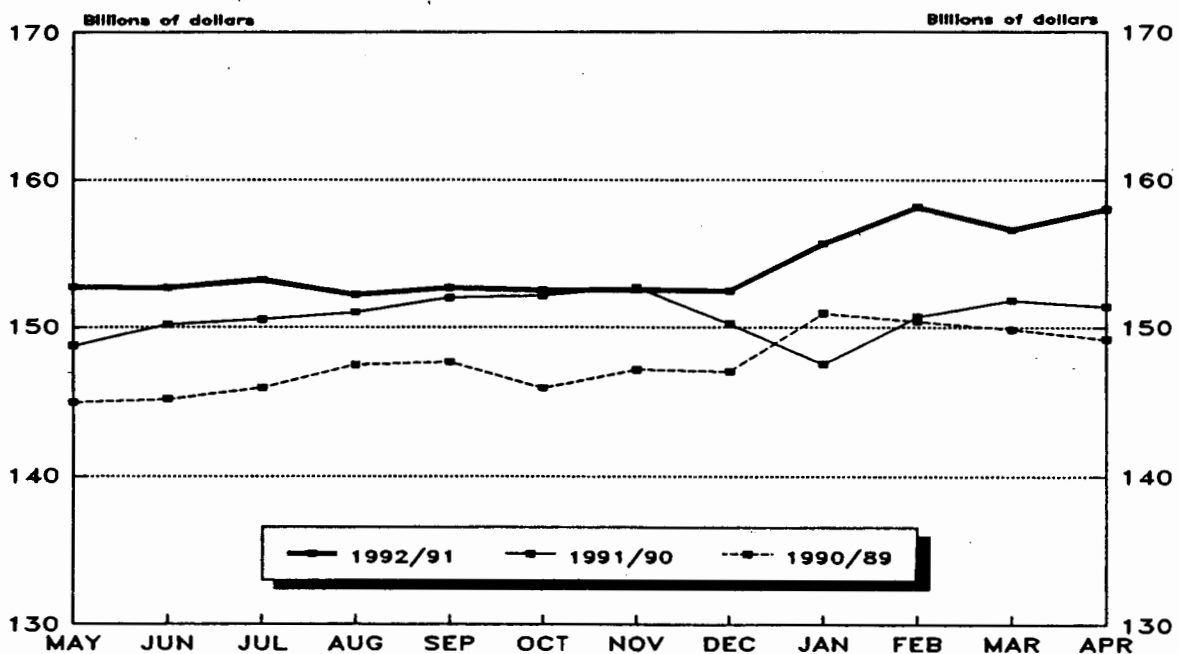
Nondurable goods increased 0.3 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) from March and were 2.4 percent above last year. General merchandise stores were up 4.7 percent above April a year ago.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for May is scheduled to be released June 11, 1992 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

May 1989 - April 1992

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



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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				
		1992			1991		1992			1991	
		Apr. ² adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ² adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr. ¹	Mar. ¹
	Retail trade, total.....	157,376	151,771	139,879	148,510	149,299	158,013	156,609	158,131	151,395	151,807
	Total (excl. auto group)....	120,937	117,397	109,230	115,325	117,108	124,122	123,584	124,482	120,467	120,458
	Durable goods, total.....	59,870	56,285	50,657	55,271	52,909	57,892	56,816	57,278	53,595	54,017
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	9,368	7,879	6,551	8,558	6,876	8,706	8,467	8,421	7,894	7,545
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	5,771	4,864	6,004	4,944	(*)	6,185	6,204	5,740	5,445
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,070	908	1,181	1,020	(*)	1,163	1,145	1,108	1,100
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	36,439	34,374	30,649	33,185	32,191	33,891	33,025	33,649	30,928	31,349
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	33,842	31,926	28,452	30,463	29,734	31,335	30,464	31,061	28,259	28,784
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	27,414	24,516	26,270	25,651	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,448	2,197	2,722	2,457	(*)	2,561	2,588	2,669	2,565
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,349	7,561	7,021	7,150	7,234	7,785	7,903	7,759	7,550	7,528
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	4,133	3,875	4,019	4,002	(*)	4,230	4,217	4,093	4,084
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,692	2,440	2,491	2,554	(*)	2,879	2,766	2,731	2,720
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	879	721	793	754	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	97,506	95,486	89,222	93,239	96,390	100,121	99,793	100,853	97,800	97,790
53	General merchandise group stores.....	17,774	16,927	15,003	16,370	16,778	18,967	19,036	19,748	18,124	18,044
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	14,529	13,917	12,150	13,386	13,734	15,440	15,481	16,114	14,726	14,642
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts).....	(*)	14,316	12,500	13,824	14,189	(*)	15,942	16,513	15,175	15,111
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	513	495	535	586	(*)	586	623	602	596
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	2,497	2,358	2,449	2,458	(*)	2,969	3,011	2,796	2,806
54	Food stores.....	30,608	30,419	29,177	29,552	31,276	31,173	31,020	31,044	30,741	30,831
541	Grocery stores.....	28,646	28,447	27,305	27,625	29,267	29,201	29,028	29,048	28,746	28,863
554	Gasoline service stations.....	10,222	10,002	9,263	10,382	10,241	10,582	10,495	10,623	10,692	10,746
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	8,334	7,369	6,371	7,533	7,890	8,293	8,163	8,289	8,081	7,916
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	663	592	736	704	(*)	784	785	786	775
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,564	2,179	2,650	2,674	(*)	2,766	2,786	2,781	2,709
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,235	1,948	2,168	2,304	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,396	1,195	1,471	1,629	(*)	1,457	1,507	1,504	1,478
58	Eating and drinking places.....	16,142	16,223	15,154	15,506	15,560	16,223	16,387	16,490	15,647	15,529
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,563	6,422	6,170	6,049	6,298	6,589	6,540	6,454	6,217	6,292
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,666	1,626	1,642	1,716	(*)	1,815	1,844	1,777	1,818
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	375	300	361	370	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	36,714	33,321	35,621	36,726	(*)	40,898	41,646	39,299	39,084

*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-92-03.

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					
		Apr. 1992 advance from--		Mar. 1992 preliminary from--		Feb. 1992 through Apr. 1992 from--	
		Mar. 1992 prelim.	Apr. 1991 final	Feb. 1992 final	Mar. 1991 final	Nov. 1991 through Jan. 1992	Feb. 1991 through Apr. 1991
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.9	+4.4	-1.0	+3.2	+2.6	+4.2
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.4	+3.0	-0.7	+2.6	+2.3	+3.1
	Durable goods, total.....	+1.9	+8.0	-0.8	+5.2	+4.2	+7.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+2.8	+10.3	+0.5	+12.2	+7.8	+11.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+2.6	+9.6	-1.9	+5.3	+3.8	+8.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+2.9	+10.9	-1.9	+5.8	+4.0	+9.0
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.5	+3.1	+1.9	+5.0	+3.8	+4.0
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.3	+2.4	-1.1	+2.0	+1.8	+2.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.4	+4.7	-3.6	+5.5	+4.6	+6.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.3	+4.8	-3.9	+5.7	+4.0	+6.9
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	-3.5	+5.5	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.5	+1.4	-0.1	+0.6	0.0	+1.2
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.6	+1.6	-0.1	+0.6	+0.1	+1.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.8	-1.0	-1.2	-2.3	+1.2	-2.1
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.6	+2.6	-1.5	+3.1	+3.9	+3.3
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1.0	+3.7	-0.6	+5.5	+0.9	+5.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.7	+6.0	+1.3	+3.9	+2.8	+4.9

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Large (Group II) Companies, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Mar. 1992 prelim.	Feb. 1992 final	Mar. 1991	Mar. 1992 prelim.	Feb. 1992 final	Mar. 1991
	Retail trade, total.....	57,208	52,586	57,230	60,739	61,390	58,634
53	General merchandise group stores.....	15,546	13,804	15,399	17,483	18,128	16,590
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	13,540	11,847	13,335	15,095	15,671	14,277
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	13,924	12,183	13,778	15,471	16,051	14,702
533	Variety stores.....	371	362	450	416	468	456
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,635	1,595	1,614	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	17,289	16,712	17,846	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	17,044	16,453	17,570	17,321	17,283	17,192
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,332	3,581	4,616	4,807	4,846	4,561
582,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,517	1,264	1,601	1,665	1,683	1,611
566	Shoe stores.....	887	721	1,046	942	965	939
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,964	3,827	3,864	4,057	4,037	3,826

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-92-03.

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: The large (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).

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey will differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

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 -0.8 percent to +1.5 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.4 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 March 1992 and final estimates for February 1992 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-92-03). 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	-0.8	+1.5	0.0	0.4
	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. 554 551,2,5, 6,7,9	Automotive dealers.....	2.2	4.1	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	-3.0	+2.6	+0.5	1.0
	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, April 1991 - March 1992. 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.

