

Advance Monthly Retail Sales



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

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The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for March adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$166.9 billion, a decrease of 1.0 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) from the previous month but were 4.4 percent ($\pm 1.6\%$) above March 1992. Total sales in the first quarter were 5.2 percent ($\pm 1.6\%$) above the same period a year ago. The January to February 1993 percent change was revised from +0.3 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) as published in the February advance, to -0.3 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$).

Durable goods decreased 0.9 percent ($\pm 3.1\%$) from the previous month but were 5.1 percent above March 1992. Automotive dealers were up 6.7 percent above the previous year.

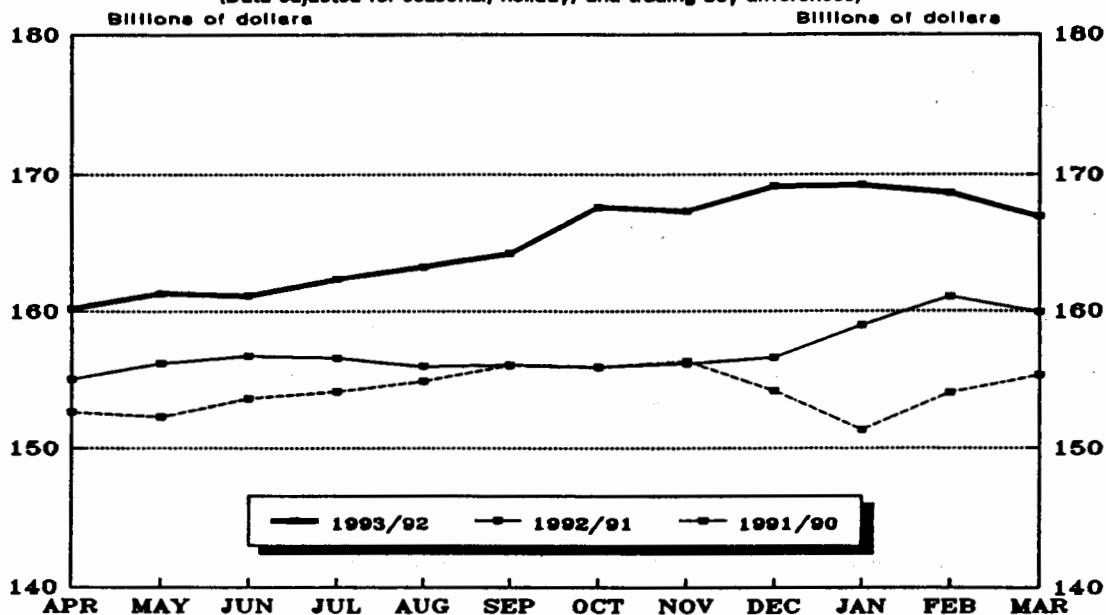
Nondurable goods decreased 1.1 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from February but were 4.0 percent above March 1992. General merchandise stores decreased 1.8 percent from February but were 6.3 percent above the previous year.

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 can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for April is scheduled to be released May 13, 1993 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES April 1990 - March 1993

(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) 482-1986. 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				
		1993			1992		1993			1992	
		Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar. ¹	Feb. ¹
	Retail trade, total.....	164,041	144,847	148,525	154,738	143,148	166,943	168,662	169,232	159,934	161,063
	Total (excl. auto group)....	127,152	114,252	118,357	121,259	113,237	132,538	134,114	133,958	127,693	128,142
	Durable goods, total.....	60,970	52,083	52,647	56,463	51,023	60,094	60,654	62,216	57,184	57,817
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	8,268	6,850	6,841	7,939	6,689	8,740	8,895	8,943	8,505	8,548
521.3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	5,052	4,983	5,768	4,902	(*)	6,553	6,471	6,149	6,221
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	810	671	973	827	(*)	1,060	1,069	1,056	1,038
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	36,689	30,595	30,168	33,479	29,911	34,405	34,548	35,274	32,241	32,921
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	33,938	28,071	27,706	30,753	27,488	31,424	31,470	32,329	29,401	30,074
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	24,973	24,831	26,925	24,106	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,524	2,462	2,726	2,423	(*)	3,078	2,945	2,840	2,847
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	8,799	8,036	8,611	8,235	7,790	9,006	9,218	9,398	8,592	8,608
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	4,102	4,330	4,310	4,084	(*)	4,640	4,732	4,421	4,444
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	3,091	3,383	3,155	2,962	(*)	3,619	3,689	3,349	3,347
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	685	754	756	697	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	103,071	92,764	95,876	98,275	92,125	106,849	108,008	107,016	102,750	103,246
53	General merchandise group stores.....	19,132	16,350	16,098	17,872	15,924	21,246	21,641	21,623	19,990	20,397
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	14,381	12,085	11,923	13,651	11,911	15,908	16,309	16,491	15,134	15,509
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	12,438	12,246	14,060	12,290	(*)	16,854	16,845	15,541	16,044
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	420	393	498	494	(*)	538	525	565	565
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	3,845	3,782	3,725	3,519	(*)	4,794	4,607	4,291	4,291
54	Food stores.....	31,954	29,429	31,404	30,807	29,628	32,324	32,849	32,543	31,524	31,500
541	Grocery stores.....	29,945	27,599	29,589	29,031	27,962	30,278	30,802	30,504	29,684	29,778
554	Gasoline service stations.....	10,613	9,891	10,402	10,376	9,706	11,231	11,435	11,173	11,003	10,845
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	8,214	6,582	6,687	7,573	6,494	8,909	9,051	9,100	8,326	8,493
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	554	626	656	584	(*)	772	763	773	768
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,461	2,561	2,616	2,362	(*)	3,344	3,392	3,034	3,048
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,004	1,931	2,183	1,901	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,065	1,084	1,367	1,184	(*)	1,396	1,392	1,452	1,496
58	Eating and drinking places.....	17,023	15,378	15,947	16,766	15,702	17,057	17,163	17,315	16,833	16,920
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,581	6,116	6,152	6,365	6,220	6,594	6,562	6,442	6,488	6,459
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,802	1,873	1,874	1,834	(*)	2,113	2,097	2,055	2,054
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	284	328	328	252	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57,594	GAF ⁴	(*)	36,077	36,745	38,835	35,317	(*)	46,296	46,766	43,082	43,609

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

NA Not available.

Revised.

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-93-02.

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					
		Mar. 1993 advance from--		Feb. 1993 preliminary from--		Jan. 1993 through Mar. 1993 from--	
		Feb. 1993 prelim.	Mar. 1992 final	Jan. 1993 final	Feb. 1992 final	Oct. 1992 through Dec. 1992	Jan. 1992 through Mar. 1992
	Retail trade, total.....	-1.0	+4.4	-0.3	+4.7	+0.2	+5.2
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-1.2	+3.8	+0.1	+4.7	+0.3	+4.6
	Durable goods, total.....	-0.9	+5.1	-2.5	+4.9	-0.3	+6.8
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-1.7	+2.8	-0.5	+4.1	+0.5	+4.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.4	+6.7	-2.1	+4.9	-0.3	+7.5
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-0.1	+6.9	-2.7	+4.6	-0.5	+7.7
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-2.3	+4.8	-1.9	+7.1	+0.3	+7.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-1.1	+4.0	+0.9	+4.6	+0.4	+4.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-1.8	+6.3	+0.1	+6.1	+2.1	+6.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-2.5	+5.1	-1.1	+5.2	+1.4	+6.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	+0.1	+5.0	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-1.6	+2.5	+0.9	+4.0	+0.5	+3.1
541	Grocery stores.....	-1.7	+2.0	+1.0	+3.4	+0.5	+2.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.8	+2.1	+2.3	+5.4	+1.9	+3.6
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.6	+7.0	-0.5	+6.6	-0.2	+7.8
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.6	+1.3	-0.9	+1.4	-1.5	+1.7
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.5	+1.6	+1.9	+1.6	+3.0	+1.0

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		
		Feb. 1993 prelim.	Jan. 1993 final	Feb. 1992	Feb. 1993 prelim.	Jan. 1993 final	Feb. ¹ 1992
	Retail trade, total.....	58,401	60,222	57,393	70,457	70,063	66,512
53	General merchandise group stores.....	15,582	15,290	15,182	20,674	20,698	19,457
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	11,923	11,742	11,747	16,178	16,308	15,336
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	12,269	12,056	12,117	16,602	16,606	15,777
533	Variety stores.....	288	261	307	375	367	388
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	3,371	3,287	3,128	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	17,673	18,939	17,945	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	17,385	18,676	17,627	19,146	18,922	18,516
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,966	4,009	3,956	5,625	5,750	5,348
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,468	1,545	1,438	2,059	2,102	1,915
566	Shoe stores.....	725	731	750	1,000	995	992
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,749	3,804	3,803	4,044	3,996	3,974

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-93-02.

²Includes data for leased departments operated with 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

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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 can 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 -0.9 percent to +1.0 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 below.

Preliminary estimates for February 1993 and final estimates for January 1993 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for February (BR-93-02). 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 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	From	To		
		From	To								
	Retail trade, total.....	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	-0.9	+1.0	-0.1	0.6
	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, March 1992 - February 1993. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period 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.

