

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, MARCH 1957

Total sales of retail stores in March were \$15.8 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences was 1 percent below February of this year and about 4 percent above March a year ago.

The March sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,700 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds 1 ½ percent.

The preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics indicated that after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences the decline in sales from February to March was mainly in the durable goods groups. Movements among the lines of trade in the nondurable sector were mixed.

(more)

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1957		March 1956
	March	February	
Retail stores, total ¹	15,813	14,193	15,864
Food group.....	4,085	3,615	3,939
Grocery stores.....	3,503	3,086	3,377
Eating and drinking places.....	1,137	1,055	1,114
General merchandise group.....	1,506	1,276	1,648
Department stores ²	813	672	882
Apparel group.....	840	694	1,003
Furniture and appliance group.....	814	754	808
Lumber, building, hardware group ³	991	836	1,056
Automotive group.....	3,263	2,948	3,195
Gasoline service stations.....	1,146	1,067	1,078
Drug and proprietary stores.....	488	467	479

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change March 1957 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change Feb. 1957 from--	
	Feb. 1957	Mar. 1956	1957		1956	Jan. 1957	Feb. 1956	
			Mar.	Feb.	Jan.			Feb.
Retail stores, total ¹	+1	+4	16,322	16,494	16,439	15,346	0	+7
Durable goods stores, total ¹	+3	+2	5,581	5,742	5,706	5,354	0	+7
Nondurable goods stores, total ¹ ..	+0	+5	10,741	10,753	10,733	9,992	0	+8
Food group.....				3,965	3,969	3,680	0	+8
Eating and drinking places.....				1,219	1,182	1,152	+3	+6
General merchandise group.....				1,718	1,722	1,645	0	+4
Apparel group.....				992	980	924	+1	+7
Furniture and appliance group.....				895	856	859	+5	+4
Lumber, building, hardware group ³				1,120	1,096	1,064	+2	+5
Automotive group.....				3,262	3,324	3,008	-2	+8
Gasoline service stations.....				1,220	1,213	1,088	+1	+12
Drug and proprietary stores.....				492	484	455	+2	+8

Source: Office of Business Economics

¹ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

² Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

³ Includes farm equipment dealers.