

COMMERCE

Office of the Secretary

Frederick H. Mueller, Secretary

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, MAY 1960

Total sales of retail stores in May were \$18.4 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, was about 3 percent below April and 1 percent above May 1959.

The May 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 2,000 retail firms which, in total, operate some 39,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger sample group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are subject to revision, on the basis of estimates subsequently derived from the full sample, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent.

The advance Census figures for May are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, most major lines of trade shared in the decline from April when sales were at a record rate. The largest relative decreases in May were at automotive and department stores; sales of food stores were higher. Estimates for April for the full sample indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were 4 percent above March.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MAY 1960

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1960		1959
	May ¹	April ²	May
Retail stores, total ³	18,420	19,216	18,600
Durable-goods stores, total ³	6,326	6,360	6,435
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	12,094	12,856	12,165
Food group.....	4,359	4,603	4,437
Grocery stores.....	3,875	4,122	3,966
Eating and drinking places.....	1,341	1,303	1,336
General merchandise group.....	1,870	2,091	1,892
Department stores.....	4,1074	1,221	1,096
Apparel group.....	1,080	1,350	1,128
Furniture and appliance group.....	859	834	899
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group.....	1,371	1,342	1,384
Automotive group.....	3,661	3,741	3,696
Gasoline service stations.....	1,507	1,476	1,427
Drug and proprietary stores.....	622	610	591

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 variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, May 1960 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, April 1960 from--	
	April 1960	May 1959	1960			1959	March 1960	April 1959
			May ¹	April ²	March	April		
Retail stores, total ³ ...	-3	+1	18,371	18,880	18,234	17,953	+4	+5
Durable-goods stores, total ³ ...	-5	-2	5,995	6,296	5,937	6,137	+6	+3
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³ ...	-2	+2	12,376	12,584	12,297	11,816	+2	+6
Food group.....				4,442	4,511	4,292	-2	+3
Eating and drinking places.....				1,379	1,309	1,283	+5	+7
General merchandise group.....				2,092	1,942	1,935	+8	+8
Apparel group.....				1,170	1,137	1,059	+3	+10
Furniture and appliance group.....				921	868	918	+6	0
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group..				1,296	1,142	1,321	+13	-2
Automotive group.....				3,569	3,458	3,396	+3	+5
Gasoline service stations.....				1,515	1,453	1,381	+4	+10
Drug and proprietary stores.....				627	612	579	+2	+8

Source: Office of Business Economics

¹ Advance sample estimates. ² Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

⁴ Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

Note: Effective with January 1960, the statistics include retail sales in Alaska and Hawaii which in 1958, according to preliminary results of the Retail Census, accounted for approximately 0.1 and 0.3 percent, respectively of the United States total.