

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales



SEPTEMBER 1981

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CB-81-178

The Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in September after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at \$88.8 billion. This adjusted figure was little changed from August but 10 percent higher than September a year ago. The adjusted September estimate excluding the automotive group was also little changed from August but 8 percent above September of last year.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores were about 1 percent above August while sales of nondurable goods stores were little changed. Compared with sales for September 1980, durable goods stores sales increased 15 percent while nondurable goods stores increased 8 percent.

The revised estimate of retail sales for August based on preliminary results from a full sample of retail stores was about \$88.4 billion, about \$0.8 billion above the August advance estimate published earlier. Seasonally adjusted preliminary sales for August increased about 1 percent from July and were 11 percent above August 1980. Excluding the automotive group, retail sales were about 1 percent above July and 9 percent above August 1980. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted August sales increased 1 percent from July and were 9 percent above the same month a year ago. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales August were 2 percent above July and 16 percent above August 1980.

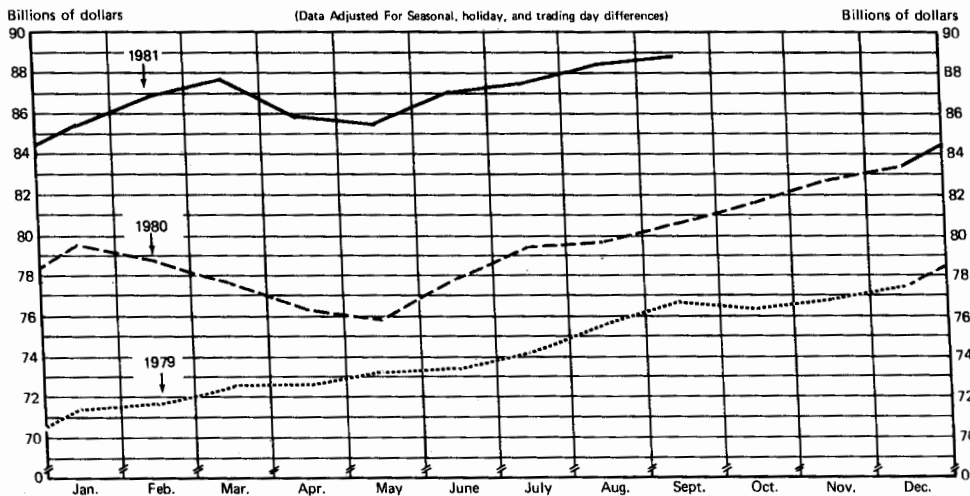
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates prior to publication on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

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 -1.5 percent to +1.6 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.8 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 on the last page of this report.

Preliminary estimates for August 1981 and final estimates for July 1981 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for August (BR-81-8). 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. In addition, the completed report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for October is scheduled to be released November 12 1981, at 2:30 p.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES FOR THE UNITED STATES JANUARY 1979-SEPTEMBER 1981



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U.S. Department of Commerce  
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The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report, the Monthly Retail Trade report, and the Annual Retail Trade report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$25 per year. Add \$6.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 70 cents each.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1981			1980		1981			1980	
		Sept. <sup>2</sup> advance	Aug. prelim.	July final	Sept.	Aug.	Sept. <sup>2</sup> advance	Aug. prelim.	July final	Sept.	Aug.
	Retail trade, total.....	86,244	89,426	88,768	77,579	81,740	88,838	88,449	87,350	80,620	79,829
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	69,937	72,078	71,846	64,090	67,529	71,873	71,727	71,352	66,447	65,889
	Durable goods stores, total.....	28,236	29,432	29,038	24,506	25,256	28,796	28,441	27,753	25,094	24,593
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	4,589	4,627	4,769	4,434	4,289	4,179	4,144	4,260	4,039	3,844
521.3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	3,256	3,361	3,215	3,071	(*)	2,814	2,910	2,820	2,670
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	763	784	642	641	(*)	766	735	639	633
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	16,307	17,348	16,922	13,489	14,211	16,965	16,722	15,998	14,173	13,940
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	(*)	15,498	15,050	11,965	12,600	(*)	14,945	14,212	12,661	12,389
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	13,547	12,919	10,450	10,840	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,850	1,872	1,524	1,611	(*)	1,777	1,786	1,512	1,551
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	3,842	3,890	3,779	3,626	3,712	3,850	3,859	3,719	3,702	3,628
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores....	(*)	2,341	2,281	2,170	2,244	(*)	2,300	2,215	2,233	2,168
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	1,213	1,182	1,083	1,119	(*)	1,214	1,163	1,097	1,099
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	524	582	516	552	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	58,008	59,994	59,730	53,073	56,484	60,042	60,008	59,597	55,526	55,236
53	General merchandise group stores.....	9,825	10,344	9,530	8,923	9,640	10,506	10,701	10,409	9,649	9,722
531	Department stores.....	8,047	8,470	7,757	7,299	7,834	8,552	8,759	8,496	7,840	7,905
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	758	716	635	741	(*)	782	768	722	740
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	1,116	1,057	989	1,065	(*)	1,160	1,145	1,087	1,070
54	Food stores.....	19,876	20,257	21,038	17,712	19,115	20,341	20,352	19,939	18,577	18,405
541	Grocery stores.....	18,422	18,817	19,557	16,474	17,812	18,779	18,874	18,467	17,250	17,078
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,618	9,003	9,173	7,982	8,470	8,653	8,526	8,541	7,990	7,998
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,856	4,077	3,598	3,586	3,913	3,983	4,003	4,013	3,724	3,785
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	636	565	608	683	(*)	694	662	699	736
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,580	1,439	1,409	1,468	(*)	1,583	1,580	1,416	1,435
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	881	757	685	836	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	763	660	693	724	(*)	735	750	670	677
58	Eating and drinking places.....	7,887	8,522	8,524	7,276	7,920	7,895	7,733	7,799	7,276	7,135
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,722	2,786	2,769	2,507	2,563	2,917	2,875	2,837	2,667	2,623
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,402	1,448	1,277	1,420	(*)	1,384	1,376	1,348	1,367
53,56,57, 594,5961 (pt.)	GAF <sup>3</sup> plus mail-order houses (department stores mdse.).....	(*)	21,401	19,922	18,777	19,932	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57, 594	GAF <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	20,936	19,465	18,319	19,497	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

<sup>\*</sup>Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-81-08.<sup>2</sup>Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.<sup>3</sup>GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise. Data for mail-order catalog desks located within department stores of some mail-order firms are included in the department store estimates.

**Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States**

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

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Sept. 1981 advance from--		Aug. 1981 preliminary from--		July 1981 through Sept. 1981	
		Aug. 1981 preliminary	Sept. 1980 final	July 1981 final	Aug. 1980 final	Apr. 1981 through June 1981	July 1980 through Sept. 1980
	Retail trade, total.....	0	+10	+1	+11	+2	+10
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0	+8	+1	+9	+1	+9
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+1	+15	+2	+16	+6	+14
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1	+3	-3	+8	-5	+8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1	+20	+5	+20	+11	+17
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	0	+4	+4	+6	-1	+4
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0	+8	+1	+9	+1	+9
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-2	+9	+3	+10	0	+9
531	Department stores.....	-2	+9	+3	+11	0	+10
54	Food stores.....	0	+9	+2	+11	+3	+10
541	Grocery stores.....	-1	+9	+2	+11	+3	+10
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1	+8	0	+7	0	+8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0	+7	0	+6	+1	+7
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+2	+9	-1	+8	-1	+9
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	+1	+9	+1	+10	+2	+9

**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies by Kind of Business for the United States**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Aug. 1981 preliminary	July 1981 final	Aug. 1980	Aug. 1981 preliminary	July 1981 final	Aug. 1980
	Retail trade, total.....	29,795	29,238	27,678	30,246	29,829	27,344
53	General merchandise group stores.....	9,164	8,390	8,477	9,510	9,194	8,536
531	Department stores.....	8,059	7,372	7,438	8,334	8,057	7,475
533	Variety stores.....	572	530	555	602	577	556
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	533	488	484	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	10,612	11,037	9,898	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	10,453	10,875	9,788	10,710	10,387	9,512
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,475	1,225	1,404	1,375	1,427	1,278
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	580	528	554	557	580	513
566	Shoe stores.....	358	292	345	331	358	311
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,352	1,352	1,292	1,425	1,410	1,328

Note: The 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).

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-81-08.

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 advance-to- preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.85	-1.54	+1.64	0.03	0.76
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-1.07	+1.19	-0.09	0.63
	Durable goods stores, total.....	0.7	2.2	1.8	-3.59	+4.63	0.73	1.85
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.7	2.5	1.95	-4.10	+7.02	1.01	1.87
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.8	2.8	2.2	-4.62	+7.79	0.56	2.87
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.3	4.8	2.25	-4.37	+4.53	0.11	2.22
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.7	-1.24	+1.33	-0.14	0.71
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.3	1.0	0.5	-3.03	+3.45	0.43	1.70
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.4	0.25	-1.81	+3.04	0.69	1.74
54	Food stores.....	1.2	1.4	1.3	-1.65	+0.71	-0.29	0.61
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.6	0.5	-1.81	+0.54	-0.60	0.79
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.8	1.2	0.95	-2.32	+4.16	-0.51	1.50
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.3	3.2	2.35	-3.60	-2.44	-0.23	1.39
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.7	1.2	1.0	-2.35	+1.55	-0.25	1.42
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.4	0.9	0.5	-1.39	+3.63	0.43	1.20

Note: See Appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

<sup>1</sup>The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of February-June 1981.

<sup>2</sup>The ranges shown are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, August 1980-July 1981.

