

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

MAY 1984

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, Wednesday, June 13, 1984

CB-84-114

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for May, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$107.3 billion, up 0.2 percent from the revised April level of \$107.1 billion and 10.3 percent above year-ago sales. This monthly increase follows an April gain of 3.1 percent. The March through May sales were 1.2 percent above the December through February sales and 11.2 percent above the same period last year. Excluding the automotive group, total sales were little changed from last month, but were 7.9 percent above year earlier sales.

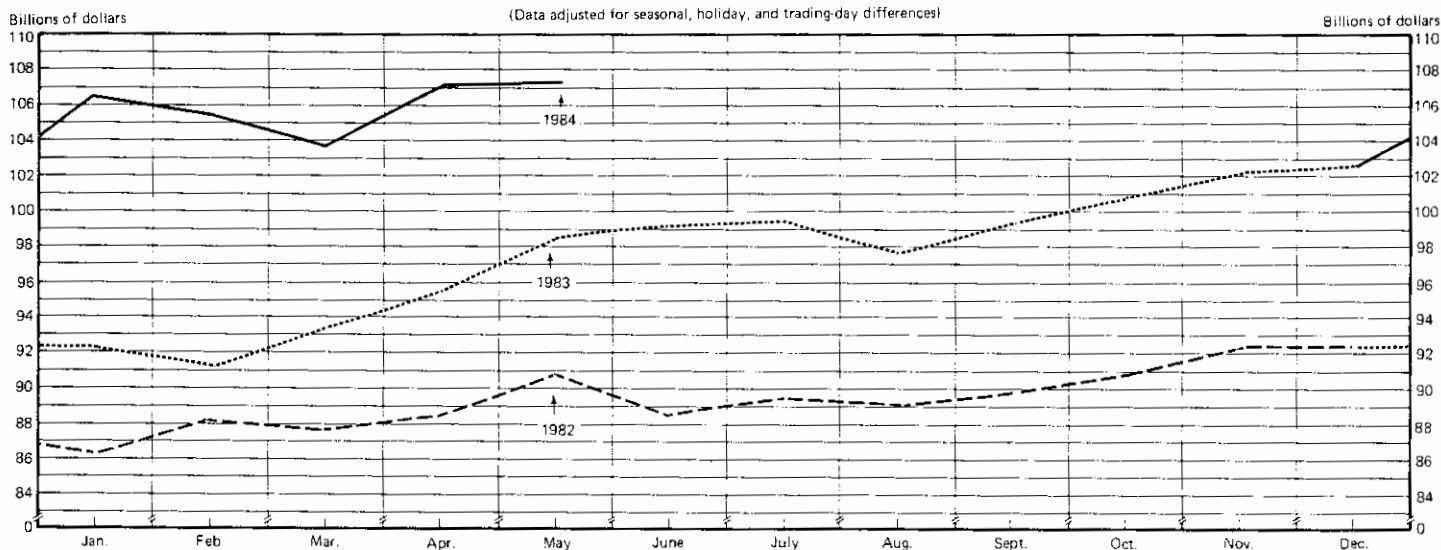
Sales of durable goods showed an increase of 0.2 percent from April but were 17.9 percent above May 1983. Automotive group sales rose 0.8 percent from April to a record level of \$22.2 billion and were 20.9 percent above a year ago. The previous record of \$22.0 billion was set in January 1984. Following a month-to-month increase of 5.3 percent in April, furniture group sales declined 2.6 percent in May but were 13.7 percent above the prior year level.

Nondurable goods sales increased 0.2 percent from April and were 6.7 percent above May 1983. General merchandise group sales totaled \$12.9 billion, up 0.5 percent from the previous month and 10.3 percent above May 1983. Apparel group sales rose for the fifth consecutive month, up 1.9 percent from April and 11.8 percent over the previous year. Sales of gasoline service stations increased 0.9 percent from April and were 2.1 percent above May 1983, the smallest year-to-year gain of any major group. Food stores and drug stores were the only major nondurable goods groups showing declines, down 0.5 percent and 0.9 percent respectively.

For a description of the sample design and reliability of the data, see back page.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for June is scheduled to be released July 13, 1984, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1982-May 1984



Inquiries concerning this report should be addressed to Ronald Piencykoski, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-5294.



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 \$39 per year. Add \$9.75 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 \$1.75 each.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not Adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1984			1983		1984			1983	
		May ² adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.	May ² adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.
	Retail trade, total.....	110,361	103,944	104,294	97,831	93,856	107,288	107,097	103,873	97,239	95,125
	Total (excl. auto group)..	85,923	81,150	81,493	78,187	75,402	85,103	85,085	83,368	78,889	77,436
	Durable goods stores, total.	40,200	37,158	36,667	33,201	30,826	37,395	37,319	35,306	31,705	30,671
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	6,540	5,692	5,070	5,721	4,823	5,648	5,657	5,523	5,032	4,798
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,068	3,746	3,894	3,381	(*)	4,164	4,098	3,582	3,486
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	843	757	915	803	(*)	837	814	808	767
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	24,438	22,794	22,801	19,644	18,454	22,185	22,012	20,505	18,350	17,689
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	22,403	20,937	21,000	17,851	16,734	20,256	20,151	18,650	16,590	16,013
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	18,630	18,843	15,458	14,478	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,857	1,801	1,793	1,720	(*)	1,861	1,855	1,760	1,676
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	4,625	4,430	4,594	3,953	3,912	4,778	4,905	4,660	4,201	4,143
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	2,661	2,748	2,422	2,357	(*)	2,855	2,723	2,464	2,427
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	1,447	1,515	1,253	1,259	(*)	1,685	1,593	1,414	1,382
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	580	603	558	548	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods total.....	70,161	66,786	67,627	64,630	63,030	69,893	69,778	68,567	65,534	64,454
53	General merchandise group stores..	12,755	11,759	11,174	11,297	10,591	12,896	12,830	12,374	11,694	11,415
531	Department stores.....	10,547	9,676	9,208	9,246	8,652	10,654	10,552	10,152	9,542	9,313
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	782	726	732	719	(*)	800	792	765	751
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,301	1,240	1,319	1,220	(*)	1,478	1,430	1,387	1,351
54	Food stores.....	23,246	21,865	22,985	21,505	21,392	22,712	22,833	22,444	21,572	21,326
541	Grocery stores.....	21,727	20,420	21,634	20,206	20,129	21,239	21,405	21,086	20,287	20,069
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,971	8,544	8,579	8,768	8,227	8,873	8,790	8,835	8,690	8,39
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,897	4,868	4,413	4,264	4,266	5,096	5,001	4,794	4,560	4,447
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	699	585	652	619	(*)	766	702	706	687
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,966	1,845	1,680	1,681	(*)	2,018	1,950	1,770	1,719
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,023	931	903	887	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	868	770	755	779	(*)	792	809	775	767
58	Eating and drinking places.....	10,687	10,159	10,207	9,898	9,582	10,227	10,200	10,156	9,536	9,468
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,507	3,415	3,383	3,147	3,094	3,497	3,528	3,400	3,185	3,183
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,502	1,529	1,555	1,530	(*)	1,645	1,608	1,608	1,604
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	376	372	348	325	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ³	(*)	24,078	23,132	22,458	21,542	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
594											

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

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-84-04).

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.

³GAF 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					
		May 1984 advance from--		Apr. 1984 preliminary from--		Mar. 1984 through May 1984	
		Apr. 1984 prelim.	May 1983 final	Mar. 1984 final	Apr. 1983 final	Dec. 1983 through Feb. 1984	Mar. 1983 through May 1983
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.2	+10.3	+3.1	+12.6	+1.2	+11.2
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.0	+7.9	+2.1	+9.9	+1.7	+8.8
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+0.2	+17.9	+5.7	+21.7	+0.4	+19.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.2	+12.2	+2.4	+17.9	+2.5	+16.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+0.8	+20.9	+7.3	+24.4	-0.7	+21.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+0.5	+22.1	+8.0	+25.8	-0.4	+22.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-2.6	+13.7	+5.3	+18.4	+2.0	+15.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+0.2	+6.7	+1.8	+8.3	+1.6	+7.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.5	+10.3	+3.7	+12.4	+0.4	+10.4
531	Department stores.....	+1.0	+11.7	+3.9	+13.3	+0.9	+11.3
54	Food stores.....	-0.5	+5.3	+1.7	+7.1	+2.3	+6.0
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.8	+4.7	+1.5	+6.7	+1.9	+5.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.9	+2.1	-0.5	+4.7	+1.2	+4.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.9	+11.8	+4.3	+12.5	+5.5	+12.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.3	+7.2	+0.4	+7.7	+1.1	+7.5
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.9	+9.8	+3.8	+10.8	+3.2	+9.1

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Apr. 1984 prelim.	Mar. 1984 final	Apr. 1983	Apr. 1984 prelim.	Mar. 1984 final	Apr. 1983
	Retail trade, total.....	35,264	35,399	32,663	37,252	36,233	33,589
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,630	10,124	9,547	11,607	11,181	10,298
531	Department stores.....	9,263	8,822	8,279	10,101	9,705	8,912
533	Variety stores.....	607	560	566	624	612	591
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	760	742	702	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	11,891	12,685	11,720	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	11,720	12,532	11,572	12,350	11,992	11,446
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,114	1,866	1,710	2,089	2,051	1,773
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	920	843	730	913	902	746
566	Shoe stores.....	478	402	404	407	419	388
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,927	1,883	1,696	1,995	1,910	1,765

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-84-04).

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).

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Sample Design and Reliability of Data

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.

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 -0.7 percent to +1.1 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 April 1984 and final estimates for March 1984 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for April (BR-84-04). 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 complete report will include 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 advance-to-preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range ¹		Median	Range ²		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.7	-0.7	1.1	0.0	0.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	0.6	1.0	0.7	-0.8	+1.3	0.0	0.6
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.0	2.2	1.4	-1.4	-3.2	-0.4	1.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.9	3.1	2.7	-1.5	-5.1	+1.3	2.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.4	2.2	1.8	-1.0	-4.2	-0.6	1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.9	1.3	-1.3	-4.8	-0.7	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.2	4.1	2.4	-3.5	-2.5	-0.5	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.8	0.6	-0.6	-1.2	0.0	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.9	0.5	-1.3	+1.0	+0.1	0.5
531	Department stores.....	0.1	0.6	0.3	-1.1	+1.0	-0.2	0.5
54	Food stores.....	0.7	1.1	0.9	-0.9	-1.3	-0.2	0.5
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.7	0.5	-0.8	-1.1	-0.2	0.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.1	1.0	-3.8	-3.0	-0.1	1.6
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.6	3.7	2.0	-3.0	-2.1	0.0	1.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.4	1.1	-2.4	-3.0	-0.1	1.2
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.4	1.6	0.9	-2.1	-1.5	-0.4	0.7

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of January-December 1983.

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, May 1983-April 1984. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period March 1983-February 1984.

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

