

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

## April 1986

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CB-86-77

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$116.8 billion, 2.2 percent above April 1985. Total sales in the February through April period were about the same as the prior three months and 3.5 percent above the same months a year ago.

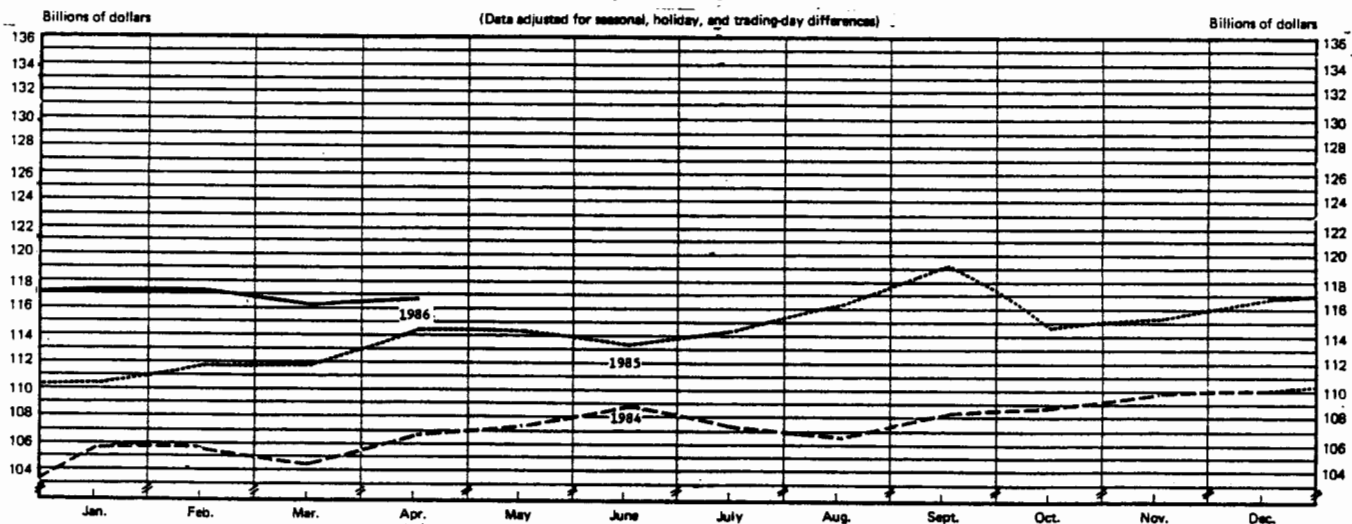
Durable goods were 3.2 percent above April 1985. For the February through April period, durable goods sales were 0.3 percent above the prior three months and 4.3 percent above the same months a year ago. Following a 4.6 percent decline in March, automotive dealers increased 4.1 percent but were 1.0 percent below April a year ago. Building material dealers increased 5.0 percent from March and were 17.7 percent above April 1985.

Nondurable goods were 1.5 percent above April a year ago and for the February through April period, sales were 3.0 percent above the same months last year. Compared to April 1985 sales, the general merchandise group was up 5.2 percent while food stores were up 2.6 percent. Gasoline service stations decreased 2.3 percent from March and were 13.5 percent below April 1985.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for May is scheduled to be released June 12, 1986, at 8:30 a.m.

### ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1984-April 1986



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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 \$37 per year. Add \$9.25 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. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1986			1985		1986			1985	
		Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. <sup>2</sup> adv.
	Retail trade, total.....	114,648	113,753	99,661	112,945	109,934	116,788	116,165	117,200	114,316	111,999
	Total (excl. auto group)..	86,850	87,721	76,333	85,109	83,336	90,938	91,334	91,160	88,214	86,815
	Durable goods, total.....	45,430	42,548	37,469	43,816	41,444	44,197	42,976	43,949	42,822	41,498
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	7,659	6,404	4,996	6,463	5,312	7,458	7,101	6,908	6,335	5,952
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,601	3,694	4,595	3,886	(*)	5,062	5,053	4,623	4,342
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	874	712	957	811	(*)	977	953	933	901
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	27,798	26,032	23,328	27,836	26,598	25,850	24,831	26,040	26,102	25,184
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	25,746	24,175	21,722	25,732	24,688	23,883	22,828	24,002	24,049	23,159
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	21,466	19,807	22,623	22,163	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,857	1,606	2,104	1,910	(*)	2,003	2,038	2,053	2,025
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,562	5,710	5,101	5,095	5,243	5,949	6,047	5,971	5,466	5,491
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,196	2,828	2,873	2,934	(*)	3,329	3,300	2,980	3,019
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,073	1,896	1,871	1,934	(*)	2,256	2,244	2,102	2,080
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	648	570	608	621	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	69,218	71,205	62,192	69,129	68,490	72,591	73,189	73,251	71,494	70,501
53	General merchandise group stores..	12,582	12,699	9,550	12,331	11,811	13,987	13,831	13,621	13,294	13,161
531	Department stores.....	10,632	10,761	8,049	10,408	9,984	11,774	11,697	11,532	11,191	11,069
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	788	556	736	696	(*)	797	747	760	758
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,150	945	1,187	1,131	(*)	1,337	1,342	1,343	1,334
54	Food stores.....	23,262	24,176	21,813	22,731	23,149	24,024	24,405	24,261	23,412	23,073
541	Grocery stores.....	21,903	22,816	20,630	21,342	21,785	22,697	23,070	22,948	22,070	21,720
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,230	7,208	7,122	8,348	7,947	7,431	7,603	8,186	8,588	8,270
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,625	6,107	4,401	5,603	5,380	6,121	6,124	5,996	5,706	5,691
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	670	511	660	579	(*)	749	730	701	694
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,545	1,879	2,323	2,284	(*)	2,532	2,492	2,356	2,355
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,551	1,089	1,390	1,359	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,028	703	996	924	(*)	933	924	934	918
58	Eating and drinking places.....	11,173	11,195	9,826	10,843	10,813	11,252	11,297	11,255	10,908	10,802
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,797	3,984	3,619	3,703	3,683	3,947	4,004	3,925	3,767	3,758
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,402	1,242	1,375	1,363	(*)	1,529	1,489	1,486	1,475
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	287	238	397	364	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	27,800	22,046	26,249	25,583	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
594		(*)					(*)				

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

NA Not available. <sup>2</sup>Revised

<sup>1</sup>Data 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, 8R-86-03.

<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.

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					
		Apr. 1986 advance from--		Mar. 1986 preliminary from--		Feb. 1986 through Apr. 1986	
		Mar. 1986 prelim.	Apr. 1985 final	Feb. 1986 final	Mar. 1985 final	Nov. 1985 through Jan. 1986	Feb. 1985 through Apr. 1985
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.5	+2.2	-0.9	+3.7	+0.1	+3.5
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	-0.4	+3.1	+0.2	+5.2	+0.6	+4.4
	Durable goods, total.....	+2.8	+3.2	-2.2	+3.6	+0.3	+4.3
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+5.0	+17.7	+2.8	+19.3	+7.2	+18.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+4.1	-1.0	-4.6	-1.4	-1.4	+0.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+4.6	-0.7	-4.9	-1.4	-1.2	+0.4
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.6	+8.8	+1.3	+10.1	+0.4	+9.1
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.8	+1.5	-0.1	+3.8	0.0	+3.0
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1.1	+5.2	+1.5	+5.1	+3.1	+4.5
531	Department stores.....	+0.7	+5.2	+1.4	+5.7	+2.4	+4.8
54	Food stores.....	-1.6	+2.6	+0.6	+5.8	+0.1	+4.3
541	Grocery stores.....	-1.6	+2.8	+0.5	+6.2	+0.2	+4.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-2.3	-13.5	-7.1	-8.1	-8.4	-7.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.0	+7.3	+2.1	+7.6	+2.3	+7.1
	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.4	+3.2	+0.4	+4.6	+1.2	+4.4
	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-1.4	+4.8	+2.0	+6.5	+1.0	+5.1

**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 <sup>1</sup>		
		Mar. 1986 prelim.	Feb. 1986 final	Mar. 1985	Mar. 1986 prelim.	Feb. 1986 final	Mar. 1985
	Retail trade, total.....	39,076	32,703	37,256	40,432	40,282	38,776
53	General merchandise group stores.....	11,900	8,911	11,003	12,910	12,724	12,242
531	Department stores.....	10,344	7,731	9,572	11,195	11,060	10,600
533	Variety stores.....	659	444	592	673	607	646
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	897	736	839	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	13,406	12,073	13,010	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	13,214	11,904	12,843	13,240	13,125	12,653
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,551	1,726	2,157	2,525	2,497	2,263
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,125	788	959	1,109	1,111	992
566	Shoe stores.....	560	352	443	488	477	432
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,216	1,939	2,066	2,212	2,169	2,143

<sup>1</sup>Revised

<sup>1</sup>Data 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, 8R-86-03.

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 -0.9 percent to +1.6 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.5 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 March 1986 and final estimates for February 1986 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-86-03). 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 <sup>1</sup>		Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-0.9	+1.6	-0.1	0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+1.1	-0.1	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-1.1	+3.8	+0.4	0.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-3.7	+5.8	-0.1	1.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-1.8	+4.9	+1.0	1.4
551,2,3,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-1.8	+5.3	+1.1	1.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.8	+3.4	-0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	0.0	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.6
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-1.1	+1.9	+0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-1.0	+1.0	-0.2	0.6
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-1.3	+0.9	-0.2	0.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-2.4	+4.2	+0.2	1.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.6	+2.8	-0.1	1.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.5	+2.8	0.0	1.1
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-1.1	+2.2	+0.4	1.1

<sup>1</sup>The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1984-July 1985.

<sup>2</sup>The 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, April 1985-March 1986. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1984-July 1985.

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

