

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

November 1987

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CB-87-196

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for November adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$125.9 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent (+1.3%) from the previous month and 3.4 percent above November 1986. The revised October sales were 0.9 percent (+0.3%) below September. Total sales in the September through November period decreased 1.0 percent from the prior three months but were 1.4 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods increased 0.4 percent (+2.6%) from the previous month and were 2.4 percent above the previous year. Durable goods less automotive increased 1.8 percent (+ 2.6%) from October and were 2.2 percent above November 1986. Automotive sales were 2.6 percent above November 1986. Building materials were 4.8 percent above last year, while furniture stores were down 3.0 percent from November 1986.

Nondurable goods were virtually unchanged from October but were 4.1 percent above the previous year. The general merchandise group was up 6.3 percent from last year while apparel stores were up 5.6 percent. Gasoline service stations were 10.5 percent above November 1986 and drug stores were up 9.2 percent in the same period.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling as well as nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

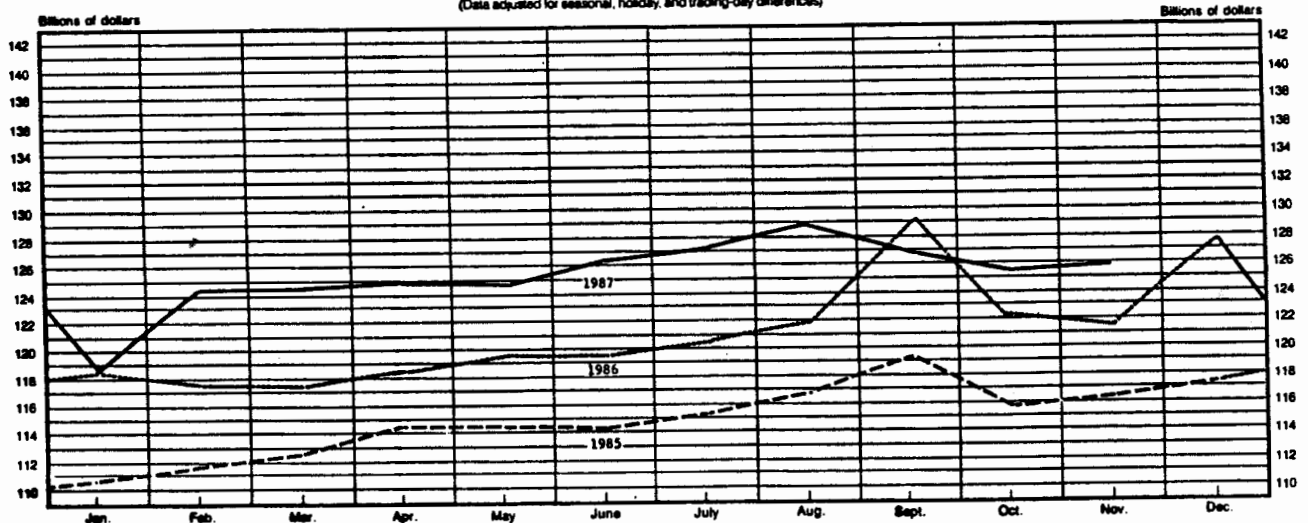
The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for December is scheduled to be released January 14, 1988, at 8:30 a.m.

The scheduled release dates for 1988 are as follows: January 14, February 11, March 11, April 13, May 12, June 15, July 14, August 11, September 15, October 14, November 15, and December 13.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1985-November 1987

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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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. 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>					
		1987			1986		1987			1986	
		Nov. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Oct. prel.	Sept. final	Nov.	Oct.	Nov. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Oct. prel.	Sept. final	Nov. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Oct. <sup>2</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	125,426	127,161	123,773	121,365	123,835	125,855	125,645	126,790	121,683	122,222
	Total (excl. auto group)..	99,991	99,440	94,142	97,141	95,763	97,513	97,148	97,258	94,069	94,195
	Durable goods, total.....	46,166	48,217	49,654	44,469	48,479	48,596	48,399	49,706	47,439	47,867
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	7,412	8,181	7,970	6,958	8,148	7,721	7,571	7,533	7,369	7,511
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	6,541	6,488	5,282	6,176	(*)	5,963	6,007	5,548	5,599
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,081	961	896	929	(*)	1,052	996	914	909
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	25,435	27,721	29,631	24,224	28,072	28,342	28,497	29,532	27,614	28,027
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	23,113	25,150	27,182	21,977	25,663	25,999	26,116	27,182	25,378	25,792
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	23,086	25,113	20,076	23,439	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,571	2,449	2,247	2,409	(*)	2,381	2,350	2,236	2,235
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	6,985	6,795	6,614	7,290	6,822	6,608	6,658	6,735	6,809	6,730
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,761	3,642	3,810	3,713	(*)	3,634	3,646	3,594	3,584
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,568	2,491	2,970	2,649	(*)	2,538	2,614	2,715	2,668
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	802	790	834	818	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	79,260	78,944	74,119	76,896	75,356	77,259	77,246	77,084	74,244	74,355
53	General merchandise group stores..	16,230	13,876	12,443	15,512	12,907	13,713	13,760	13,663	12,899	13,017
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	13,855	11,903	10,684	13,249	11,001	11,702	11,773	11,677	11,022	11,079
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.) <sup>3</sup>	(*)	12,812	11,487	14,314	11,887	(*)	12,685	12,554	11,899	11,983
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	693	629	685	665	(*)	720	713	652	693
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,280	1,130	1,578	1,241	(*)	1,267	1,273	1,225	1,245
54	Food stores.....	24,636	25,969	24,774	24,748	25,284	25,359	25,348	25,262	25,032	24,990
541	Grocery stores.....	23,269	24,545	23,400	23,280	23,792	23,964	23,923	23,829	23,539	23,487
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,461	7,788	7,621	6,711	7,061	7,582	7,591	7,652	6,862	6,882
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,811	7,253	6,862	7,570	6,826	7,192	7,154	7,167	6,812	6,864
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	805	715	927	782	(*)	807	805	776	797
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	3,067	2,889	3,217	2,948	(*)	2,963	2,975	2,875	2,896
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,717	1,577	1,794	1,532	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,333	1,352	1,318	1,256	(*)	1,328	1,331	1,267	1,274
58	Eating and drinking places.....	12,097	13,036	12,451	11,863	12,762	12,707	12,644	12,539	12,396	12,390
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,415	4,482	4,223	4,044	4,113	4,580	4,536	4,512	4,195	4,180
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,607	1,531	1,622	1,630	(*)	1,588	1,593	1,600	1,635
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	304	251	332	337	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	32,379	30,288	35,016	30,556	(*)	32,327	32,382	30,820	30,890

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

NA Not available.      <sup>†</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, BR-B7-10.

<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>Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

<sup>4</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					
		Nov. 1987 advance from--		Oct. 1987 preliminary from--		Sept. 1987 through Nov. 1987	
		Oct. 1987 prelim.	Nov. 1986 final	Sept. 1987 final	Oct. 1986 final	June 1987 through Aug. 1987	Sept. 1986 through Nov. 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.2	+3.4	-0.9	+2.8	-1.0	+1.4
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.4	+3.7	-0.1	+3.1	-0.4	+3.5
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.4	+2.4	-2.6	+1.1	-2.1	-2.5
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+2.0	+4.8	+0.5	+0.8	+1.9	+2.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.5	+2.6	-3.5	+1.7	-3.2	-5.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-0.4	+2.4	-3.9	+1.3	-3.7	-5.9
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.8	-3.0	-1.1	-1.1	-1.9	-1.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.0	+4.1	+0.2	+3.9	-0.4	+4.0
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.3	+6.3	+0.7	+5.7	-0.2	+5.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.6	+6.2	+0.8	+6.3	+0.1	+5.8
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+1.0	+5.9	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.0	+1.3	+0.3	+1.4	-0.3	+1.5
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.2	+1.8	+0.4	+1.9	-0.3	+2.0
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.1	+10.5	-0.8	+10.3	-0.1	+10.5
6	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.5	+5.6	-0.2	+4.2	+0.2	+5.1
8	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.5	+2.5	+0.8	+2.1	-0.5	+2.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.0	+9.2	+0.5	+8.5	+2.3	+8.7

**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>		
		Oct. 1987 prelim.	Sept. 1987 final	Oct. 1986	Oct. 1987 prelim.	Sept. 1987 final	Oct. 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	47,156	44,027	43,946	46,631	46,295	43,860
53	General merchandise group stores.....	12,885	11,556	11,976	12,853	12,699	12,143
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	11,538	10,352	10,659	11,446	11,301	10,756
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	12,409	11,118	11,490	12,298	12,138	11,594
533	Variety stores.....	554	499	509	586	578	540
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	793	705	808	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	14,880	14,038	14,049	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	14,682	13,855	13,828	14,352	14,167	13,705
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,926	3,701	3,491	3,929	3,872	3,561
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,677	1,556	1,504	1,667	1,628	1,516
566	Shoe stores.....	786	814	732	792	820	750
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,545	2,423	2,335	2,618	2,619	2,427

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, BR-87-10.

<sup>2</sup>Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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 -1.6 percent to +1.0 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.6 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 October 1987 and final estimates for September 1987 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for October (BR-87-10). 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.

Whenever a statement such as "up 0.8 percent (+1.3%)" appears in the text, this indicates a range from -0.5 percent to +2.1 percent. All ranges given are 90 percent confidence intervals. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with 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>1</sup>		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-1.6	-1.0	-0.1	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+0.6	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-2.1	+0.8	-0.3	0.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-2.6	+4.2	+0.5	1.7
55 ex. 554 551,2,5, 6,7,9	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.1
	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.4	+2.7	+0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.7	+0.8	0.0	0.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-0.6	+1.1	+0.1	0.4
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-0.7	+0.6	+0.1	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-0.6	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-0.7	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-5.2	+3.1	-0.5	1.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.3	+2.2	+0.6	0.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.1	+1.5	0.0	1.0
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	+0.2	0.6

<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 January-December 1983.

<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, November 1986-October 1987. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1985-July 1986.

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

