

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

December 1988

CB-89-05

**INTENTION TO REVISE SALES ESTIMATES.** The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales will be revised based on the 1987 Annual Retail Trade Survey estimates. Revised estimates for January 1983 through February 1989 are scheduled for release the week of March 13, 1989. Estimates shown in this report do not reflect this revision.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M., Friday, January 13, 1989

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for December adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$138.0 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from the previous month and 7.4 percent ( $\pm 1.6\%$ ) above December 1987. Total sales in the fourth quarter were 2.2 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) above the third quarter and 7.7 percent ( $\pm 1.8\%$ ) above the same quarter a year ago. Total sales for the 12 months of 1988 were \$1,612.0 billion, up 6.7 percent from the 1987 total.

Durable goods increased 0.6 percent ( $\pm 2.3\%$ ) from the previous month and were 9.2 percent ( $\pm 4.0\%$ ) above the previous year. Automotive sales were up 9.1 percent from December a year ago. Building materials dealers were up 9.0 percent from the previous year, while furniture stores were up 13.6 percent from the same period.

Nondurable goods decreased 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from the previous month and were 6.3 percent ( $\pm 1.6\%$ ) above December a year ago. General merchandise stores were up 5.3 percent from the previous year with food stores up 6.0 percent in the same period. Apparel stores were up 5.2 percent from a year ago, while drug stores were up 7.2 percent in the same period.

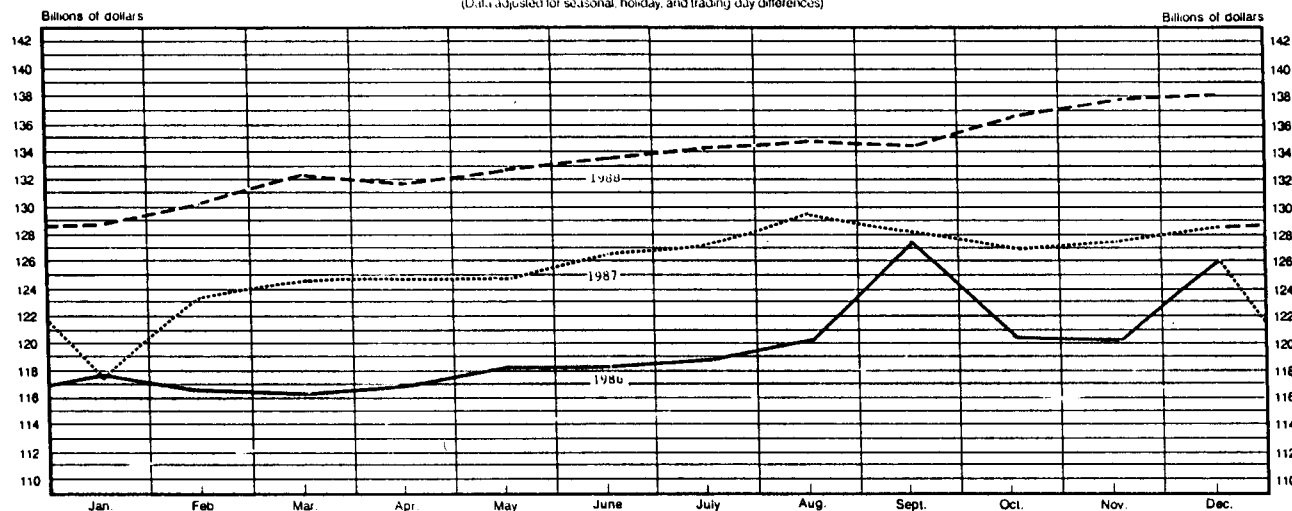
The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for January is scheduled to be released February 14, 1989 at 8:30 a.m.

The scheduled release dates for 1989 are as follows: February 14, March 14, April 13, May 11, June 13, July 14, August 11, September 14, October 13, November 14, December 13.

### ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1986-December 1988

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



Inquiries concerning this report should be addressed to **Ronald Plencykoski**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-5294/7561.



U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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>					
		12 month total		1988			1987		1988			1987	
		1988	Percent Change from 1987	Dec. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Nov. prel.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Nov. prel.	Oct. final	Dec. <sup>2</sup>	Nov. <sup>2</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	1,611,971	+6.7	169,599	138,546	134,575	157,189	126,897	138,025	137,809	136,560	128,527	127,456
	Total (excl. auto group)..	1,254,203	+6.0	142,019	110,607	105,829	131,571	102,380	107,207	106,898	106,262	100,279	99,967
	Durable goods, total.....	608,514	+8.8	57,873	49,954	49,542	53,526	44,732	52,328	52,009	51,198	47,941	47,158
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	83,794	+7.4	6,647	6,860	7,482	6,215	6,359	7,225	7,092	7,023	6,628	6,647
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,287	5,681	4,350	4,801	(*)	5,406	5,255	4,877	4,975
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,193	1,332	1,399	1,178	(*)	1,234	1,306	1,210	1,227
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	357,768	+9.5	27,580	27,939	28,746	25,618	24,517	30,818	30,911	30,298	28,248	27,489
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	328,293	+9.5	25,226	25,507	26,205	23,263	22,221	28,440	28,531	27,878	25,905	25,165
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,152	23,325	21,318	20,229	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,432	2,541	2,355	2,296	(*)	2,380	2,420	2,343	2,324
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	92,237	+9.6	11,060	8,521	7,651	9,729	7,399	7,883	7,841	7,748	6,942	7,004
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,399	4,064	4,238	3,877	(*)	4,073	4,028	3,595	3,689
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,586	3,071	4,656	3,051	(*)	3,254	3,186	2,867	2,851
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,024	895	1,293	991	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	1,003,457	+5.5	111,726	88,592	85,033	103,663	82,165	85,697	85,800	85,362	80,586	80,298
53	General merchandise group stores..	183,802	+4.5	30,044	18,762	15,351	28,132	17,533	15,755	15,709	15,620	14,968	14,821
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	154,241	+5.3	25,010	15,799	13,002	23,314	14,685	13,247	13,221	13,160	12,528	12,392
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup>	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,264	13,422	24,049	15,146	(*)	13,621	13,585	12,930	12,803
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	744	697	1,338	710	(*)	737	734	711	705
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,219	1,652	3,480	2,138	(*)	1,751	1,726	1,729	1,724
54	Food stores.....	331,031	+5.3	30,870	27,546	27,869	28,287	25,431	27,993	28,205	28,108	26,403	26,277
541	Grocery stores.....	311,838	+5.3	28,947	25,961	26,293	26,423	23,947	26,436	26,599	26,505	24,880	24,764
554	Gasoline service stations.....	107,977	+4.7	9,182	8,863	9,224	8,817	8,595	9,127	9,016	9,124	8,730	8,824
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	83,024	+5.0	11,930	7,828	7,122	11,112	7,132	7,059	7,103	7,174	6,708	6,610
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	855	792	1,498	832	(*)	751	783	773	732
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,068	2,787	4,246	2,800	(*)	2,764	2,743	2,599	2,576
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,109	1,816	3,062	1,869	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,291	1,233	1,735	1,215	(*)	1,264	1,271	1,278	1,219
58	Eating and drinking places.....	157,363	+6.6	13,840	12,959	13,664	12,574	11,936	13,771	13,684	13,489	12,714	12,577
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	60,198	+7.5	6,823	5,013	4,899	6,342	4,640	5,099	5,152	5,071	4,758	4,813
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,582	1,512	2,314	1,638	(*)	1,569	1,544	1,639	1,645
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	(*)	(*)	438	348	409	386	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57,594	GAF.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	40,832	34,791	59,642	37,590	(*)	35,756	35,648	33,625	33,440

\*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, BR-88-11.

<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					
		Dec. 1988 advance from--		Nov. 1988 preliminary from--		Oct. 1988 through Dec. 1988	
		Nov. 1988 prelim.	Dec. 1987 final	Oct. 1988 final	Nov. 1987 final	July 1988 through Sep. 1988	Oct. 1987 through Dec. 1987
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.2	+7.4	+0.9	+8.1	+2.2	+7.7
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.3	+6.9	+0.6	+6.9	+1.6	+7.0
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.6	+9.2	+1.6	+10.3	+3.1	+9.4
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.9	+9.0	+1.0	+6.7	+2.2	+7.3
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.3	+9.1	+2.0	+12.4	+4.3	+10.2
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-0.3	+9.8	+2.3	+13.4	+4.9	+11.0
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.5	+13.6	+1.2	+12.0	+2.0	+12.3
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.1	+6.3	+0.5	+6.9	+1.7	+6.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.3	+5.3	+0.6	+6.0	+3.6	+5.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+0.2	+5.7	+0.5	+6.7	+3.9	+6.5
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+0.3	+6.4	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.8	+6.0	+0.3	+7.3	+0.7	+6.7
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.6	+6.3	+0.4	+7.4	+0.9	+6.8
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.2	+4.5	-1.2	+2.2	+0.4	+3.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.6	+5.2	-1.0	+7.5	+1.8	+7.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.6	+8.3	+1.4	+8.8	+3.2	+8.7
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-1.0	+7.2	+1.6	+7.0	+1.8	+6.7

**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>		
		Nov. 1988 prelim.	Oct. 1988 final	Nov. 1987	Nov. 1988 prelim.	Oct. 1988 final	Nov. 1987
	Retail trade, total.....	54,738	50,371	50,998	51,060	51,065	48,101
53	General merchandise group stores.....	17,547	14,274	16,271	14,605	14,568	13,705
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	15,305	12,586	14,233	12,786	12,739	12,021
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	15,745	12,984	14,668	13,176	13,142	12,409
533	Variety stores.....	595	561	579	584	595	568
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,647	1,127	1,459	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	15,678	15,742	14,700	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	15,462	15,535	14,489	15,745	15,740	14,922
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,304	3,764	3,946	3,820	3,837	3,561
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,699	1,472	1,562	1,500	1,484	1,405
566	Shoe stores.....	816	764	743	793	804	742
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,921	2,807	2,730	3,018	2,974	2,826

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-88-11.

<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).



POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
COM-202

Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use, \$300

First Class Mail

### 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 -0.6 percent to +0.9 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 November 1988 and final estimates for October 1988 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for November (BR-88-11). 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 (+1.0%)" appears in the text, this indicates a range from -0.2 percent to +1.8 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					Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change				
		Advance-to- preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Aver. of absolute diff.	
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Median	Median	Median	From	To		
		From	To								
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.6	+0.9	+0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-1.0	+1.8	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods, total..	1.4	1.7	1.6	2.3	1.7	2.2	-1.6	+1.8	+0.3	1.0
52	Building materials, group stores.....	0.6	3.6	1.6	3.9	3.3	3.1	-5.2	+1.5	-0.9	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.7	2.2	1.9	3.1	2.3	3.0	-2.1	+2.7	+0.4	1.2
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.2	2.2	1.5	3.7	2.4	3.2	-2.5	+2.8	+0.3	1.2
57	Furniture, home furn. and equipment stores.....	1.6	2.3	1.9	3.7	3.3	2.7	-3.3	+4.4	+0.5	1.5
	Nondur. stores, total..	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.8	+0.7	0.0	0.4
53	General merch. group, total.	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	-2.6	+1.8	-0.2	0.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	-2.1	+2.0	-0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.4	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.6	-0.9	+0.8	+0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.4	1.6	-0.8	+0.9	+0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations...	0.7	1.2	0.8	3.0	2.2	2.8	-1.4	+2.3	-0.1	1.0
56	Apparel and acc. stores.....	1.2	3.4	1.5	2.4	1.8	1.8	-2.8	+2.2	-0.5	1.3
58	Eating and drinking.....	0.8	1.3	1.1	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.7	+1.8	+0.3	0.9
591	Drug and proprietary.....	0.4	0.7	0.5	2.3	1.7	2.1	-1.6	+1.3	-0.1	0.7

<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 March - July 1988.

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, December 1987 - November 1988. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period May 1987-April 1988.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.