



# ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

U.S. Department of Commerce  
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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**INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES.** The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 1989 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised estimates for January 1988 through February 1991 are scheduled for release the week of March 18, 1991. Estimates shown in this report do not reflect this revision.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Wednesday, February 13, 1991

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for January adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$148.2 billion, a decrease of 0.9 percent (+1.5%) from the previous month and 1.4 percent (+1.6%) below January 1990. Total sales in the November through January period were 1.5 percent (+ 1.7%) above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods decreased 2.8 percent (+3.5%) from the previous month and were 11.3 percent below the previous year. Automobile dealers decreased 4.4 percent from December and were 15.7 percent below January 1990.

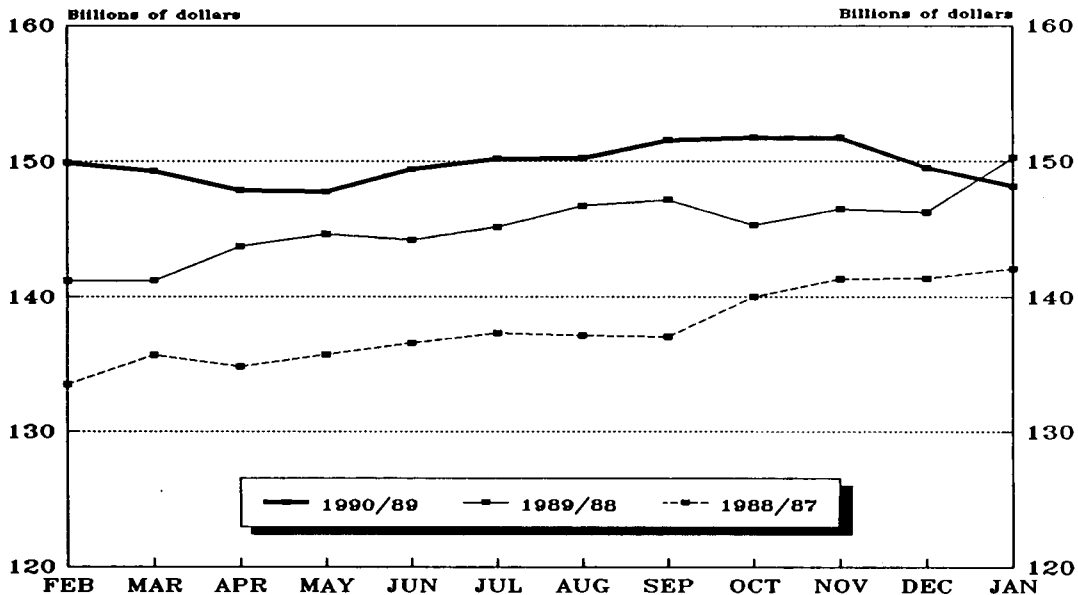
Nondurable goods increased 0.1 percent (+1.5%) from the previous month and were 4.6 percent above last year. General merchandise stores increased 0.8 percent from December. Food stores were up 4.8 percent from the previous year while gasoline service stations were up 15.9 percent in the same period.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for February is scheduled to be released March 13, 1991, at 8:30 a.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

February 1988 - January 1991

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



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This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (N-8-1) (202-377-3870) and through the Census Bureau's online information service - CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2464) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

**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>				
		1991	1990		1989	1991	1990		1989		
		Jan. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Dec. prel.	Nov. final	Jan.	Dec.	Jan. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Dec. prel.	Nov. final	Jan. <sup>2</sup>	Dec. <sup>2</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	131,714	179,220	155,269	132,560	176,486	148,186	149,547	151,749	150,281	146,230
	Total (excl. auto group)...	106,667	153,346	126,858	102,645	150,011	119,706	119,741	120,564	116,515	115,716
	Durable goods, total.....	43,601	55,838	51,642	49,283	57,004	50,240	51,662	53,455	56,643	53,005
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers....	5,639	6,580	7,451	6,065	6,841	7,276	7,342	7,662	7,818	7,698
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores....	(*)	4,537	5,461	4,595	4,709	(*)	5,369	5,499	5,773	5,613
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,149	1,055	845	1,118	(*)	1,035	1,050	1,034	996
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	25,047	25,874	28,411	29,915	26,475	28,480	29,806	31,185	33,766	30,514
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	22,810	23,323	25,725	27,541	23,850	25,891	27,151	28,520	31,015	27,797
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	20,916	22,826	24,492	21,031	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,551	2,686	2,374	2,625	(*)	2,655	2,665	2,751	2,717
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	6,810	9,659	7,961	7,150	9,993	7,276	7,302	7,402	7,708	7,528
571	Furniture and home furnishings....	(*)	4,428	4,338	3,926	4,597	(*)	3,936	3,998	4,254	4,072
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	3,972	2,876	2,573	4,186	(*)	2,634	2,680	2,752	2,754
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	956	798	660	983	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	88,113	123,382	103,627	83,277	119,482	97,946	97,885	98,294	93,638	93,225
53	General merchandise group stores....	12,341	32,160	21,563	12,069	32,336	17,428	17,284	17,485	17,406	17,317
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)...	10,055	26,049	17,466	9,701	25,998	14,262	14,081	14,200	14,059	14,038
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts)...	(*)	26,744	17,936	10,011	26,709	(*)	14,456	14,594	14,509	14,429
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	1,063	666	440	1,181	(*)	552	613	589	610
539	Misc. general mize. stores.....	(*)	5,048	3,431	1,928	5,157	(*)	2,651	2,672	2,758	2,669
54	Food stores.....	30,142	33,360	30,930	28,470	32,352	31,353	31,228	31,159	29,916	29,927
541	Grocery stores.....	28,460	31,138	29,126	26,855	30,241	29,492	29,375	29,331	28,120	28,184
554	Gasoline service stations.....	10,940	11,614	11,975	9,427	9,761	11,651	11,924	12,133	10,050	9,970
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,911	12,712	8,772	5,802	12,844	7,717	7,718	7,790	7,653	7,706
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	1,470	872	657	1,536	(*)	760	770	809	797
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	4,219	3,014	2,131	4,466	(*)	2,595	2,644	2,701	2,730
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	4,225	2,811	1,482	4,105	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	2,021	1,504	1,107	1,925	(*)	1,477	1,475	1,407	1,398
58	Eating and drinking places.....	14,100	15,194	14,739	13,478	14,519	15,410	15,286	15,274	14,795	14,476
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	5,473	7,288	5,776	5,254	6,754	5,619	5,685	5,788	5,400	5,264
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,513	1,783	1,478	2,311	(*)	1,782	1,771	1,672	1,624
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	522	514	291	519	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	66,259	44,444	29,600	66,910	(*)	37,805	38,166	38,413	38,046

\*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-90-12.

<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					
		Jan. 1991 advance from--		Dec. 1990 preliminary from--		Nov. 1990 through Jan. 1991 from--	
		Dec. 1990 prelim.	Jan. 1990 final	Nov. 1990 final	Dec. 1989 final	Aug. 1990 through Oct. 1990	Nov. 1989 through Jan. 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.9	-1.4	-1.5	+2.3	-0.9	+1.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.0	+2.7	-0.7	+3.5	-0.1	+3.6
	Durable goods, total.....	-2.8	-11.3	-3.4	-2.5	-3.4	-5.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.9	-6.9	-4.2	-4.6	-3.6	-4.3
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-4.4	-15.7	-4.4	-2.3	-3.9	-6.2
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	-4.6	-16.5	-4.8	-2.3	-4.2	-6.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.4	-5.6	-1.4	-3.0	-2.7	-4.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.1	+4.6	-0.4	+5.0	+0.5	+5.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.8	+0.1	-1.1	-0.2	-0.9	+0.5
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....	+1.3	+1.4	-0.8	+0.3	-0.1	+1.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	-0.9	+0.2	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.4	+4.8	+0.2	+4.3	+0.9	+4.6
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.4	+4.9	+0.2	+4.2	+0.9	+4.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-2.3	+15.9	-1.7	+19.6	+3.4	+19.9
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.0	+0.8	-0.9	+0.2	-2.3	+0.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.8	+4.2	+0.1	+5.6	+0.6	+4.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-1.2	+4.1	-1.8	+8.0	-0.2	+7.1

**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>		
		Dec. 1990 prelim.	Nov. 1990 final	Dec. 1989	Dec. 1990 prelim.	Nov. 1990 final	Dec. <sup>F</sup> 1989
	Retail trade, total.....	82,334	63,579	80,162	57,897	58,325	55,644
53	General merchandise group stores.....	29,875	19,911	30,047	15,864	16,060	15,893
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	25,240	16,925	25,121	13,636	13,749	13,557
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....	25,908	17,380	25,797	14,027	14,142	13,959
533	Variety stores.....	836	506	975	423	457	488
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	3,799	2,480	3,951	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	19,106	17,611	18,574	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	18,695	17,387	18,188	17,310	17,370	16,625
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,497	5,118	7,319	4,365	4,406	4,205
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	2,617	1,773	2,579	1,522	1,536	1,485
566	Shoe stores.....	1,245	953	1,239	893	920	879
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	4,853	3,566	4,368	3,486	3,606	3,142

NA Not Available.

<sup>F</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-90-12.

<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 -1.1 percent to +1.2 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 December 1990 and final estimates for November 1990 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for December (RR-90-12). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. 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	Ave. of absolute diff.	
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range <sup>2</sup>			
		From	To					From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	1.0	-1.1	+1.2	+0.2	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-0.3	+0.5	+0.1	0.2
	Durable goods, total.....	1.4	2.0	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.2	-0.9	+1.7	-0.1	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores....	1.1	3.0	1.7	3.8	3.2	3.1	-1.9	+3.1	0.0	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	2.4	2.0	3.2	2.6	3.0	-2.1	+2.9	-0.1	0.9
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.3	2.0	1.6	4.0	2.8	3.3	-2.5	+3.3	-0.1	1.0
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.8	2.1	4.2	3.9	3.1	-1.9	+5.0	+0.5	1.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.2	+0.7	+0.1	0.2
53	General march. group, total.....	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	-0.9	+1.3	0.0	0.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)..	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.5	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.6	-0.4	+1.5	+0.2	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.6	-0.5	+1.3	+0.2	0.4
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.9	2.1	2.7	-1.8	+1.9	0.0	0.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.6	1.7	2.5	2.0	1.9	-3.9	+3.8	+0.2	1.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.4	1.9	0.8	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary.....	0.6	1.8	0.7	2.5	1.9	2.1	-1.7	+2.1	+0.3	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 November 1988 - October 1989.

<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, January 1990 - December 1990. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period October 1988 - September 1989.

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 of the measures of sampling variability.

