

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales



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

OCTOBER 1991

CB-91-322

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Thursday, November 14, 1991

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for October adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$152.9 billion, a decrease of 0.1 percent ( $\pm 1.5\%$ ) from the previous month but 0.6 percent ( $\pm 1.5\%$ ) above October 1990. Total sales in the August through October period were 0.7 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods were unchanged from the previous month.

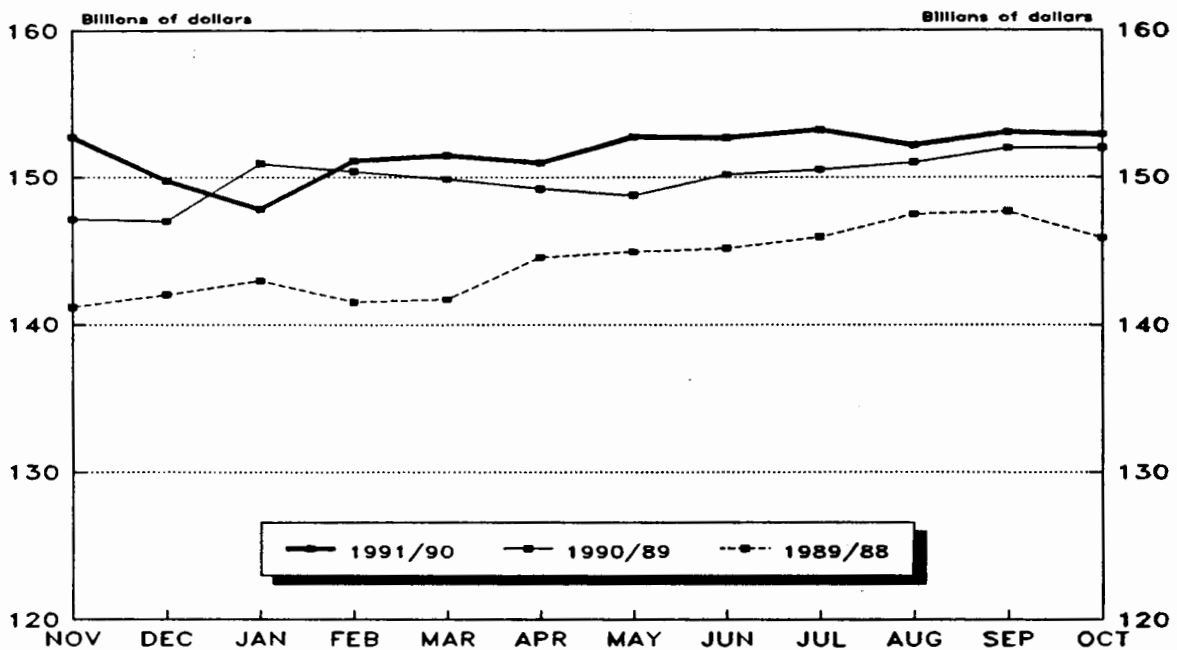
Nondurable goods decreased 0.2 percent ( $\pm 1.2\%$ ) from the previous month. General merchandise stores declined 0.7 percent from September but were 3.2 percent above a year ago. Gasoline service stations were down 13.3 percent from October 1990 while drug store sales were up 6.7 percent in the same period.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for November is scheduled to be released December 12, 1991 at 8:30 a.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

November 1988 - October 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. For information call (202) 377-1986. The data are also available through the Census Bureau's online information service - CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2564) 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		1991			1990	
		Oct. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Sept. prel.	Aug. final	Oct.	Sept.	Oct. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Sept. prel.	Aug. final	Oct. <sup>1</sup>	Sept. <sup>1</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	152,470	147,259	159,910	151,469	146,335	152,688	153,025	152,160	151,984	151,970
	Total (excl. auto group)...	121,229	115,372	126,728	119,866	115,330	121,149	121,195	121,469	120,255	120,306
	Durable goods, total.....	53,975	53,642	56,724	54,092	52,561	54,549	54,526	53,390	54,296	54,276
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	8,417	8,055	8,556	8,082	7,707	7,918	7,848	7,727	7,555	7,625
521.3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	6,064	6,503	5,905	5,640	(*)	5,808	5,750	5,408	5,476
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,039	1,137	1,144	1,096	(*)	1,074	1,093	1,111	1,114
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	31,241	31,887	33,182	31,603	31,005	31,739	31,830	30,691	31,729	31,664
551, 2.5, 6, 7, 9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	28,591	29,294	30,368	28,882	28,439	29,234	29,265	28,119	29,174	29,138
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	25,712	26,738	25,681	25,017	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,593	2,814	2,721	2,566	(*)	2,565	2,572	2,555	2,526
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,523	7,124	7,676	7,710	7,377	7,515	7,541	7,581	7,677	7,740
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	3,919	4,219	4,366	4,131	(*)	4,082	4,088	4,243	4,290
5722, 32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,485	2,715	2,668	2,580	(*)	2,710	2,737	2,742	2,759
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	730	840	868	800	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	98,495	93,617	103,186	97,377	93,774	98,339	98,499	98,770	97,688	97,694
53	General merchandise group stores.....	17,859	16,178	18,595	17,027	15,970	18,181	18,309	18,393	17,613	17,676
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	14,588	13,202	15,231	13,778	12,898	14,795	14,867	14,932	14,204	14,189
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.) <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	13,583	15,682	14,199	13,302	(*)	15,296	15,375	14,578	14,634
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	518	596	593	530	(*)	600	599	601	611
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	2,458	2,768	2,656	2,542	(*)	2,842	2,862	2,808	2,876
54	Food stores.....	30,850	29,913	32,518	29,970	30,010	31,137	31,064	30,825	30,500	30,675
541	Grocery stores.....	28,911	27,960	30,418	28,055	28,124	29,115	29,004	28,778	28,511	28,669
554	Gasoline service stations.....	10,896	10,756	11,572	12,562	11,781	10,507	10,618	10,735	12,125	11,711
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,964	7,578	8,918	7,728	7,599	8,004	8,066	8,155	7,816	7,905
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	691	709	779	718	(*)	777	768	783	790
562, 3, 8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,626	2,840	2,716	2,625	(*)	2,776	2,787	2,694	2,723
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,303	2,946	2,284	2,204	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,435	1,809	1,405	1,500	(*)	1,478	1,518	1,488	1,506
58	Eating and drinking places.....	16,093	15,624	17,450	15,289	15,176	15,918	15,766	15,907	15,168	15,252
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,241	5,866	6,231	5,841	5,454	6,323	6,260	6,281	5,924	5,858
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,679	1,922	1,694	1,666	(*)	1,802	1,822	1,768	1,761
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	327	354	422	368	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53, 56, 57	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	35,979	40,704	37,614	35,986	(*)	39,665	39,838	38,814	39,009

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

NA Not available.

<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, BR-91-09.

<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					
		Oct. 1991 advance from--		Sept. 1991 preliminary from--		Aug. 1991 through Oct. 1991 from--	
		Sept. 1991 prelim.	Oct. 1990 final	Aug. 1991 final	Sept. 1990 final	May 1991 through July 1991	Aug. 1990 through Oct. 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.1	+0.6	+0.6	+0.7	-0.1	+0.7
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.0	+0.7	-0.2	+0.7	-0.2	+1.0
	Durable goods, total.....	0.0	+0.5	+2.1	+0.5	0.0	0.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+0.9	+4.8	+1.6	+2.9	+0.1	+2.5
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.3	0.0	+3.7	+0.5	+0.2	-0.3
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	-0.1	+0.2	+4.1	+0.4	+0.6	-0.4
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.3	-2.1	-0.5	-2.6	-0.9	-1.9
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.2	+0.7	-0.3	+0.8	-0.2	+1.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.7	+3.2	-0.5	+3.6	+0.2	+3.1
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.5	+4.2	-0.4	+4.8	+0.5	+4.1
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....	(NA)	(NA)	-0.5	+4.5	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.2	+2.1	+0.8	+1.3	-0.4	+1.6
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.4	+2.1	+0.8	+1.2	-0.3	+1.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.0	-13.3	-1.1	-9.3	-0.5	-9.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.8	+2.4	-1.1	+2.0	-0.8	+2.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+1.0	+4.9	-0.9	+3.4	+0.1	+4.3
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.0	+6.7	-0.3	+6.9	+0.6	+7.3

**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Large (Group II) Companies, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Sept. 1991 prelim.	Aug. 1991 final	Sept. 1990	Sept. 1991 prelim.	Aug. 1991 final	Sept. <sup>2</sup> 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	54,936	61,046	54,606	59,138	59,292	57,895
53	General merchandise group stores.....	14,778	17,055	14,555	16,820	16,893	16,203
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	12,818	14,811	12,494	14,451	14,521	13,775
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....	13,187	15,248	12,882	14,817	14,949	14,141
533	Variety stores.....	373	444	404	438	445	474
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,587	1,800	1,657	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	16,611	18,121	16,608	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	16,403	17,898	16,407	17,339	17,177	16,967
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,338	5,202	4,288	4,645	4,641	4,461
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,528	1,637	1,499	1,652	1,594	1,571
566	Shoe stores.....	901	1,166	963	917	953	955
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,605	3,832	3,293	3,889	3,898	3,587

NA Not available.

<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, BR-91-09.

<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 large (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).

Official 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 September 1991 and final estimates for August 1991 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for September (BR-91-09). 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	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Median	Median	Median	From	To		
		From	To								
	Retail trade, total.....	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	-1.1	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.7	+1.3	+0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total.....	1.8	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.3	-2.5	+2.2	+0.2	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores.....	1.2	2.0	1.7	3.3	2.5	2.5	-3.4	+4.0	+0.4	2.0
55 ex. 554 551,2,5, 6,7,9	Automotive dealers.....	2.2	4.1	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	-3.0	+2.6	+0.5	1.0
	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.6	4.1	2.9	4.8	3.9	3.5	-3.2	+2.6	+0.5	1.1
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.8	4.3	2.4	4.5	4.2	3.1	-2.5	+2.3	-0.2	1.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.6	+0.9	+0.2	0.4
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	-1.4	+1.7	+0.1	0.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.9	1.5	1.0	1.7	1.4	1.5	-0.5	+0.6	0.0	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.9	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.5	-0.5	+0.7	0.0	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	1.1	4.7	1.3	3.3	2.6	2.8	-1.4	+1.9	+0.3	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	2.9	2.0	3.0	2.6	2.0	-2.7	+4.8	+0.5	1.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	3.1	2.7	2.7	-0.9	+2.3	+0.3	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.5	3.2	0.8	2.4	1.7	2.0	-3.7	+1.1	+0.1	1.0

<sup>1</sup>The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1990 - March 1991.

<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, October 1990 - September 1991. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period April 1990 - March 1991.

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.

