

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales



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

DECEMBER 1991

CB-92-05

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Tuesday, January 14, 1992

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 \$151.2 billion, a decrease of 0.4 percent ( $\pm 1.2\%$ ) from the previous month but up 0.7 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) from December 1990. Total sales for the 12 months of 1991 were \$1,820.1 billion, up 0.7 percent from the 1990 total.

Durable goods decreased 0.5 percent ( $\pm 2.3\%$ ) from the previous month.

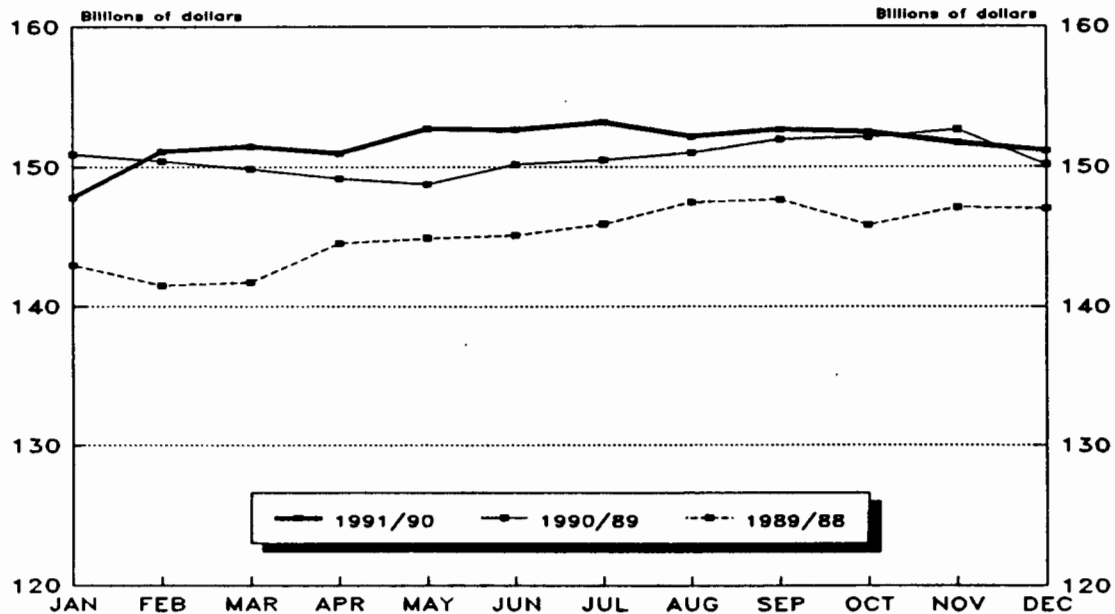
Nondurable goods decreased 0.3 percent ( $\pm 1.3\%$ ) from the previous month. General merchandise stores decreased 2.2 percent from the previous month but were 1.6 percent above the previous year. Drug stores sales were up 6.8 percent from December 1990 while gasoline service stations were down 12.1 percent in the same period.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for January is scheduled to be released February 13, 1992 at 8:30 a.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1989 - December 1991

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



Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Piencykoski, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.  
Telephone: (301) 763-5294 or (301) 763-7561.

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. (1-800-334-2464) 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>					
		12 month total		1991			1990		1991			1990	
		1991	Percent change from 1990	Dec. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Nov. prel.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Nov. prel.	Oct. final	Dec. <sup>1</sup>	Nov. <sup>1</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	1,819,225	+0.7	179,918	154,899	152,113	179,653	156,086	151,153	151,731	152,483	150,149	152,669
	Total (ex. auto group).	1,445,626	+1.4	152,783	126,339	120,413	153,146	127,133	119,872	120,090	120,354	119,413	120,754
	Durable goods, total.....	643,967	-1.6	67,579	51,535	54,213	66,505	52,271	53,660	53,919	54,657	52,627	54,343
52	Bld. mat., hrdware, garden supply, and mobile home dirs.	92,278	-0.3	6,747	7,185	8,283	6,558	7,443	7,581	7,539	7,711	7,316	7,692
521,3	Bld. mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,348	6,338	4,549	5,410	(*)	5,577	5,783	5,339	5,509
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,108	1,098	1,184	1,112	(*)	1,093	1,080	1,083	1,098
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers.....	373,599	-2.2	27,135	28,560	31,700	26,507	28,953	31,281	31,641	32,129	30,736	31,915
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	342,543	-2.4	24,703	26,086	28,994	24,064	26,388	28,758	29,179	29,586	28,178	29,353
551	Motor vehicle (franch.).....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,650	25,170	21,501	23,343	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply str..	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,474	2,706	2,443	2,565	(*)	2,462	2,543	2,558	2,562
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	89,827	-3.4	9,604	7,970	7,427	9,784	8,118	7,365	7,369	7,430	7,391	7,567
571	Furniture and home furn.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,334	4,135	4,620	4,528	(*)	3,976	4,034	4,070	4,177
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,831	2,581	3,919	2,859	(*)	2,633	2,658	2,616	2,690
5722	Household appliance str..	(*)	(*)	(*)	853	797	1,093	914	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total..	1,175,258	+2.0	122,339	103,364	97,900	123,148	103,815	97,493	97,812	97,826	97,522	98,326
53	General mdse. group stores....	217,228	+2.5	32,630	22,344	17,795	32,454	21,783	17,811	18,219	18,119	17,533	17,654
531	Dept stores (ex lsd. depts)...	177,106	+3.7	26,667	18,353	14,578	26,130	17,533	14,636	14,970	14,785	14,224	14,243
531	Dept stores (in lsd. depts)...	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,841	15,002	26,871	18,034	(*)	15,443	15,246	14,596	14,674
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	663	565	1,081	684	(*)	591	577	561	610
539	Misc. general mdse. stores...	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,328	2,652	5,243	3,566	(*)	2,658	2,757	2,748	2,801
54	Food stores.....	369,995	+2.1	32,210	30,871	30,613	32,809	30,472	30,812	30,727	30,882	30,673	30,738
541	Grocery stores.....	345,854	+2.1	29,873	28,919	28,655	30,448	28,526	28,835	28,747	28,857	28,697	28,756
554	Gasoline service stations.....	128,242	-2.6	10,396	10,490	10,843	11,709	12,271	10,303	10,553	10,466	11,721	12,259
56	Apparel and accessory stores..	95,482	+0.8	12,640	8,908	7,814	12,696	8,807	7,817	7,870	7,873	7,753	7,827
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	864	746	1,490	882	(*)	759	754	772	779
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,099	2,759	4,239	3,042	(*)	2,730	2,732	2,630	2,687
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,977	2,457	4,242	2,829	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,446	1,367	2,051	1,546	(*)	1,396	1,427	1,506	1,511
58	Eating and drinking places.....	189,124	+3.9	15,744	15,496	15,962	15,075	14,722	16,231	15,992	15,851	15,320	15,319
591	Drug and proprietary stores....	74,753	+9.0	8,042	6,205	6,239	7,500	5,943	6,312	6,293	6,328	5,910	5,967
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,836	1,715	2,501	1,785	(*)	1,795	1,788	1,794	1,778
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (dept. store merchandise).....	(*)	(*)	(*)	513	398	547	538	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57 594	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	45,461	38,247	66,621	44,880	(*)	39,104	39,167	38,179	38,578

\*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-91-11.

<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. 1991 advance from--		Nov. 1991 preliminary from--		Oct. 1991 through Dec. 1991 from--	
		Nov. 1991 prelim.	Dec. 1990 final	Oct. 1991 final	Nov. 1990 final	July 1991 through Sept. 1991	Oct. 1990 through Dec. 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.4	+0.7	-0.5	-0.6	-0.6	+0.1
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-0.2	+0.4	-0.2	-0.5	-1.1	-0.1
	Durable goods, total.....	-0.5	+2.0	-1.4	-0.8	+0.1	+0.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+0.6	+3.6	-2.2	-2.0	-2.4	+1.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.1	+1.8	-1.5	-0.9	+1.3	+0.8
551, 2.5, 6, 7, 9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-1.4	+2.1	-1.4	-0.6	+1.7	+1.0
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.1	-0.4	-0.8	-2.6	-2.8	-2.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.3	0.0	0.0	-0.5	-0.9	-0.2
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-2.2	+1.6	+0.6	+3.2	-1.9	+2.5
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-2.2	+2.9	+1.3	+5.1	-1.0	+4.0
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....	(NA)	(NA)	+1.3	+5.2	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.3	+0.5	-0.5	0.0	-0.4	+0.6
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.3	+0.5	-0.4	0.0	-0.2	+0.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-2.4	-12.1	+0.8	-13.9	-1.6	-13.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.7	+0.8	0.0	+0.5	-3.1	+0.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+1.5	+5.9	+0.9	+4.4	+1.5	+4.9
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.3	+6.8	-0.6	+5.5	+0.5	+6.3

**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>		
		Nov. 1991 prelim.	Oct. 1991 final	Nov. 1990	Nov. 1991 prelim.	Oct. 1991 final	Nov. <sup>1</sup> 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	64,611	58,428	63,525	59,157	58,994	58,169
53	General merchandise group stores.....	20,704	16,319	20,087	16,855	16,702	16,213
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	17,832	14,179	16,989	14,616	14,410	13,812
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....	18,305	14,588	17,474	15,078	14,691	14,230
533	Variety stores.....	499	417	520	445	431	463
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	2,373	1,723	2,578	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	17,730	17,337	17,264	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	17,490	17,115	17,028	17,198	17,218	17,045
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,397	4,534	5,163	4,639	4,628	4,462
562, 3, 8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,891	1,601	1,804	1,640	1,617	1,569
566	Shoe stores.....	937	868	979	904	911	946
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,863	3,814	3,670	3,930	3,948	3,692

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-91-11.

<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 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

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

## 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 November 1991 and final estimates for October 1991 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for November (BR-91-11). 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.

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	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.
		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, December 1990 - November 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.

