

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 1992 Census of Retail Trade and the 1993 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised estimates for January 1987 through February 1995 are scheduled for release the week of March 20, 1995. Estimates shown in this report do not reflect this revision.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Tuesday, March 14, 1995

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for February adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$192.8 billion, a decrease of 0.5 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) from the previous month but an increase of 6.0 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) from February 1994. Total sales in the December through February period were 7.1 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) above the same period a year ago. The December to January 1995 percent change was revised from +0.2 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) as published in the January advance, to +0.6 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$).

Durable goods decreased 0.6 percent ($\pm 2.5\%$) from January while nondurable goods decreased 0.5 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) in the same period.

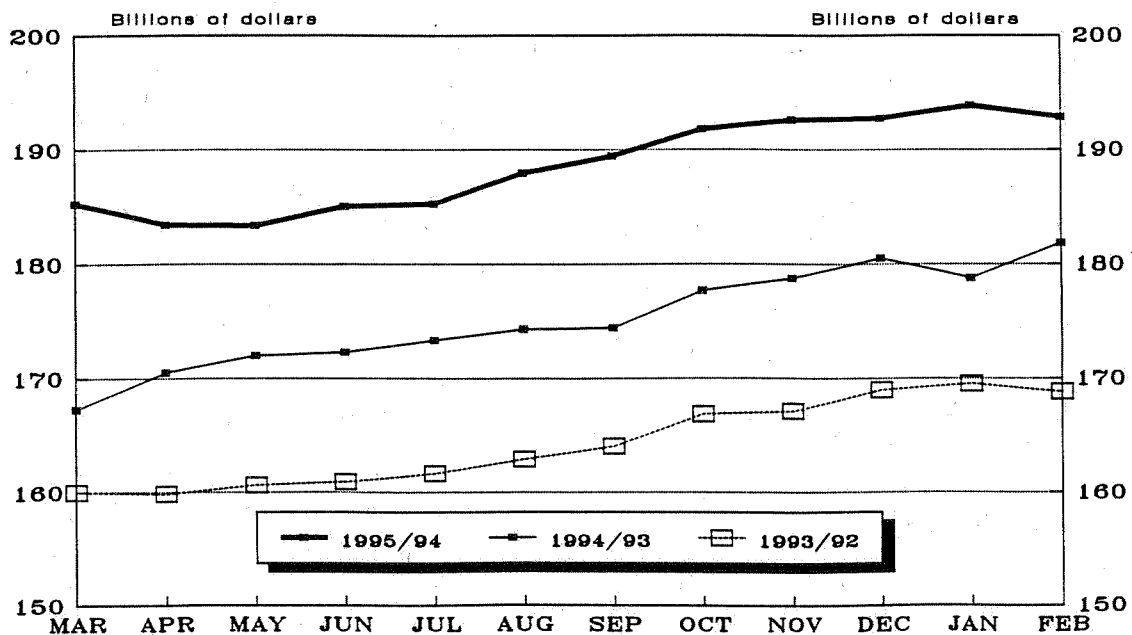
The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for March is scheduled to be released April 13, 1995 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

March 1992 - February 1995

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



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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) 482-1986. 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 (301-457-1214) 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 ¹				
		1995		1994			1995		1994		
		Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.
	Retail trade, total.....	165,921	167,892	233,024	156,643	155,452	192,849	193,885	192,748	181,859	178,802
	Total (excl. auto group)...	125,466	128,760	191,697	118,866	120,286	147,317	147,913	146,683	139,323	137,083
	Durable goods, total.....	66,144	65,435	84,857	60,819	58,349	77,242	77,719	77,728	70,859	70,009
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	8,180	8,442	10,208	7,414	7,547	10,950	11,000	11,057	9,828	10,110
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	6,570	7,386	5,676	5,659	(*)	8,359	8,384	7,324	7,368
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	851	1,220	865	954	(*)	1,043	1,109	1,138	1,154
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	40,455	39,132	41,327	37,777	35,166	45,532	45,972	46,065	42,536	41,719
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	37,585	36,139	38,069	34,989	32,409	42,136	42,417	42,678	39,225	38,445
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	32,514	34,254	31,684	29,587	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,993	3,258	2,788	2,757	(*)	3,555	3,387	3,311	3,274
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	9,939	10,506	16,291	8,770	8,885	11,437	11,576	11,638	10,060	9,752
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	4,821	6,516	4,296	4,187	(*)	5,447	5,503	4,899	4,710
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,662	7,612	3,620	3,845	(*)	4,986	4,978	4,200	4,099
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	850	1,181	698	746	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	99,777	102,457	148,167	95,824	97,103	115,607	116,166	115,020	111,000	108,793
53	General merchandise group stores.....	18,633	18,448	42,424	17,714	17,114	24,487	24,767	24,207	23,232	22,749
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	14,229	13,841	33,411	13,297	12,761	18,947	19,039	18,645	17,753	17,386
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	14,165	34,155	13,667	13,112	(*)	19,511	19,081	18,174	17,839
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	383	917	414	369	(*)	539	508	531	510
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	4,224	8,096	4,003	3,984	(*)	5,189	5,054	4,948	4,853
54	Food stores.....	31,489	33,207	37,837	30,131	31,980	34,886	35,111	34,374	33,412	33,317
541	Grocery stores.....	29,726	31,423	35,107	28,473	30,335	32,883	33,077	32,179	31,532	31,435
554	Gasoline service stations.....	10,510	10,994	11,790	9,880	10,184	11,889	11,873	11,766	11,202	10,986
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,481	6,354	15,209	6,557	6,207	8,866	8,973	9,023	8,950	8,581
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	686	1,597	597	640	(*)	841	835	813	764
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores.....	(*)	2,147	5,157	2,415	2,199	(*)	3,007	3,118	3,246	2,984
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,984	5,450	1,944	1,828	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,026	2,001	1,113	1,075	(*)	1,379	1,456	1,461	1,431
58	Eating and drinking places.....	17,084	17,397	19,725	16,334	15,872	19,088	19,118	19,357	18,230	17,328
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,560	6,840	8,807	6,293	6,598	7,092	7,118	6,913	6,796	6,880
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,523	2,473	1,445	1,491	(*)	1,783	1,765	1,720	1,716
5961	Total mail-order.....	(*)	2,775	4,275	2,179	2,456	(*)	2,870	2,934	2,588	2,585
53,56,57,594	GAF ⁴	(*)	40,674	88,279	38,096	37,214	(*)	52,178	51,567	48,657	47,470

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

NA Not available.

¹Revised.

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. 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-95-01.

²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

⁴GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise; apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

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, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Feb. 1995 advance from—		Jan. 1995 preliminary from—		Dec. 1994 through Feb. 1995 from—	
		Jan. 1995 prelim.	Feb. 1994 final	Dec. 1994 final	Jan. 1994 final	Sept. 1994 through Nov. 1994	Dec. 1993 through Feb. 1994
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.5	+6.0	+0.6	+8.4	+1.0	+7.1
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-0.4	+5.7	+0.8	+7.9	+1.0	+6.4
	Durable goods, total.....	-0.6	+9.0	0.0	+11.0	+0.7	+9.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.5	+11.4	-0.5	+8.8	-2.2	+8.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.0	+7.0	-0.2	+10.2	+1.1	+9.3
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-0.7	+7.4	-0.6	+10.3	+1.0	+9.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.2	+13.7	-0.5	+18.7	+1.9	+15.8
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.5	+4.2	+1.0	+6.8	+1.2	+5.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-1.1	+5.4	+2.3	+8.9	+1.6	+6.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.5	+6.7	+2.1	+9.5	+1.9	+8.0
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+2.3	+9.4	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.6	+4.4	+2.1	+5.4	+1.7	+4.3
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.6	+4.3	+2.8	+5.2	+1.7	+4.1
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.1	+6.1	+0.9	+8.1	+1.9	+7.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.2	-0.9	-0.6	+4.6	-1.2	+1.8
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.2	+4.7	-1.2	+10.3	+0.4	+7.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.4	+4.4	+3.0	+3.5	+0.2	+2.7

NA Not available.

¹Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

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 -1.0 percent to +1.3 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 January 1995 and final estimates for December 1994 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for January (BR-95-01). 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 3. 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 ²		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range ¹		Median	Median	Median	Median	From	To		
		From	To								
	Retail trade, total.....	0.5	1.3	0.7	1.0	0.8	1.0	-1.0	+1.3	+0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.5	0.9	0.7	1.1	0.8	1.0	-1.6	+0.7	-0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total.....	1.2	3.4	1.4	2.2	1.7	2.2	-0.9	+1.1	+0.2	0.5
52	Building materials, group stores.....	0.9	2.6	1.6	4.1	2.9	3.4	-4.2	+2.5	-0.4	1.4
55 ex. 554 551,2,5, 6,7,9	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	3.2	2.1	3.4	2.6	3.1	-1.3	+2.2	+0.6	1.1
	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.2	3.0	1.5	4.0	2.8	3.2	-1.5	+2.3	+0.5	1.1
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.6	2.1	4.6	3.4	4.1	-3.4	+2.3	-0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.4	0.8	0.6	1.1	0.8	1.1	-1.1	+0.5	0.0	0.3
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	-0.3	+0.7	+0.1	0.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	-0.4	+0.6	-0.1	0.2
54	Food stores.....	0.6	1.0	0.7	1.7	0.9	1.7	-0.5	+0.8	+0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.1	0.8	0.3	1.8	0.9	1.7	-0.6	+0.5	0.0	0.2
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.5	1.9	0.9	2.7	1.8	3.0	-1.4	+1.2	-0.4	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.8	3.4	1.4	3.3	2.8	2.6	-2.4	+1.3	-0.4	1.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	2.0	1.2	4.6	4.0	3.9	-3.6	+2.4	0.0	1.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.4	1.8	1.0	2.5	1.5	2.5	-1.0	+1.3	+0.2	0.6

¹The 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 April 1993 - March 1994.

²The 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, February 1994 - January 1995. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the period April 1993 - February 1994.

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.

