

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales



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The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for August adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$197.3 billion, an increase of 0.6 percent ( $\pm 1.3\%$ ) from the previous month and up 5.0 percent ( $\pm 1.9\%$ ) from August 1994. Total sales in the June through August period were 5.7 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) above the same period a year ago. The June to July 1995 percent change was revised from -0.1 percent ( $\pm 1.3\%$ ) to -0.4 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ).

Durable goods increased 1.7 percent ( $\pm 2.4\%$ ) from July and were 7.4 percent above August 1994. Automotive dealers sales were up 10.3 percent from last year.

Nondurable goods decreased 0.1 percent ( $\pm 1.2\%$ ) from last month but were 3.4 percent above last year. General merchandise sales were up 5.4 percent from last year.

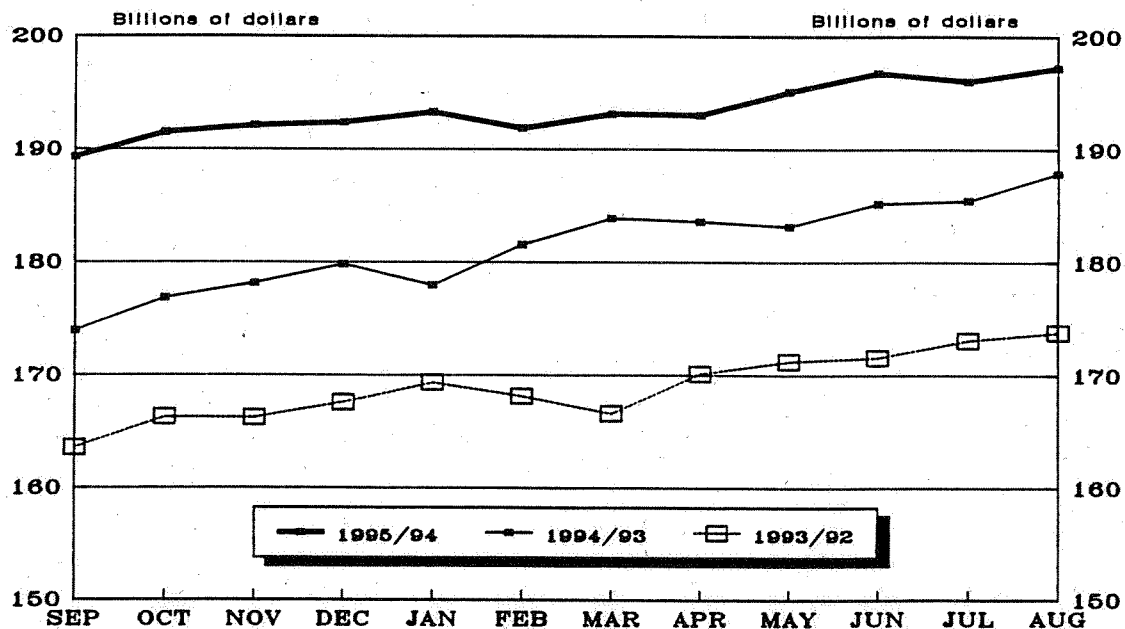
*The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.*

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

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

September 1992 - August 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 <sup>1</sup>				
		1995			1994		1995			1994	
		Aug. <sup>2</sup> adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug.	July	Aug. <sup>2</sup> adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug. <sup>1</sup>	July <sup>1</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	204,436	195,464	203,432	193,782	185,811	197,251	196,023	196,774	187,864	185,435
	Total (excl. auto group)...	152,630	146,516	149,276	146,871	141,321	148,731	148,659	148,695	143,885	142,621
	Durable goods, total.....	84,148	79,414	86,048	78,171	73,712	79,510	78,196	78,835	74,034	72,291
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	11,173	10,922	11,867	11,466	10,868	10,185	10,270	10,243	10,436	10,191
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	8,494	8,979	8,853	8,303	(*)	7,887	7,842	7,897	7,717
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,203	1,325	1,222	1,250	(*)	1,139	1,172	1,193	1,181
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	51,806	48,948	54,156	46,911	44,490	48,520	47,364	48,079	43,979	42,814
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	48,659	45,948	51,089	43,939	41,623	45,646	44,523	45,252	41,257	40,099
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	39,433	43,925	38,426	36,274	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,000	3,067	2,972	2,867	(*)	2,841	2,827	2,722	2,715
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	10,864	10,288	10,359	10,121	9,547	10,810	10,620	10,660	10,163	9,826
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	5,208	5,194	5,313	4,999	(*)	5,234	5,210	5,138	5,024
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,251	4,341	3,987	3,746	(*)	4,456	4,536	4,106	3,902
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	902	864	816	837	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	120,288	116,050	117,384	115,611	112,099	117,741	117,827	117,939	113,830	113,144
53	General merchandise group stores.....	24,729	23,015	23,871	23,224	21,542	25,007	25,107	25,013	23,715	23,505
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	19,242	17,784	18,387	18,007	16,526	19,436	19,521	19,396	18,337	18,160
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	18,036	18,664	18,324	16,812	(*)	19,832	19,685	18,624	18,472
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	555	599	615	581	(*)	612	622	639	637
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	4,676	4,885	4,602	4,435	(*)	4,974	4,995	4,739	4,708
54	Food stores.....	35,046	35,157	34,572	33,768	34,341	34,098	34,085	33,872	33,260	32,971
541	Grocery stores.....	33,233	33,333	32,728	31,973	32,555	32,296	32,268	32,055	31,469	31,213
554	Gasoline service stations.....	13,184	13,224	13,368	13,077	12,613	12,321	12,475	12,744	12,165	11,888
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	9,518	8,284	8,737	9,652	8,399	8,929	9,068	9,202	9,115	9,123
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	819	938	924	875	(*)	950	952	1,031	1,020
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,516	2,719	2,897	2,569	(*)	2,792	2,865	2,891	2,842
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,900	2,955	3,258	2,886	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,484	1,577	1,825	1,492	(*)	1,572	1,577	1,528	1,569
58	Eating and drinking places.....	21,422	21,147	20,879	20,310	20,504	20,021	20,121	19,980	19,142	19,325
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,950	6,676	6,927	6,788	6,538	7,049	6,991	7,018	6,877	6,846
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,911	1,870	1,830	1,952	(*)	1,815	1,833	1,810	1,829
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	3,380	3,482	3,469	3,012	(*)	4,241	4,145	3,816	3,765
53,56,57 594	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	47,854	49,415	49,718	45,420	(*)	51,909	51,953	49,816	49,142

\*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, 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-95-07.

<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 (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					
		Aug. 1995 advance from—		July 1995 preliminary from—		June 1995 through Aug. 1995 from—	
		July 1995 prelim.	Aug. 1994 final	June 1995 final	July 1994 final	Mar. 1995 through May 1995	June 1994 through Aug. 1994
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.6	+5.0	-0.4	+5.7	+1.5	+5.7
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	0.0	+3.4	0.0	+4.2	+0.9	+4.1
	Durable goods, total.....	+1.7	+7.4	-0.8	+8.2	+2.4	+8.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.8	-2.4	+0.3	+0.8	-0.9	-0.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+2.4	+10.3	-1.5	+10.6	+3.3	+10.9
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+2.5	+10.6	-1.6	+11.0	+3.5	+11.3
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1.8	+6.4	-0.4	+8.1	+1.9	+7.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.1	+3.4	-0.1	+4.1	+0.9	+4.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.4	+5.4	+0.4	+6.8	+2.2	+6.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.4	+6.0	+0.6	+7.5	+2.4	+6.8
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>1</sup> .....	(NA)	(NA)	+0.7	+7.4	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.0	+2.5	+0.6	+3.4	+0.5	+2.8
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.1	+2.6	+0.7	+3.4	+0.6	+2.8
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.2	+1.3	-2.1	+4.9	+0.2	+4.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.5	-2.0	-1.5	-0.6	-0.5	-0.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.5	+4.6	+0.7	+4.1	+0.4	+4.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.8	+2.5	-0.4	+2.1	+0.3	+2.8

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Includes 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 +0.7 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 3 below.

Preliminary estimates for July 1995 and final estimates for June 1995 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for July (BR-95-07). 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 <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range <sup>1</sup>		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	+0.7	+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

<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 April 1993 - March 1994.

<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, August 1994 - July 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.

