

# 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 annual revision of the monthly retail sales estimates will be published in the press release the week of March 25. The estimates will be revised for the months of January 1993 through February 1996.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Tuesday, February 27, 1996

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 \$199.1 billion, a decrease of 0.3 percent ( $\pm 1.3\%$ ) from the previous month but up 3.0 percent ( $\pm 1.9\%$ ) from January 1995. Total sales for the November through January period were 3.6 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) above the same period a year ago. The November to December 1995 percent change was revised from +0.3 ( $\pm 1.3\%$ ) to +0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.6\%$ ).

Durable goods decreased 1.0 percent ( $\pm 2.6\%$ ) from December but were 4.7 percent above January 1995.

Nondurable goods increased 0.2 percent ( $\pm 1.2\%$ ) from December and were 2.0 percent above January 1995.

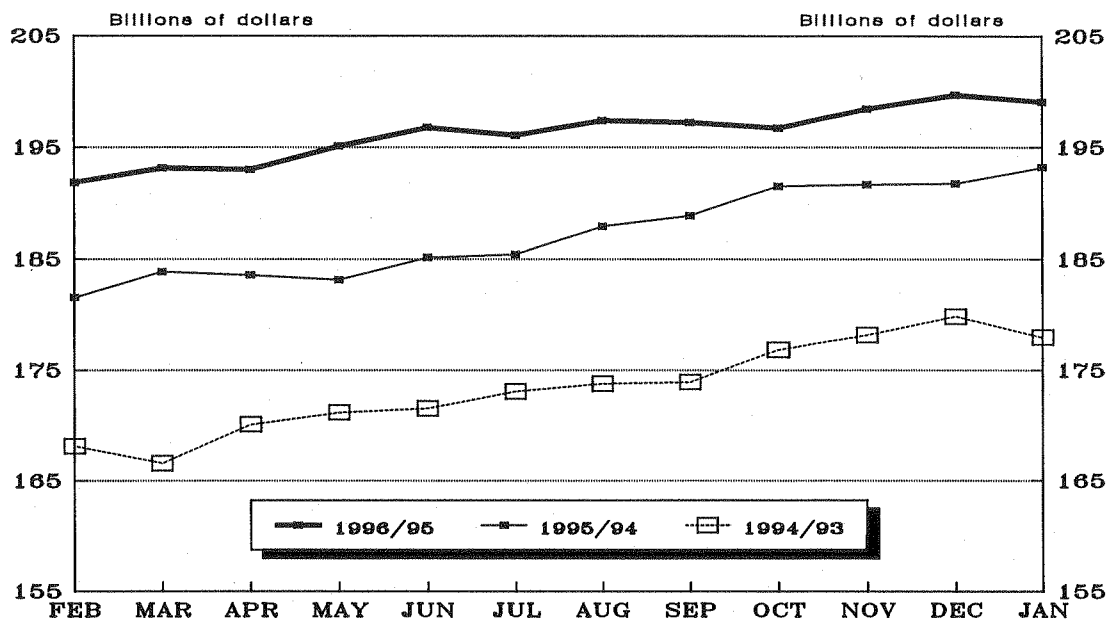
*The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.*

The release date for the February 1996 Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report will be announced at a later date.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

February 1993 - January 1996

(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 on the internet - <http://www.census.gov/ftp/pub/svsd/www/fullpub.html>, or 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 (301-457-1242) 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>				
		1996		1995		1994	1996		1995		1994
		Jan. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Dec. prel.	Nov. final	Jan.	Dec.	Jan. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Dec. prel.	Nov. final	Jan. <sup>f</sup>	Dec. <sup>f</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	175,278	238,079	202,758	167,495	233,326	199,062	199,694	198,432	193,203	191,757
	Total (excl. auto group)...	132,093	195,083	157,878	128,005	191,774	150,248	150,298	149,809	147,168	145,557
	Durable goods, total.....	69,581	86,869	78,101	64,892	84,407	80,285	81,108	80,524	76,704	76,608
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	8,140	9,543	10,183	8,011	9,678	10,503	10,549	10,583	10,401	10,390
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	7,147	7,854	6,390	7,211	(*)	8,196	8,072	8,089	8,039
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,244	1,188	876	1,258	(*)	1,164	1,186	1,071	1,141
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	43,185	42,996	44,880	39,490	41,552	48,814	49,396	48,623	46,035	46,200
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	40,531	40,249	41,900	37,053	38,881	45,798	46,423	45,643	43,185	43,394
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	35,640	37,135	32,742	34,352	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,747	2,980	2,437	2,671	(*)	2,973	2,980	2,850	2,806
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	10,387	15,883	12,473	9,723	15,195	11,193	11,267	11,294	10,598	10,608
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	6,482	6,113	4,644	6,338	(*)	5,465	5,512	5,195	5,225
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	7,586	5,339	4,244	7,090	(*)	4,857	4,823	4,491	4,462
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	968	848	757	1,047	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	105,697	151,210	124,657	102,603	148,919	118,777	118,586	117,908	116,499	115,149
53	General merchandise group stores.....	18,629	42,645	29,738	18,251	42,072	24,752	24,690	24,713	24,504	23,958
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	14,146	33,924	23,517	13,792	33,299	19,272	19,231	19,292	18,945	18,592
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	34,367	23,891	14,013	33,793	(*)	19,595	19,648	19,202	18,982
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	1,109	709	491	1,171	(*)	620	615	684	638
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	7,612	5,512	3,968	7,602	(*)	4,839	4,806	4,875	4,728
54	Food stores.....	33,525	37,719	34,140	32,509	37,067	34,892	34,583	34,390	34,215	33,567
541	Grocery stores.....	31,766	35,217	32,234	30,867	34,624	32,918	32,639	32,461	32,355	31,678
554	Gasoline service stations.....	11,417	12,107	11,849	11,341	12,213	12,263	12,205	11,981	12,287	12,213
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,494	15,173	10,585	6,481	15,559	9,121	9,148	9,239	9,140	9,164
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	1,841	1,136	835	1,962	(*)	984	1,005	1,017	1,026
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	4,365	2,997	2,013	4,808	(*)	2,703	2,681	2,819	2,898
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	6,099	4,175	2,117	5,821	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,987	1,578	1,069	2,074	(*)	1,493	1,555	1,443	1,512
58	Eating and drinking places.....	18,221	20,565	19,256	17,830	20,048	20,178	20,201	20,079	19,658	19,655
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,058	8,845	7,054	6,761	8,654	7,187	7,099	7,205	7,006	6,803
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,582	1,885	1,551	2,550	(*)	1,876	1,879	1,818	1,821
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	6,501	5,750	3,823	6,058	(*)	4,425	4,301	3,958	4,033
53,56,57 594	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	89,410	61,016	39,844	87,695	(*)	52,391	52,585	51,169	50,519

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

NA Not available.

<sup>f</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.

<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					
		Jan. 1996 advance from—		Dec. 1995 preliminary from—		Nov. 1995 through Jan. 1996 from—	
		Dec. 1995 prelim.	Jan. 1995 final	Nov. 1995 final	Dec. 1994 final	Aug. 1995 through Oct. 1995	Nov. 1994 through Jan. 1995
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.3	+3.0	+0.6	+4.1	+1.0	+3.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.0	+2.1	+0.3	+3.3	+0.9	+2.8
	Durable goods, total.....	-1.0	+4.7	+0.7	+5.9	+1.4	+5.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.4	+1.0	-0.3	+1.5	+2.0	+1.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.2	+6.0	+1.6	+6.9	+1.3	+6.0
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	-1.3	+6.1	+1.7	+7.0	+1.2	+6.0
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.7	+5.6	-0.2	+6.2	+1.5	+6.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.2	+2.0	+0.6	+3.0	+0.7	+2.5
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.3	+1.0	-0.1	+3.1	-0.2	+2.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+0.2	+1.7	-0.3	+3.4	0.0	+3.0
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>1</sup> .....	(NA)	(NA)	-0.3	+3.2	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.9	+2.0	+0.6	+3.0	+1.3	+2.4
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.9	+1.7	+0.5	+3.0	+1.2	+2.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.5	-0.2	+1.9	-0.1	-0.8	-0.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.3	-0.2	-1.0	-0.2	+1.0	-0.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.1	+2.6	+0.6	+2.8	0.0	+2.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.2	+2.6	-1.5	+4.4	+0.9	+3.7

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.

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
 POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
 CENSUS  
 PERMIT No. G-58

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 -0.6 percent to +0.7 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.3 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 December 1995 and final estimates for November 1995 based on the full sample will be published in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for December (BR-95-12). 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 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	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.
		From	To					From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.5	1.3	0.7	1.0	0.8	1.0	-0.6	+0.7	+0.1	0.3
	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, January 1995 - December 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.

