

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., Wednesday, March 20, 1996

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 \$201.1 billion, an increase of 0.8 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) from the previous month and up 5.0 percent ($\pm 1.9\%$) from February 1995. Total sales for the December 1995 to February 1996 period were 4.0 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. The December 1995 to January 1996 percent change was revised from -0.3 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) to -0.1 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$).

Durable goods increased 1.4 percent ($\pm 2.5\%$) from January and were 7.6 percent above February 1995.

Nondurable goods increased 0.4 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) from last month and were 3.2 percent above last year.

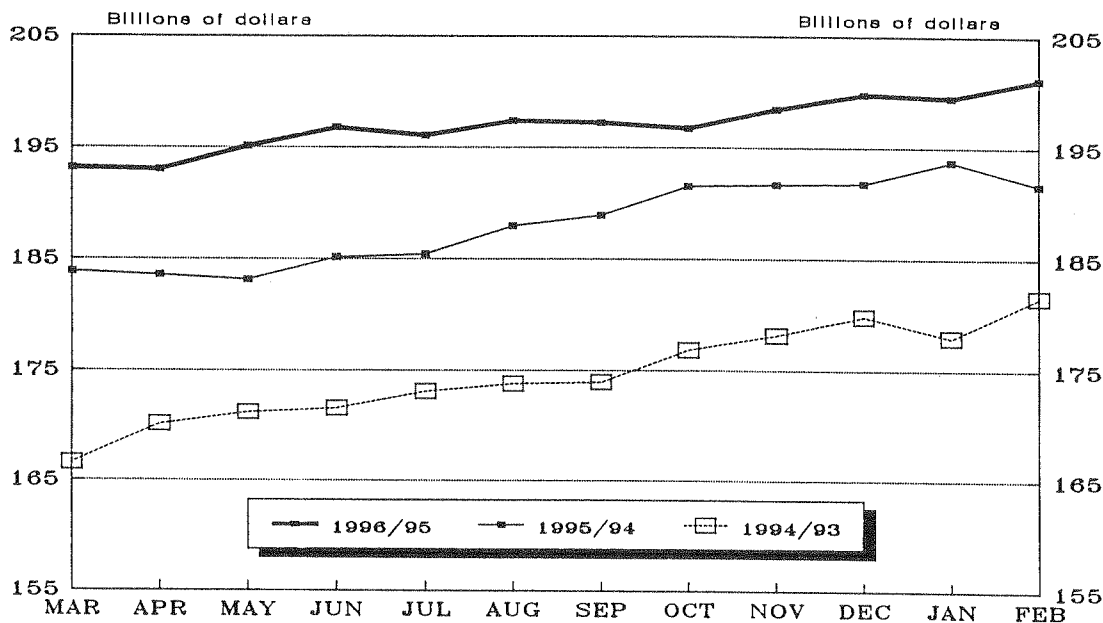
The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for March is scheduled to be released April 11, 1996 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

March 1993 - February 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 ¹				
		1996		1995			1996		1995		
		Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb. ¹	Jan. ¹
	Retail trade, total.....	179,832	175,227	238,235	164,410	167,495	201,078	199,472	199,771	191,584	193,735
	Total (excl. auto group)...	133,029	131,665	195,349	123,885	128,005	150,638	150,006	150,345	146,000	147,534
	Durable goods, total.....	72,932	69,764	87,052	64,937	64,892	81,842	80,711	81,220	76,069	76,988
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	8,022	7,958	9,553	7,774	8,011	10,324	10,246	10,555	10,379	10,483
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	6,271	7,132	6,172	6,390	(*)	7,908	8,188	8,005	8,151
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	967	1,241	845	876	(*)	1,162	1,163	1,122	1,070
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	46,803	43,562	42,886	40,525	39,490	50,440	49,466	49,426	45,584	46,201
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	44,162	40,929	40,134	38,189	37,053	47,435	46,457	46,451	42,813	43,337
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	36,273	35,456	33,380	32,742	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,633	2,752	2,336	2,437	(*)	3,009	2,975	2,771	2,864
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	9,824	10,170	15,901	9,033	9,723	11,038	11,006	11,222	10,492	10,671
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	4,757	6,508	4,388	4,644	(*)	5,321	5,441	5,126	5,253
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,586	7,633	3,874	4,244	(*)	4,777	4,862	4,484	4,501
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	699	969	669	757	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	106,900	105,463	151,183	99,473	102,603	119,236	118,761	118,551	115,515	116,747
53	General merchandise group stores.....	20,303	18,523	42,663	18,416	18,251	25,343	24,777	24,717	24,114	24,570
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	15,714	14,144	33,920	14,150	13,792	19,841	19,375	19,284	18,742	18,997
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	14,378	34,363	14,380	14,013	(*)	19,656	19,570	19,128	19,313
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	440	1,119	463	491	(*)	622	629	594	698
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	3,939	7,624	3,803	3,968	(*)	4,780	4,804	4,778	4,875
54	Food stores.....	32,748	33,706	37,869	30,515	32,509	34,815	35,085	34,717	33,759	34,219
541	Grocery stores.....	30,938	31,961	35,353	28,881	30,867	32,843	33,120	32,765	31,913	32,355
554	Casoline service stations.....	11,400	11,680	12,106	10,815	11,341	12,500	12,505	12,228	12,276	12,261
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,063	6,480	15,171	6,607	6,481	9,257	9,145	9,135	9,069	9,250
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	802	1,841	768	835	(*)	972	979	1,012	1,018
562,3	Women's clothing specialty stores.....	(*)	1,809	4,359	2,121	2,013	(*)	2,573	2,678	2,874	2,909
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,280	6,104	2,185	2,117	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,094	1,992	1,076	1,069	(*)	1,513	1,499	1,425	1,479
58	Eating and drinking places.....	18,405	17,834	20,392	17,478	17,830	19,897	19,838	20,051	19,616	19,702
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,011	7,018	8,819	6,542	6,761	7,198	7,176	7,050	6,982	7,028
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,696	2,603	1,499	1,551	(*)	1,963	1,892	1,797	1,816
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	4,037	6,432	3,186	3,823	(*)	4,074	4,358	3,848	4,003
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	40,999	89,583	39,327	39,844	(*)	52,266	52,411	50,476	51,427
594											

*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-95-12.

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. 1996 advance from—		Jan. 1996 preliminary from—		Dec. 1995 through Feb. 1996 from—	
		Jan. 1996 prelim.	Feb. 1995 final	Dec. 1995 final	Jan. 1995 final	Sept. 1995 through Nov. 1995	Dec. 1994 through Feb. 1995
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.8	+5.0	-0.1	+3.0	+1.3	+4.0
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	+0.4	+3.2	-0.2	+1.7	+0.7	+2.7
	Durable goods, total.....	+1.4	+7.6	-0.6	+4.8	+2.0	+6.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+0.8	-0.5	-2.9	-2.3	-0.7	-0.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+2.0	+10.7	+0.1	+7.1	+3.2	+8.2
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+2.1	+10.8	0.0	+7.2	+3.3	+8.3
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.3	+5.2	-1.9	+3.1	-0.8	+4.7
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.4	+3.2	+0.2	+1.7	+0.9	+2.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+2.3	+5.1	+0.2	+0.8	+0.8	+3.0
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+2.4	+5.9	+0.5	+2.0	+1.1	+3.9
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ¹	(NA)	(NA)	+0.4	+1.8	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.8	+3.1	+1.1	+2.5	+1.7	+3.0
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.8	+2.9	+1.1	+2.4	+1.6	+2.9
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.0	+1.8	+2.3	+2.0	+2.5	+1.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.2	+2.1	+0.1	-1.1	+0.2	+0.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.3	+1.4	-1.1	+0.7	-1.0	+1.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.3	+3.1	+1.8	+2.1	-0.1	+2.9

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 -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 January 1996 and final estimates for December 1995 based on the full sample will be published in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for January (BR-96-01). 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	Range ²		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	0.0	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

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 1995 - January 1996. 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.

