

Advance Monthly Retail Sales



U.S. Department of Commerce
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION
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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 \$205.0 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 4.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from August 1995. Total sales for the June through August period were 4.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. The June to July 1996 percent change was unrevised from the +0.1 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) published in the July Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report.

Durable goods increased 0.3 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) from July and were 5.5 percent above last year. Building materials sales were up 10.9 percent from last year.

Nondurable goods increased 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from last month and were up 3.4 percent from last year. General merchandise sales were up 4.8 percent from August 1995.

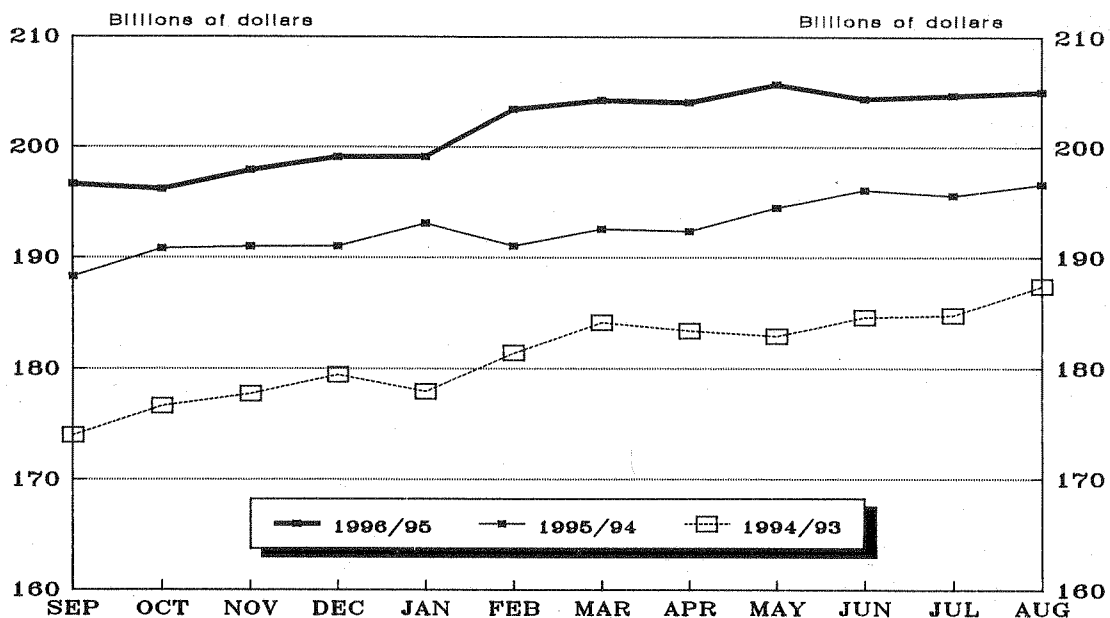
The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

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

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

September 1993 - August 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	
		Aug. ² adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug.	July	Aug. ² adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug. ¹	July ¹
	Retail trade, total.....	215,060	206,304	206,292	204,178	194,879	204,998	204,662	204,366	196,637	195,615
	Total (excl. auto group)...	161,735	153,287	153,228	152,504	146,401	155,329	155,067	154,757	148,522	148,613
	Durable goods, total.....	89,049	87,093	87,092	84,383	79,182	83,776	83,550	83,472	79,408	78,281
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	12,413	12,589	12,715	11,339	10,976	11,388	11,463	11,441	10,266	10,352
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	9,810	9,535	8,720	8,507	(*)	8,822	8,716	7,793	7,943
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,263	1,346	1,172	1,219	(*)	1,190	1,202	1,142	1,148
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	53,325	53,017	53,064	51,674	48,478	49,669	49,595	49,609	48,115	47,002
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	50,036	49,688	49,851	48,493	45,451	46,632	46,524	46,546	45,194	44,127
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	43,164	43,001	42,080	39,069	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,329	3,213	3,181	3,027	(*)	3,071	3,063	2,921	2,875
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	11,393	10,882	10,752	11,009	10,240	11,325	11,352	11,352	11,016	10,812
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	5,661	5,452	5,596	5,317	(*)	5,650	5,603	5,396	5,382
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,424	4,468	4,524	4,143	(*)	4,793	4,825	4,645	4,548
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	718	718	785	813	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	126,011	119,211	119,200	119,795	115,697	121,222	121,112	120,894	117,229	117,334
53	General merchandise group stores.....	26,168	23,430	24,576	24,526	23,054	25,923	25,736	25,688	24,729	25,025
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	20,417	18,020	18,962	19,066	17,831	20,155	19,978	19,981	19,220	19,487
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	18,343	19,308	19,417	18,128	(*)	20,315	20,259	19,592	19,838
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	637	644	601	574	(*)	707	687	616	629
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	4,773	4,970	4,859	4,649	(*)	5,051	5,020	4,893	4,909
54	Food stores.....	36,834	36,402	35,382	35,045	35,219	35,169	35,407	35,086	34,270	34,144
541	Grocery stores.....	34,965	34,550	33,523	33,259	33,468	33,300	33,544	33,191	32,479	32,368
554	Gasoline service stations.....	14,015	13,931	13,868	13,346	13,195	12,917	13,032	13,271	12,369	12,436
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	10,443	8,567	8,896	9,616	8,362	9,511	9,417	9,484	9,012	9,145
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	700	792	755	698	(*)	839	816	837	820
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,413	2,724	2,822	2,615	(*)	2,711	2,835	2,828	2,915
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	3,259	3,205	3,386	2,916	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,559	1,588	1,885	1,526	(*)	1,624	1,606	1,550	1,585
58	Eating and drinking places.....	21,185	20,390	20,354	21,015	20,666	19,436	19,512	19,571	19,622	19,589
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,373	7,250	7,039	6,894	6,664	7,463	7,436	7,332	7,013	6,949
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,080	1,979	1,903	1,929	(*)	1,977	1,967	1,871	1,830
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	3,477	3,284	3,500	3,094	(*)	4,189	4,100	3,950	3,912
53,56,57,594	GAF ⁴	(*)	50,179	51,388	52,417	48,092	(*)	54,625	54,511	52,089	52,271

*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-96-07.

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					
		Aug. 1996 advance from—		July 1996 preliminary from—		June 1996 through Aug. 1996 from—	
		July 1996 prelim.	Aug. 1995 final	June 1996 final	July 1995 final	Mar. 1996 through May 1996	June 1995 through Aug. 1995
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.2	+4.3	+0.1	+4.6	0.0	+4.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	+0.2	+4.6	+0.2	+4.3	+0.5	+4.3
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.3	+5.5	+0.1	+6.7	-0.1	+6.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.7	+10.9	+0.2	+10.7	+5.9	+11.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+0.1	+3.2	0.0	+5.5	-1.4	+4.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+0.2	+3.2	0.0	+5.4	-1.5	+4.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.2	+2.8	0.0	+5.0	-0.6	+4.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.1	+3.4	+0.2	+3.2	+0.1	+3.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.7	+4.8	+0.2	+2.8	+0.6	+3.5
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+0.9	+4.9	0.0	+2.5	+0.4	+3.5
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ¹	(NA)	(NA)	+0.3	+2.4	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.7	+2.6	+0.9	+3.7	+0.5	+3.1
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.7	+2.5	+1.1	+3.6	+0.5	+2.9
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.9	+4.4	-1.8	+4.8	-1.8	+4.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.0	+5.5	-0.7	+3.0	+0.1	+3.8
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.4	-0.9	-0.3	-0.4	-1.5	-0.2
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.4	+6.4	+1.4	+7.0	+1.4	+6.0

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

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 each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average

difference between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

SIC code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Estimated CV ¹ for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ² for			Revision for month- to-month change ²	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total.....	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. auto)	0.9	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.3
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.2	0.3
52	Building materials, group stores	3.4	1.8	2.7	1.1	0.4	1.2
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers.....	2.0	1.4	1.8	0.9	0.3	0.9
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	2.1	1.6	2.0	1.0	0.3	1.0
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.1	1.0	1.5	0.7	0.0	0.6
	Nondurable goods, total	1.1	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.3
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.3	-0.1	0.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.) ...	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	-0.2	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.1
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.2
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.0	1.3	1.5	0.1	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.6	0.6	1.1	0.6	0.0	0.8
58	Eating and drinking places	4.7	1.0	2.3	1.1	-0.1	0.9
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.5	0.5	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.4

(1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.

(2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions for Retail trade total are based on the latest 12 months of data while all other kinds of businesses are based on the preceding 12 months.

