

# 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 September adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$205.7 billion, an increase of 0.7 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the previous month and up 4.7 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from September 1995. Total sales for the third quarter were 4.3 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) above the same quarter a year ago. The July to August 1996 percent change was revised from +0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) to -0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ).

Durable goods increased 0.9 percent ( $\pm 1.3\%$ ) from August and were 7.0 percent above last year. Automotive sales were up 7.7 percent from last year.

Nondurable goods increased 0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from last month and were up 3.2 percent from last year. General merchandise sales were up 4.2 percent from September 1995.

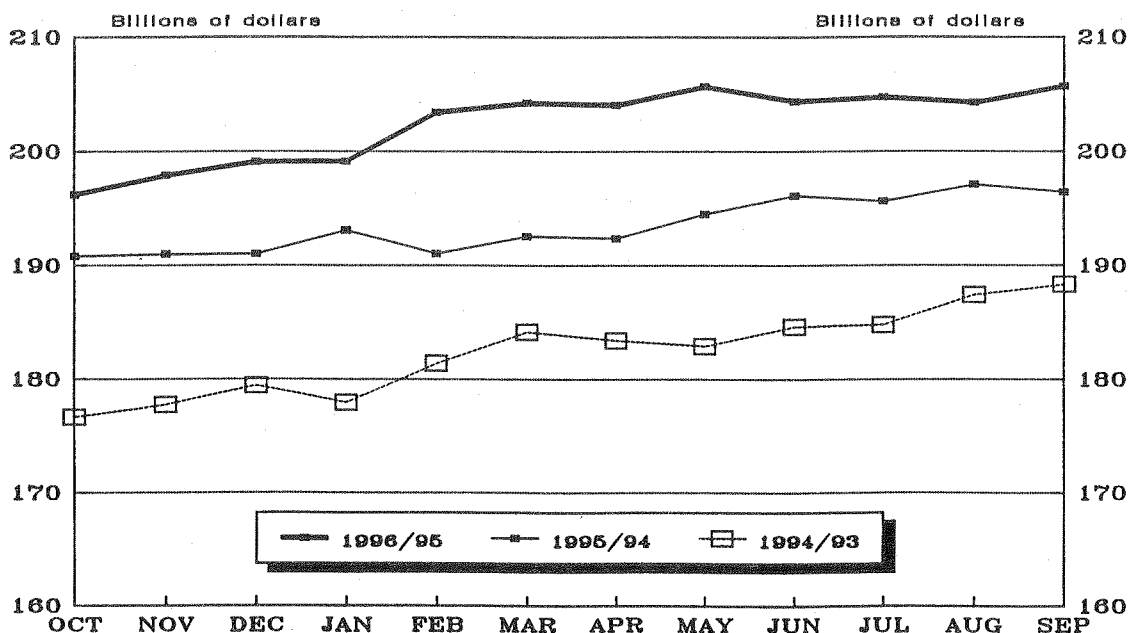
*The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.*

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for October is scheduled to be released November 14, 1996 at 8:30 a.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

October 1993 - September 1996

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



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**NOTE THE FOLLOWING CHANGE:** Beginning November 15, 1996, this document will no longer be available on CENDATA, FASTFAX, or the CENSUS/BEA Forum. This document and all future releases can be retrieved on the day of issue from the Census Bureau's World-Wide-Web site, <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/fullpub.html> and through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (STAT-USA) -- 202-482-1986.

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		1996			1995	
		Sept. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept.	Aug.	Sept. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept. <sup>f</sup>	Aug. <sup>f</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	196,982	213,564	206,440	192,776	204,178	205,709	204,252	204,719	196,431	197,081
	Total (excl. auto group)...	147,533	160,115	153,331	145,489	152,504	154,897	154,275	154,988	149,247	148,808
	Durable goods, total.....	81,458	88,342	87,183	78,241	84,383	84,184	83,468	83,539	78,710	79,687
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	11,333	12,069	12,571	10,838	11,339	11,144	11,131	11,381	10,354	10,349
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	9,420	9,778	8,368	8,720	(*)	8,611	8,754	7,947	7,856
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,232	1,284	1,144	1,172	(*)	1,176	1,201	1,139	1,146
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	49,449	53,449	53,109	47,287	51,674	50,812	49,977	49,731	47,184	48,273
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	46,484	50,091	49,779	44,292	48,493	47,823	46,902	46,653	44,248	45,363
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	43,258	43,179	38,500	42,080	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,358	3,330	2,995	3,181	(*)	3,075	3,078	2,936	2,910
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	10,906	11,602	10,927	10,753	11,009	11,480	11,517	11,399	11,083	10,986
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	5,904	5,661	5,527	5,596	(*)	5,661	5,644	5,516	5,391
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,850	4,471	4,376	4,524	(*)	4,944	4,849	4,655	4,626
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	736	720	695	785	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	115,524	125,222	119,257	114,535	119,795	121,525	120,784	121,180	117,721	117,394
53	General merchandise group stores.....	23,687	26,155	23,410	23,059	24,526	26,023	25,949	25,752	24,974	24,738
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	18,457	20,395	18,019	17,948	19,066	20,282	20,173	19,999	19,445	19,239
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	20,777	18,341	18,275	19,417	(*)	20,493	20,353	19,777	19,568
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	687	639	588	601	(*)	693	708	645	620
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	5,073	4,752	4,523	4,859	(*)	5,083	5,045	4,884	4,879
54	Food stores.....	34,121	36,814	36,363	33,875	35,045	35,647	35,239	35,403	34,247	34,301
541	Grocery stores.....	32,358	34,944	34,518	32,146	33,259	33,777	33,375	33,545	32,438	32,511
554	Gasoline service stations.....	12,954	13,929	13,855	12,419	13,346	12,954	12,873	12,973	12,272	12,392
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	8,812	10,270	8,569	9,171	9,616	9,355	9,367	9,411	9,271	9,054
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	796	688	782	755	(*)	846	831	844	833
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,679	2,412	2,838	2,822	(*)	2,645	2,695	2,887	2,851
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	3,928	3,246	3,230	3,386	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,988	1,563	1,593	1,885	(*)	1,599	1,630	1,550	1,559
58	Eating and drinking places.....	19,334	21,223	20,630	19,653	21,015	19,648	19,542	19,685	19,633	19,659
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,991	7,429	7,251	6,711	6,894	7,493	7,519	7,437	7,094	7,013
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,093	2,056	1,886	1,903	(*)	1,986	1,969	1,899	1,871
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	3,444	3,425	3,736	3,500	(*)	3,968	4,117	3,933	3,977
53,56,57 594	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	56,197	50,153	49,672	52,417	(*)	54,995	54,641	52,703	52,095

\*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-96-08.

<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					
		Sept. 1996 advance from--		Aug. 1996 preliminary from--		July 1996 through Sept. 1996 from--	
		Aug. 1996 prelim.	Sept. 1995 final	July 1996 final	Aug. 1995 final	Apr. 1996 through June 1996	July 1995 through Sept. 1995
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.7	+4.7	-0.2	+3.6	+0.1	+4.3
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.4	+3.8	-0.5	+3.7	-0.1	+3.9
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.9	+7.0	-0.1	+4.7	+0.3	+6.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+0.1	+7.6	-2.2	+7.6	+1.0	+8.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1.7	+7.7	+0.5	+3.5	+0.8	+5.7
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+2.0	+8.1	+0.5	+3.4	+0.8	+5.7
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.3	+3.6	+1.0	+4.8	+0.6	+4.6
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.6	+3.2	-0.3	+2.9	-0.1	+3.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.3	+4.2	+0.8	+4.9	+0.6	+4.0
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+0.5	+4.3	+0.9	+4.9	+0.4	+3.9
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>1</sup> .....	(NA)	(NA)	+0.7	+4.7	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+1.2	+4.1	-0.5	+2.7	+1.0	+3.5
541	Grocery stores.....	+1.2	+4.1	-0.5	+2.7	+1.0	+3.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.6	+5.6	-0.8	+3.9	-3.5	+4.6
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.1	+0.9	-0.5	+3.5	-1.5	+2.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.5	+0.1	-0.7	-0.6	-0.6	0.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.3	+5.6	+1.1	+7.2	+2.3	+6.6

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**

### 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 <sup>1</sup> for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error <sup>1</sup> for			Revision for month- to-month change <sup>2</sup>	
			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	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. auto) .....	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
	Durable goods, total .....	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.0	0.3	0.3
52	Building materials, group stores ....	3.5	2.0	1.1	2.7	0.6	1.4
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers.....	2.0	1.4	0.9	1.8	0.3	0.9
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	2.2	1.6	1.0	2.0	0.3	1.0
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores .....	2.1	1.0	0.7	1.5	0.1	0.2
	Nondurable goods, total .....	1.1	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.3
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.7	-0.1	0.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.) ...	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	-0.2	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.1
541	Grocery stores .....	1.2	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.2
554	Gasoline service stations .....	2.2	1.3	1.5	1.3	0.1	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores .....	1.6	0.6	0.7	1.1	0.3	0.8
58	Eating and drinking places .....	4.7	1.0	1.2	2.3	-0.2	0.9
591	Drug and proprietary stores .....	1.6	0.5	0.4	1.0	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 business are based on the preceding 12 months.