

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, Wednesday, August 13, 1997

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
JULY 1997**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for July adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$212.1 billion, an increase of 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and 4.5 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from July 1996. Total sales for the May through July period were 3.7 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. The May to June 1997 percent change was revised from +0.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to +0.7 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$).

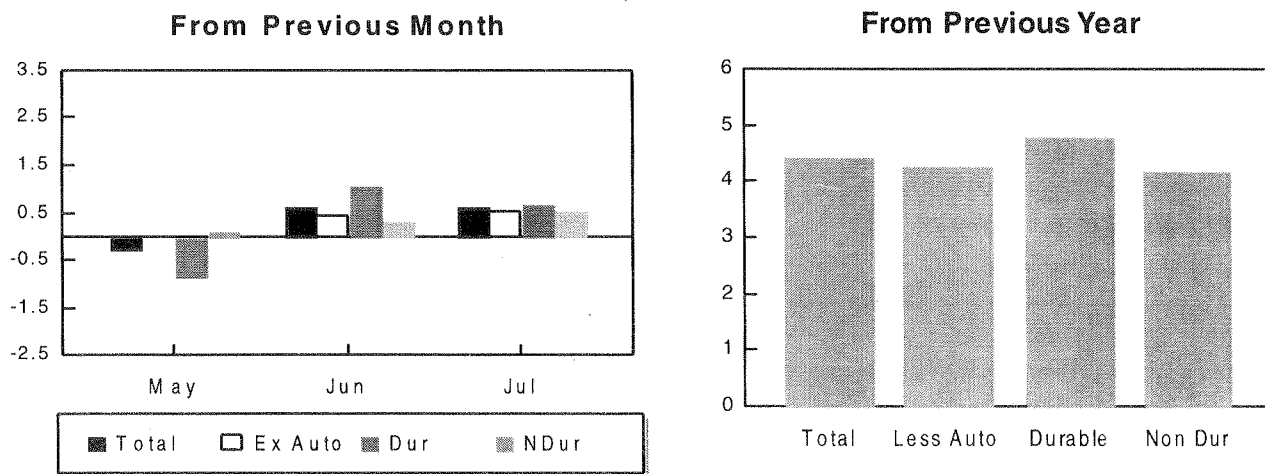
Durable goods increased 0.7 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from June and were 4.8 percent above July 1996. Automotive dealers sales were up 5.0 percent from last year.

Nondurable goods increased 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from last month and were 4.2 percent above last year. General merchandise sales were up 6.8 percent from July 1996 while food sales were up 1.3 percent in the same period.

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.

Percent Change in Retail Sales

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



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for August is scheduled to be released September 12, 1997 at 8:30 a.m.

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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/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, By Kind of Business

(In Millions of Dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1997			1996		1997			1996	
		July ² (a)	June (p)	May (r)	July	June	July ² (a)	June (p)	May (r)	July (r)	June (r)
	Retail trade, total	214,958	212,283	219,101	204,817	204,705	212,075	210,739	209,370	203,017	202,698
	Total (excl. auto group)...	160,112	157,775	164,132	152,803	152,745	160,945	160,103	159,445	154,308	154,033
	Durable goods, total.....	90,621	90,063	91,155	86,024	85,962	86,296	85,684	84,759	82,332	82,315
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	13,709	13,695	14,192	12,718	12,892	12,240	12,127	12,018	11,474	11,500
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	10,355	10,798	9,758	9,514	(*)	9,329	9,390	8,705	8,665
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,463	1,493	1,353	1,418	(*)	1,302	1,267	1,263	1,257
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	54,846	54,508	54,969	52,014	51,960	51,130	50,636	49,925	48,709	48,665
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	51,642	51,385	51,858	48,753	48,814	48,174	47,667	46,973	45,692	45,663
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	44,146	44,686	42,789	42,613	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,123	3,111	3,261	3,146	(*)	2,969	2,952	3,017	3,002
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	11,223	11,014	11,205	10,686	10,507	11,666	11,716	11,693	11,136	11,140
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	5,781	5,964	5,590	5,382	(*)	5,997	5,982	5,568	5,548
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,479	4,454	4,306	4,299	(*)	4,874	4,841	4,670	4,673
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	894	814	790	788	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	124,337	122,220	127,946	118,793	118,743	125,779	125,055	124,611	120,685	120,383
53	General merchandise group stores.....	25,592	26,138	27,253	23,695	24,866	27,759	27,562	27,352	25,983	25,949
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	19,967	20,416	21,353	18,265	19,211	21,894	21,719	21,547	20,227	20,222
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	20,750	21,699	18,582	19,551	(*)	21,973	21,863	20,651	20,546
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	691	730	646	651	(*)	730	721	715	698
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	5,031	5,170	4,784	5,004	(*)	5,113	5,084	5,041	5,029
54	Food stores.....	37,064	35,401	37,462	36,289	35,310	35,834	35,706	35,763	35,371	35,113
541	Grocery stores.....	35,009	33,342	35,336	34,411	33,420	33,760	33,611	33,685	33,474	33,188
554	Gasoline service stations.....	13,782	13,485	13,562	13,629	13,642	12,929	12,831	12,843	12,737	12,992
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	8,963	9,035	9,620	8,616	8,941	9,753	9,734	9,621	9,457	9,502
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	870	882	701	806	(*)	917	900	849	834
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,600	2,857	2,453	2,765	(*)	2,717	2,703	2,738	2,859
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	3,370	3,510	3,206	3,165	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,611	1,719	1,566	1,592	(*)	1,637	1,604	1,626	1,597
58	Eating and drinking places.....	21,463	20,838	21,563	20,470	20,219	20,383	20,310	20,228	19,589	19,479
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,956	7,838	8,259	7,381	7,164	8,194	8,122	8,097	7,578	7,470
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,957	2,067	2,002	1,927	(*)	1,985	1,986	1,907	1,910
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	3,897	3,975	3,440	3,296	(*)	4,623	4,486	4,160	4,029
53,56,57,594	GAF(4).....	(*)	53,384	55,421	50,048	51,297	(*)	57,089	56,622	54,445	54,385

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

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) 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-97-06.

(2) 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.

(3) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

(4) 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 ¹					
		July 1997 Advance from --		June 1997 Preliminary from --		May 1997 through July 1997 from --	
		June 1997 (p)	July 1996 (r)	May 1997 (r)	June 1996 (r)	Feb. 1997 through Apr. 1997	May 1996 through July 1996
	Retail trade, total	0.6	4.5	0.7	4.0	-0.5	3.7
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.5	4.3	0.4	3.9	0.0	3.8
	Durable goods, total	0.7	4.8	1.1	4.1	-1.4	3.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	0.9	6.7	0.9	5.5	1.0	6.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.0	5.0	1.4	4.1	-2.0	3.3
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.1	5.4	1.5	4.4	-2.1	3.6
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.4	4.8	0.2	5.2	1.0	4.9
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.6	4.2	0.4	3.9	0.1	3.7
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.7	6.8	0.8	6.2	0.7	5.9
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	0.8	8.2	0.8	7.4	0.9	7.1
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	0.5	6.9	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.4	1.3	-0.2	1.7	-0.5	1.7
541	Grocery stores.....	0.4	0.9	-0.2	1.3	-0.6	1.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.8	1.5	-0.1	-1.2	-2.8	-1.1
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.2	3.1	1.2	2.4	1.2	2.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.4	4.1	0.4	4.3	-0.2	3.7
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.9	8.1	0.3	8.7	0.6	8.4

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

(2) 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 ¹ for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ¹ 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.....	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. auto)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	-0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.4
52	Building materials, group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.1	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.4	0.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.4	0.4
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.1	1.0
	Nondurable goods, total	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.) ...	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.1
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.1
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	-0.2	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	0.1	0.8
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	-0.1	0.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.2	0.5

(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.

