

INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES. The advance estimates in this report are the first estimates from a new sample which was selected from the full monthly sample. The advance, preliminary and final estimates are now all on the same sample basis.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday December 11, 1997

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
November 1997**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for November adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$213.8 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and 3.8 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) above November 1996. Total sales for the September through November period were 3.8 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. The September to October 1997 percent change was unchanged from the -0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) shown in the October report.

Durable goods increased 0.2 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from October and were 3.7 percent above last year.

Nondurable goods increased 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from last month and were 3.9 percent above last year.

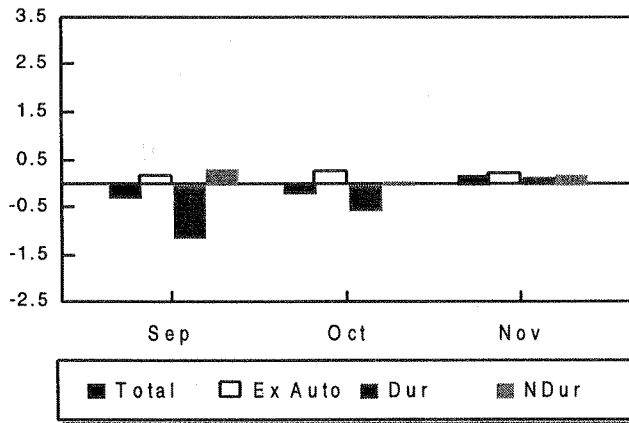
The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

The scheduled release dates for 1998 are as follows: January 14, February 12, March 12, April 14, May 13, June 11, July 14, August 13, September 15, October 14, November 13, and December 11.

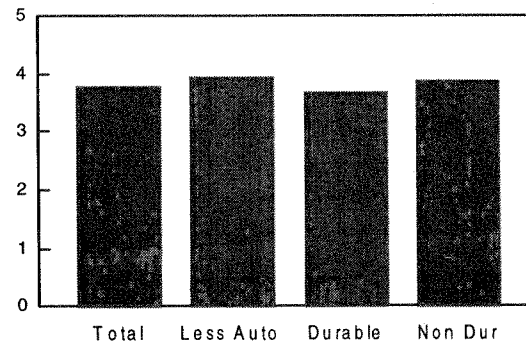
Percent Change in Retail Sales

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

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for December is scheduled to be released January 14, 1998 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Pienycoski, Services Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone: (301) 457-2713 or (301) 457-2666.

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	
		Nov. ² (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov.	Oct.	Nov. ² (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov. (r)	Oct. (r)
	Retail trade, total	214,309	215,534	206,839	210,236	207,531	213,821	213,409	213,805	205,933	206,693
	Total (excl. auto group)...	169,125	163,258	155,001	164,872	156,473	162,610	162,285	161,876	156,353	156,402
	Durable goods, total.....	81,459	87,610	86,463	80,826	84,794	86,684	86,541	87,025	83,582	84,066
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers....	11,128	12,925	12,653	10,921	12,316	11,927	12,023	11,901	11,371	11,355
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	10,037	9,797	8,403	9,478	(*)	9,183	9,130	8,654	8,577
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,389	1,305	1,299	1,306	(*)	1,356	1,340	1,265	1,278
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	45,184	52,276	51,838	45,364	51,058	51,211	51,124	51,929	49,580	50,291
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	42,348	49,128	48,827	42,420	47,786	48,287	48,165	48,974	46,615	47,219
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	43,228	42,801	37,578	42,423	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,148	3,011	2,944	3,272	(*)	2,959	2,955	2,965	3,072
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	13,162	11,762	11,465	12,483	11,211	11,944	11,796	11,799	11,169	11,238
571	Furniture and home furnishings....	(*)	6,207	5,979	6,347	5,822	(*)	6,009	6,003	5,632	5,636
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,716	4,661	5,205	4,604	(*)	4,877	4,901	4,672	4,737
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	831	805	882	797	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	132,850	127,924	120,376	129,410	122,737	127,137	126,868	126,780	122,351	122,627
53	General merchandise group stores...	33,004	27,699	24,676	31,075	25,978	28,008	27,977	27,747	26,210	26,555
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	26,509	21,800	19,369	24,614	20,183	22,146	22,087	21,861	20,427	20,764
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	22,133	19,675	25,069	20,539	(*)	22,424	22,145	20,940	21,054
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	774	716	776	710	(*)	765	802	703	716
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	5,125	4,591	5,685	5,085	(*)	5,125	5,084	5,080	5,075
54	Food stores.....	36,179	36,468	34,956	35,880	35,498	36,475	36,320	36,338	35,599	35,675
541	Grocery stores.....	34,031	34,305	32,896	33,924	33,584	34,305	34,168	34,160	33,655	33,753
554	Gasoline service stations.....	12,606	13,468	13,191	12,807	13,264	13,172	13,243	13,178	13,176	13,068
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	11,153	9,870	9,269	10,777	9,569	9,887	9,769	9,759	9,347	9,579
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	965	843	977	843	(*)	973	938	850	858
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,685	2,581	3,048	2,805	(*)	2,653	2,697	2,731	2,791
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	3,903	3,505	4,366	3,683	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,540	1,548	1,606	1,494	(*)	1,621	1,596	1,558	1,586
58	Eating and drinking places.....	19,787	20,894	20,243	19,622	20,083	20,462	20,525	20,635	20,105	19,864
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	8,148	8,264	7,882	7,613	7,715	8,452	8,306	8,341	7,768	7,793
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,044	1,897	1,970	1,837	(*)	2,071	2,001	1,892	1,886
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	4,969	4,489	5,223	4,491	(*)	4,477	4,595	3,945	4,028
53,56,57, 594	GAF(4).....	(*)	56,607	52,549	63,380	53,897	(*)	57,600	57,326	54,795	55,322

* 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-97-10.

(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					
		Nov. 1997 Advance from --		Oct. 1997 Preliminary from --		Sept. 1997 through Nov. 1997 from --	
		Oct. 1997 (p)	Nov. 1996 (r)	Sept. 1997 (r)	Oct. 1996 (r)	June 1997 through Aug. 1997	Sept. 1996 through Nov. 1996
	Retail trade, total	0.2	3.8	-0.2	3.2	0.3	3.8
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.2	4.0	0.3	3.8	0.7	4.0
	Durable goods, total	0.2	3.7	-0.6	2.9	-0.3	3.8
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	-0.8	4.9	1.0	5.9	-0.5	5.2
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	0.2	3.3	-1.6	1.7	-0.7	3.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.3	3.6	-1.7	2.0	-0.6	3.4
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.3	6.9	0.0	5.0	-0.2	5.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.2	3.9	0.1	3.5	0.8	3.8
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.1	6.9	0.8	5.4	0.7	5.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	0.3	8.4	1.0	6.4	0.9	6.9
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	1.3	6.5	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.4	2.5	0.0	1.8	1.3	2.1
541	Grocery stores.....	0.4	1.9	0.0	1.2	1.3	1.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.5	0.0	0.5	1.3	2.2	1.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.2	5.8	0.1	2.0	-1.0	3.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.3	1.8	-0.5	3.3	0.9	3.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	1.8	8.8	-0.4	6.6	1.7	8.2

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	0.1	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.