

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Friday November 13, 1998

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
October 1998**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for October adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$227.1 billion, an increase of 1.0 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 5.7 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from October 1997. Total sales for the August through October period were up 4.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The August to September percent change was unrevised from +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) reported last month.

Durable goods increased 1.8 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from September and were 8.3 percent above last year. Building materials were up 10.3 percent from October a year ago, while furniture sales were up 8.9 percent during the same period.

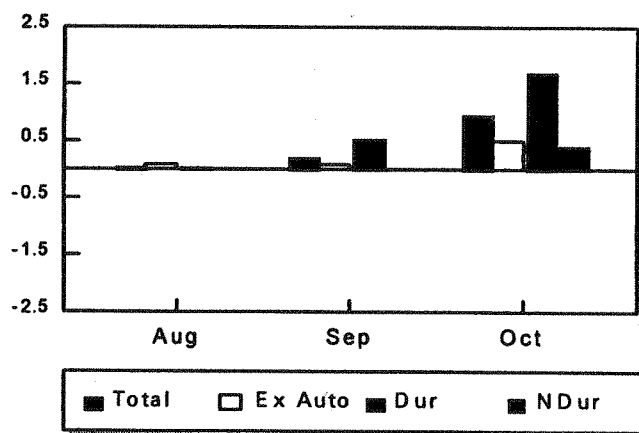
Nondurable goods increased 0.5 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from last month and were 3.9 percent above last year. General merchandise sales were up 5.6 percent from October a year ago, while food sales were up 4.0 percent during the same period.

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.

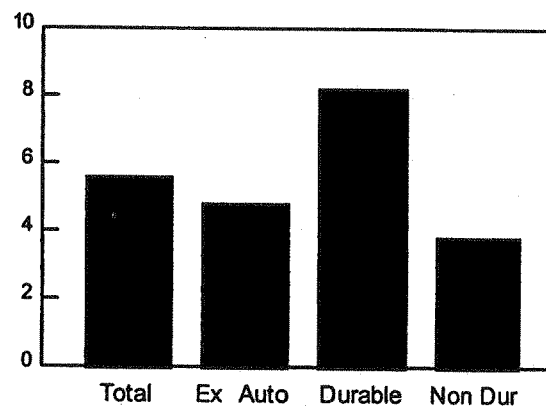
Percent Change in Retail Sales

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

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for November is scheduled to be released December 11, 1998 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Piencykoski, Service Sector Statistics 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				
		1998			1997		1998			1997	
		Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct.	Sept.	Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct. (r)	Sept. (r)
	Retail trade, total.....	230,311	217,913	227,611	217,578	208,727	227,145	224,882	224,296	214,861	215,821
	Total (excl. auto group).....	173,289	163,718	172,133	164,550	156,289	171,316	170,490	170,366	163,234	163,245
	Durable goods, total.....	96,520	92,903	95,441	89,509	88,159	95,513	93,860	93,309	88,210	88,891
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers....	15,010	14,658	14,412	13,642	13,449	14,002	13,874	13,770	12,700	12,649
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	11,399	11,137	10,692	10,455	(*)	10,713	10,566	9,782	9,753
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,301	1,329	1,300	1,225	(*)	1,328	1,302	1,254	1,246
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	57,022	54,195	55,478	53,028	52,438	55,829	54,392	53,930	51,627	52,576
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	53,470	50,875	52,025	49,670	49,229	52,525	51,131	50,657	48,506	49,427
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	43,789	44,225	43,247	42,724	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,320	3,453	3,358	3,209	(*)	3,261	3,273	3,121	3,149
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	13,374	12,909	13,437	12,299	11,908	13,482	13,458	13,410	12,376	12,352
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	6,193	6,400	6,217	5,946	(*)	6,300	6,268	6,042	6,018
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	5,778	6,106	5,206	5,101	(*)	6,153	6,161	5,384	5,404
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	850	924	853	823	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	133,791	125,010	132,170	128,069	120,568	131,632	131,022	130,987	126,651	126,930
53	General merchandise group stores....	29,392	26,649	29,062	27,762	24,753	29,652	29,606	29,363	28,092	27,796
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	23,055	20,808	22,985	21,822	19,399	23,359	23,301	23,170	22,177	21,920
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts)*.....	(*)	21,153	23,392	22,225	19,763	(*)	23,705	23,598	22,555	22,315
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	893	928	987	914	(*)	979	960	977	1,013
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	4,948	5,149	4,953	4,440	(*)	5,326	5,233	4,938	4,863
54	Food stores.....	37,949	36,390	37,741	36,228	34,792	37,412	37,247	37,246	35,971	36,062
541	Grocery stores.....	35,509	34,110	35,395	33,924	32,616	34,984	34,842	34,872	33,688	33,764
554	Gasoline service stations.....	12,833	12,328	13,197	13,640	13,390	12,447	12,390	12,438	13,243	13,377
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	10,596	9,572	11,179	9,986	9,375	10,297	10,108	10,422	9,853	9,930
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	855	953	921	803	(*)	968	1,004	916	914
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,415	2,562	2,600	2,476	(*)	2,537	2,604	2,562	2,609
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	3,664	4,397	3,942	3,540	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,616	2,128	1,607	1,620	(*)	1,701	1,754	1,695	1,695
58	Eating and drinking places.....	21,428	20,311	21,732	20,125	19,522	20,824	20,662	20,444	19,789	19,880
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	8,964	8,473	8,636	8,248	7,885	9,018	8,976	8,940	8,298	8,344
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,003	2,084	2,041	1,885	(*)	2,093	2,063	2,060	2,001
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	4,550	4,084	4,640	4,188	(*)	4,805	4,754	4,154	4,318
53,56,57,594	GAF(4).....	(*)	56,525	61,646	57,098	52,995	(*)	61,453	61,426	58,173	57,906

* 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-98-09.
- (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					
		Oct. 1998 Advance from --		Sept. 1998 Preliminary from --		Aug. 1998 through Oct. 1998 from --	
		Sept. 1998 (p)	Oct. 1997 (r)	Aug. 1998 (r)	Sept. 1997 (r)	May 1998 through July 1998	Aug. 1997 through Oct. 1997
	Retail trade, total	1.0	5.7	0.3	4.2	0.2	4.5
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.5	5.0	0.1	4.4	0.7	4.7
	Durable goods, total	1.8	8.3	0.6	5.6	-0.4	6.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	0.9	10.3	0.8	9.7	0.8	10.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	2.6	8.1	0.9	3.5	-1.4	4.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	2.7	8.1	0.9	3.4	-1.5	4.1
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	0.2	8.9	0.4	9.0	1.7	8.6
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.5	3.9	0.0	3.2	0.6	3.5
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.2	5.6	0.8	6.5	0.4	5.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	0.2	5.3	0.6	6.3	0.2	5.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	0.5	6.2	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.4	4.0	0.0	3.3	1.1	3.7
541	Grocery stores.....	0.4	3.8	-0.1	3.2	1.1	3.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.5	-6.0	-0.4	-7.4	-1.2	-6.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.9	4.5	-3.0	1.8	-1.4	3.3
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	5.2	1.1	3.9	0.9	4.1
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.5	8.7	0.4	7.6	2.3	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 M o. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ¹ for			Revision for month- to-month change ²	
			Current M o. to Previous M o.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current M o. to Current M o. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. auto)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.1
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.3
52	Building materials, group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.3	0.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.3	0.5
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and m isc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.3	0.6
57	Furniture, home fum, and equipment stores	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.3	0.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.1
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	-0.1	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	0.1	0.2
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	-0.1	0.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	-0.5	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	0.0	0.3



(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 are based on the latest 12 months of data.