

INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES. The annual revision of the monthly retail sales estimates will be published in the press release the week of April 26. Unadjusted estimates will be revised for the months of January 1993 through March 1999, while corresponding adjusted data will be revised for January 1990 through March 1999.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday February 11, 1999

ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES JANUARY 1999

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for January adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$232.2 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 6.1 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from January 1998. Total sales for the November through January period were up 6.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The November to December percent change was revised from +0.9 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to +1.0 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Durable goods increased 0.2 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from December and were 7.5 percent above last year. Building materials were up 9.1 percent from January a year ago, while automotive sales were up 8.5 percent during the same period.

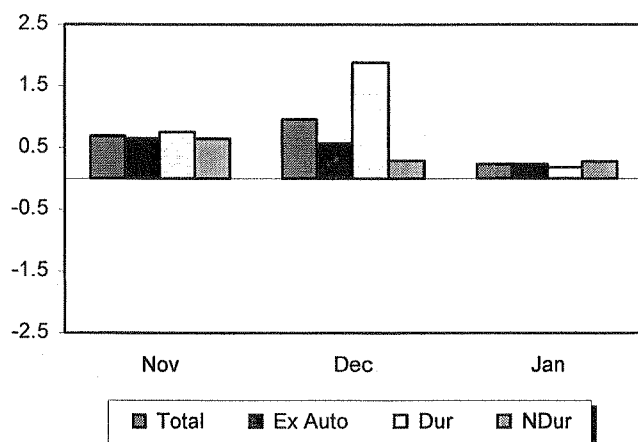
Nondurable goods increased 0.3 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from last month and were up 5.1 percent from January 1998. General merchandise sales were up 7.3 percent from January a year ago.

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.

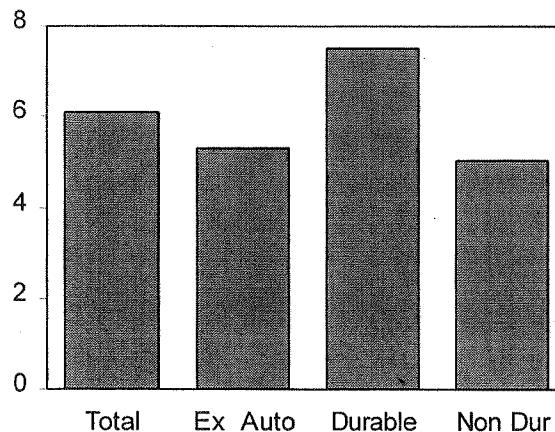
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(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 February is scheduled to be released March 11, 1999 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Pienycoski, 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 and Annual Percent Change)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		1 month total		1999		1998		1997	1999		1998		1997
		1999	Change from 1998	Jan. ² (a)	Dec. (p)	Nov. (r)	Jan.	Dec.	Jan. ² (a)	Dec. (p)	Nov. (r)	Jan. (r)	Dec. (r)
	Retail trade, total.....	202,655	4.2	202,655	277,055	228,399	194,449	258,278	232,212	231,665	229,463	218,883	216,935
	Total (excl. auto group).....	152,838	3.9	152,838	224,614	178,191	147,052	210,166	174,217	173,812	172,831	165,434	163,338
	Durable goods, total.....	83,265	4.6	83,265	108,060	90,952	79,575	98,932	98,762	98,584	96,761	91,859	90,712
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	10,715	6.3	10,715	13,394	13,235	10,076	11,756	14,558	14,556	14,283	13,345	12,824
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,120	10,338	7,874	8,885	(*)	11,269	11,033	10,173	9,916
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,385	1,252	999	1,230	(*)	1,300	1,284	1,185	1,148
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	49,817	5.1	49,817	52,441	50,208	47,397	48,112	57,995	57,853	56,632	53,449	53,597
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	46,938	5.1	46,938	49,305	47,068	44,662	45,190	54,643	54,541	53,365	50,352	50,492
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)...	(*)	(*)	(*)	43,113	41,156	39,026	39,749	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,136	3,140	2,735	2,922	(*)	3,312	3,267	3,097	3,105
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	12,443	1.7	12,443	19,291	14,653	12,237	17,924	13,614	13,663	13,508	13,179	12,714
571	Furniture and home furnishings	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,937	7,048	5,764	7,522	(*)	6,549	6,448	6,279	6,206
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,591	6,646	5,585	8,592	(*)	6,172	6,125	5,923	5,540
5722	Household appliance stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,055	900	817	1,055	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	119,390	3.9	119,390	168,995	137,447	114,874	159,346	133,450	133,081	132,702	127,024	126,223
53	General merchandise group stores.	23,581	6.8	23,581	50,218	35,007	22,077	46,690	30,611	30,160	30,163	28,517	28,145
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)...	18,268	6.6	18,268	40,505	27,789	17,138	37,859	24,100	23,757	23,670	22,520	22,270
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³ ..	(*)	(*)	(*)	41,136	28,256	17,420	38,519	(*)	24,188	24,092	22,984	22,704
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,776	1,196	710	1,539	(*)	1,040	1,073	950	925
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,937	6,022	4,229	7,292	(*)	5,363	5,420	5,047	4,950
54	Food stores.....	36,689	3.5	36,689	41,220	36,821	35,464	38,789	37,650	37,853	37,536	35,943	35,991
541	Grocery stores.....	34,601	3.6	34,601	38,149	34,511	33,405	35,832	35,307	35,487	35,179	33,640	33,708
554	Gasoline service stations.....	11,558	-2.8	11,558	12,309	11,853	11,888	12,771	12,388	12,446	12,334	12,647	12,874
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,554	1.0	7,554	16,787	11,604	7,479	16,039	10,477	10,376	10,438	10,224	9,957
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,645	1,101	778	1,569	(*)	934	967	904	891
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,450	2,820	1,999	4,356	(*)	2,697	2,636	2,750	2,634
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,183	5,001	2,712	6,639	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,289	1,680	1,284	2,256	(*)	1,755	1,730	1,735	1,741
58	Eating and drinking places.....	19,732	6.3	19,732	21,309	20,152	18,563	19,639	21,355	21,395	21,280	20,003	19,857
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	8,934	6.3	8,934	11,167	8,852	8,405	10,281	9,191	9,116	9,107	8,498	8,352
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,035	2,142	1,819	2,799	(*)	2,240	2,166	2,023	2,072
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,850	5,693	3,948	6,146	(*)	4,567	4,628	4,315	4,028
53,56,57,594	GAF(4).....	(*)	(*)	(*)	104,311	70,280	48,294	97,506	(*)	62,524	62,365	59,956	58,629

* 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-98-12.

(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					
		Jan. 1999 Advance from --		Dec. 1998 Preliminary from --		Nov. 1998 through Jan. 1999 from --	
		Dec. 1998 (p)	Jan. 1998 (r)	Nov. 1998 (r)	Dec. 1997 (r)	Aug. 1998 through Oct. 1998	Nov. 1997 through Jan. 1998
	Retail trade, total	0.2	6.1	1.0	6.8	2.4	6.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.2	5.3	0.6	6.4	1.6	5.8
	Durable goods, total	0.2	7.5	1.9	8.7	3.8	8.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	0.0	9.1	1.9	13.5	4.1	11.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	0.2	8.5	2.2	7.9	4.7	8.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.2	8.5	2.2	8.0	4.9	8.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.4	3.3	1.1	7.5	1.5	6.0
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.3	5.1	0.3	5.4	1.4	5.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	1.5	7.3	0.0	7.2	2.5	7.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	1.4	7.0	0.4	6.7	2.4	6.7
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	0.4	6.5	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.5	4.7	0.8	5.2	1.1	4.6
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.5	5.0	0.9	5.3	1.2	4.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.5	-2.0	0.9	-3.3	-0.2	-3.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.0	2.5	-0.6	4.2	1.5	3.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.2	6.8	0.5	7.7	2.9	7.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.8	8.2	0.1	9.1	1.8	8.7

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	0.1
	Total (excl. auto)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.2
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.2
52	Building materials, group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.4	0.5
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.1	0.5
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.1	0.6
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.4	0.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
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	0.1	0.1
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	0.0	0.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	-0.3	0.5
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	0.4	0.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.1	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 are based on the latest 12 months of data.