

# advance monthly RETAIL SALES



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## DECEMBER 1968

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in December were estimated at \$34.4 billion; this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes, was \$28.3 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment, was about 2 percent below November sales but about 7 percent above December sales last year. Adjusted October-through-December sales averaged about 1 percent below the prior 3 months but 9 percent above the comparable period a year ago. Sales for the full year 1968 amounted to \$340.1 billion, about 8 percent above 1967.

After adjustment, sales of most kinds-of-business in both the nondurable and durable goods store categories showed declines from November.

Average monthly sales for durable goods stores during the October-through-December period were about 3 percent below the average for the prior 3 months, while the average for nondurable goods stores for the comparable period was virtually unchanged. The year-to-year gain in the 3 month average for nondurable goods stores was about 8 percent and about 12 percent for durable goods stores.

Based on the full sample, the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for November was about \$0.3 billion below the \$30.5 billion published earlier in the November Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released December 10, 1968. The seasonally adjusted sales for November as revised were 1 percent above October.

### Sample Revision

The full sample on which the advance monthly data are linked has been revised beginning with the August 1968 data month. For a detailed explanation of the sample revision see the August 1968 Monthly Retail Trade Report.

The December sales figures are based on advance reporting of a small sample of retail firms. Beginning with the October 1967 report, the advance figures have been modified on the basis of the relationship between the advance estimates and full sample estimates. The advance estimates are subject to revision by estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.5 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.8 percent for food stores to 3.4 percent for the furniture group.

It should be noted that even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements between individual pairs of months tend to be relatively irregular. Data for several months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

(more)

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Annual subscription to Current Retail Trade Reports (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription) \$6.00. Single copies, available only from the Bureau of the Census, 10¢.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE C. R. Smith, Secretary  
William H. Chartener, Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS A. Ross Eckler, Director

## SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

Part A. NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)				
	Dec. <sup>1</sup> 1968	Nov. <sup>2</sup> 1968	Dec. 1967	12-month total	
				1968	% change 1968/1967 <sup>3</sup>
Retail stores, total <sup>4</sup> .....	34,365	30,223	32,622	340,100	+8
Durable goods stores, total <sup>4</sup> .....	9,835	9,604	9,032	110,455	+10
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>4</sup> .....	24,530	20,619	23,590	229,645	+7
Food group.....	6,466	6,464	6,562	73,397	+6
Grocery stores.....	6,018	6,042	6,110	68,417	(NA)
Eating and drinking places.....	2,094	2,057	2,041	25,350	+8
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,739	5,456	7,376	54,393	+9
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	7,161	4,970	6,698	49,143	(NA)
Department stores.....	4,886	3,379	4,512	33,094	+12
Apparel group.....	2,722	1,821	2,618	19,357	+7
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,764	1,496	1,738	16,541	+8
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....	1,481	1,588	1,460	19,124	(NA)
Automotive group.....	5,215	5,638	4,523	65,442	+12
Gasoline service stations.....	2,100	2,075	1,958	24,567	+8
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,257	937	1,241	11,433	+7

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, December 1968 from		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, November 1968 from	
	Nov. 1968	Dec. 1967	1968			1967	Oct. 1968	Nov. 1967
			Dec. <sup>1</sup>	Nov. <sup>2</sup>	Oct.	Nov.		
Retail stores, total <sup>4</sup> .....	-2	+7	28,273	28,891	28,706	26,385	+1	+9
Durable goods stores, total <sup>4</sup> .....	-2	+9	9,174	9,320	9,402	8,276	-1	+13
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>4</sup> .....	-2	+6	19,099	19,571	19,304	18,109	+1	+8
Food group.....				6,274	6,133	5,841	+2	+7
Eating and drinking places.....				2,145	2,146	2,012	0	+7
General merchandise group with nonstores.....				4,720	4,622	4,473	+2	+6
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....				4,257	4,141	3,807	+3	+12
Apparel group.....				1,674	1,634	1,517	+2	+10
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,356	1,359	1,295	0	+5
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,615	1,637	1,490	-1	+8
Automotive group.....				5,512	5,623	4,756	-2	+16
Gasoline service stations.....				2,085	2,040	1,955	+2	+7
Drug and proprietary stores.....				948	963	914	-2	+4

<sup>1</sup>Advance sample estimates.      <sup>2</sup>Preliminary estimates of full sample.      <sup>3</sup>The full sample on which the advance monthly data are linked has been revised. Estimates for January through July 1967, used in developing these percentages, were prepared by the Office of Business Economics, U. S. Department of Commerce. (See the August 1968 Monthly Retail Trade Report and the November 1968 Survey of Current Business.)      <sup>4</sup>Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

Source: Bureau of the Census.