



# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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## FEBRUARY 1974

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in February were estimated at \$36.2 billion. The Bureau, part of the Department's Social and Economic Statistics Administration (SESA), said this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes was \$42.6 billion, about 1 percent below January but about 3 percent above February sales last year. Adjusted total December-through-February sales were about 1 percent below the prior 3 months but 5 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for January was about \$0.1 billion less than the \$43.0 billion published earlier in the January Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released February 11, 1974. The seasonally adjusted sales for January as revised were about 2 percent above December.

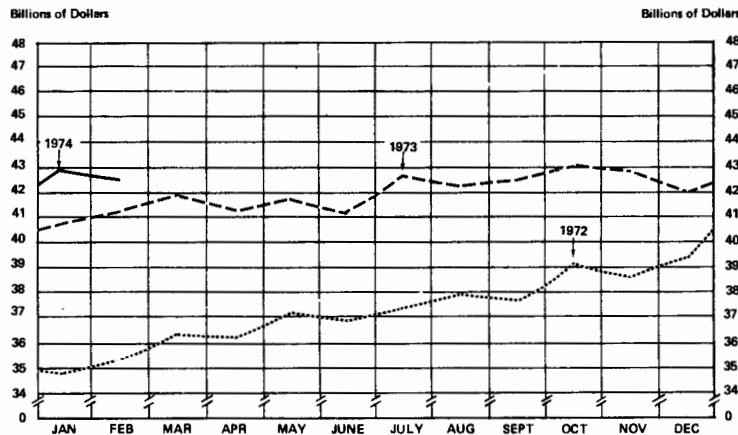
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability between sub-sample and later full sample results can be a cause of difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimate, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between the month-to-month change in advance and full-sample estimates for total retail sales seldom exceed 1.0 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.9 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.7 percent for the Food group to 2.7 percent for the Apparel group.

Even for figures derived from the full sample sale movements from one month to the next can be relatively irregular. Data for 3 months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

MONTHLY SALES OF ALL RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES  
(Data ADJUSTED for seasonal, holiday, and trading day differences)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE | Social and Economic Statistics Administration | BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Data on the retail trade, published in the Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, the Monthly Retail Trade Report, and the Annual Retail Trade Report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402, at \$30.10 per year. Add \$7.55 for each subscription to a foreign address. Single copies of the Monthly Retail Trade Report are available from Publications Distribution Section, Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Washington, D.C., 20233 at 40 cents each.

Table 1. 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)		
	1974		1973
	February <sup>1</sup>	January <sup>2</sup>	February
Total, retail stores <sup>3</sup> .....	36,161	37,894	34,977
Total (excluding automotive group).....	29,924	31,420	27,365
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	11,082	11,458	12,284
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	25,079	26,436	22,693
Food group.....	8,708	9,115	7,646
Grocery stores.....	8,106	8,498	7,106
Eating and drinking places.....	2,873	3,007	2,623
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	5,424	5,536	4,933
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	4,951	5,062	4,469
Department stores.....	3,309	3,387	2,976
Apparel group.....	1,473	1,705	1,460
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,811	1,925	1,754
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,007	1,989	1,945
Automotive group.....	6,237	6,474	7,612
Gasoline service stations.....	2,468	2,767	2,474
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,226	1,266	1,151

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change January 1974 from--	
	1974		1973			December 1973	January 1973
	February <sup>1</sup>	January <sup>2</sup>	December	February	January		
Total, retail stores <sup>3</sup> .....	42,602	42,902	42,116	41,242	40,707	+2	+5
Total (excluding automotive group) <sup>1</sup> ..	35,581	35,425	34,755	34,867	32,200	+2	+10
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	13,057	13,496	13,270	14,405	14,234	+2	-5
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	29,545	29,406	28,846	26,837	26,473	+2	+11
Food group.....		9,520	9,264	8,409	8,476	+3	+12
Eating and drinking places.....		3,345	3,387	3,057	3,057	-1	+9
General merchandise group with nonstores.....		7,268	7,002	6,753	6,590	+4	+10
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....		6,700	6,464	6,223	6,095	+4	+10
Apparel group.....		2,060	2,051	2,012	1,949	0	+6
Furniture and appliance group.....		2,054	1,975	2,021	1,962	+4	+5
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....		2,682	2,661	2,625	2,585	+1	+4
Automotive group.....		7,477	7,400	8,575	8,507	+1	-12
Gasoline service stations.....		2,925	2,902	2,821	2,714	+1	+8
Drug and proprietary stores.....		1,322	1,297	1,254	1,246	+2	+6

<sup>1</sup>Advance sample estimates.   <sup>2</sup>Preliminary estimates of full sample.   <sup>3</sup>Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	February 1974 from--		December 1973 through February 1974 from--	
	January 1974	February 1973	December 1972 through February 1973	
			September 1973 through November 1973	December 1972 through February 1973
Total, retail stores.....	-1	+3	-1	+5
Total (excluding automotive group).....	0	+9	+2	+10
Durable goods stores, total.....	-3	-9	-7	-6
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0	+10	+2	+11

Source: Bureau of the Census