



# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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## MARCH 1974

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in March were estimated at \$42.7 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 \$43.9 billion, about 2 percent above February and about 5 percent above March sales last year. Adjusted total January-through-March sales were about 1 percent above the prior 3 months and 5 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

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.

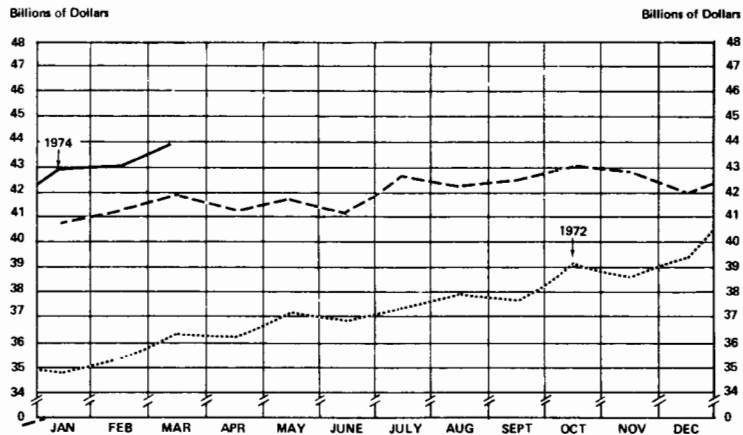
Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for February was about \$40.4 billion more than the \$42.6 billion published earlier in the February Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released March 11, 1974. The seasonally adjusted sales for February as revised were virtually unchanged from January.

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 0.8 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.6 percent for the Food group to 2.8 percent for the Apparel group.

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

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
	March <sup>1</sup>	February <sup>2</sup>	March
Total, retail stores <sup>3</sup> .....	42,677	36,594	41,309
Total (excluding automotive group).....	34,954	30,233	31,935
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	13,465	11,269	14,853
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	29,212	25,325	26,456
Food group.....	9,816	8,730	8,792
Grocery stores.....	9,132	8,129	8,202
Eating and drinking places.....	3,300	2,860	2,975
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	6,641	5,309	6,307
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,081	4,812	5,776
Department stores.....	4,036	3,153	3,868
Apparel group.....	1,847	1,515	1,829
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,034	1,841	1,927
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,582	2,059	2,448
Automotive group.....	7,723	6,361	9,374
Gasoline service stations.....	3,118	2,665	2,773
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,332	1,247	1,222

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change February 1974 from--	
	1974			1973		January 1974	February 1973
	March <sup>1</sup>	February <sup>2</sup>	January	March	February		
Total, retail stores <sup>3</sup> .....	43,897	43,034	42,932	41,979	41,242	0	+4
Total (excluding automotive group)..	36,577	35,832	35,458	33,210	32,667	+1	+10
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	13,502	13,290	13,525	14,612	14,405	-2	-8
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	30,395	29,744	29,407	27,367	26,837	+1	+11
Food group.....	9,612	9,551	8,431	8,409	8,409	+1	+14
Eating and drinking places.....	3,333	3,331	3,089	3,057	3,057	0	+9
General merchandise group with nonstores	7,221	7,234	7,137	6,753	6,753	0	+7
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,663	6,666	6,621	6,223	6,223	0	+7
Apparel group.....	2,072	2,053	2,175	2,012	2,012	+1	+3
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,073	2,058	2,014	2,021	2,021	+1	+3
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,764	2,716	2,614	2,625	2,625	+2	+5
Automotive group.....	7,202	7,474	8,769	8,575	8,575	-4	-16
Gasoline service stations.....	3,028	2,952	2,821	2,821	2,821	+3	+7
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,361	1,323	1,241	1,254	1,254	+3	+9

<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	March 1974 from--		January 1974 through March 1974 from--	
	February 1974	March 1973	October 1973 through December 1973	January 1973 through March 1973
Total, retail stores.....	+2	+5	+1	+5
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+2	+10	+4	+10
Durable goods stores, total.....	+2	-8	-3	-7
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+2	+11	+4	+11

Source: Bureau of the Census

