

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

August 1985

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, Friday, September 13, 1985

B-85-167

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for August, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$116.1 billion, up 1.9 percent from July and 8.1 percent above August last year. Excluding the automotive group, August sales were little changed from July but were 4.2 percent above sales last year. Sales in the June through August period were 0.5 percent above the prior three months and 6.1 percent above the same months a year ago.

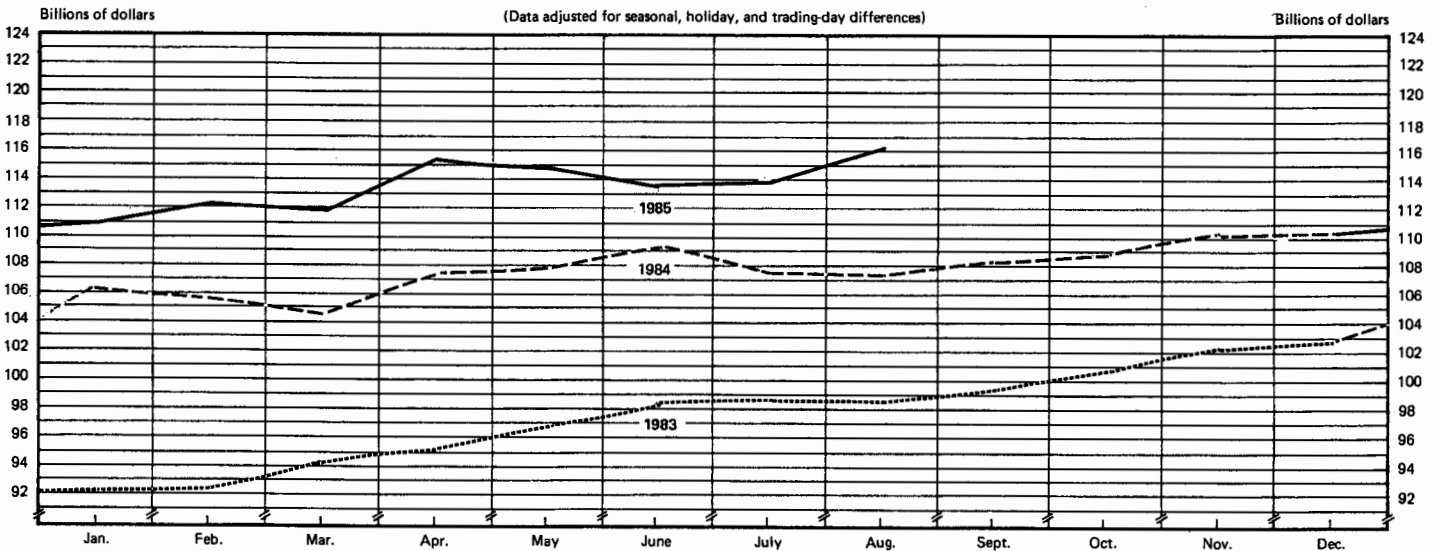
Durable goods increased 4.0 percent during the month primarily due to automotive sales which rose 7.1 percent from July. Furniture sales were little changed compared to the previous month but were 7.3 percent higher than August a year ago. Building materials were also little changed compared to July but were 5.4 percent above August 1984.

Nondurable goods were at about the same level as July but were 4.1 percent above August last year. General merchandise increased 2.9 in August and 6.2 percent from sales a year ago. Gasoline service stations sales increased during the month and were 5.9 percent above last year. Drug stores gained 1.6 percent from July and were 8.7 above August 1984. Compared to August last year, the food and apparel groups showed increases of 2.4 and 8.0 percent, respectively.

For a description of the sample design and reliability of the data, see back page.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for September is scheduled to be released October 11, 1985, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1983-August 1985



Inquiries concerning this report should be addressed to Ronald Pienycoski, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-5294/7561.



U.S. Department of Commerce
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The 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, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$37 per year. Add \$9.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1985			1984		1985			1984	
		Aug. ² adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug.	July	Aug. ² adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug.	July
	Retail trade, total.....	120,140	114,980	114,962	111,159	106,875	116,102	113,912	113,730	107,396	107,563
	Total (excl. auto group)..	91,693	87,226	87,515	87,257	82,800	88,484	88,115	87,910	84,893	84,524
	Durable goods, total.....	45,370	44,514	44,236	40,119	39,546	43,906	42,218	42,064	38,071	38,465
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	6,683	6,847	6,740	6,420	6,381	6,053	6,051	5,852	5,741	5,763
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	5,051	4,900	4,713	4,681	(*)	4,385	4,283	4,120	4,135
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	885	904	838	831	(*)	834	817	820	802
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	28,447	27,754	27,447	23,902	24,075	27,618	25,797	25,820	22,503	23,039
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	26,235	25,471	25,240	21,708	21,873	25,570	23,716	23,744	20,479	20,991
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	23,140	22,553	19,613	19,743	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,283	2,207	2,194	2,202	(*)	2,081	2,076	2,024	2,048
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,833	5,619	5,562	5,381	5,000	5,663	5,682	5,718	5,279	5,154
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,042	3,026	3,058	2,819	(*)	3,091	3,038	2,938	2,894
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,187	2,154	1,972	1,851	(*)	2,163	2,260	1,986	1,889
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	754	723	697	701	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	74,770	70,466	70,726	71,040	67,329	72,196	71,694	71,666	69,325	69,098
53	General merchandise group stores..	13,524	11,536	12,412	12,525	10,991	13,503	13,117	13,063	12,711	12,557
531	Department stores.....	11,494	9,741	10,469	10,572	9,268	11,448	11,082	10,962	10,700	10,597
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	668	693	739	670	(*)	721	741	732	736
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,127	1,250	1,214	1,053	(*)	1,314	1,360	1,279	1,229
54	Food stores.....	24,507	23,908	23,542	23,480	22,952	23,128	23,312	23,355	22,585	22,662
541	Grocery stores.....	23,079	22,516	22,142	22,063	21,546	21,711	21,945	21,966	21,174	21,269
554	Gasoline service stations.....	9,267	9,175	8,947	8,771	8,786	8,701	8,559	8,628	8,220	8,234
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,216	5,210	5,465	5,605	4,854	5,886	5,827	5,915	5,448	5,519
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	567	674	626	568	(*)	665	688	670	675
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,248	2,237	2,250	2,063	(*)	2,495	2,464	2,259	2,315
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,387	1,461	1,556	1,292	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	784	876	910	735	(*)	899	921	858	857
58	Eating and drinking places.....	11,805	11,574	11,462	11,502	11,058	10,791	10,857	10,895	10,591	10,364
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,937	3,815	3,782	3,640	3,501	4,005	3,941	3,907	3,684	3,654
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,672	1,582	1,695	1,689	(*)	1,626	1,592	1,654	1,666
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	326	303	398	317	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ³	(*)	25,542	26,815	26,904	23,870	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-07).

²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

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)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Aug. 1985 advance from--		July 1985 preliminary from--		June 1985 through Aug. 1985	
		July 1985 prelim.	Aug. 1984 final	June 1985 final	July 1984 final	Mar. 1985 through May 1985	June 1984 through Aug. 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	+1.9	+8.1	+0.2	+5.9	+0.5	+6.1
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.4	+4.2	+0.2	+4.2	-0.3	+3.9
	Durable goods, total.....	+4.0	+15.3	+0.4	+9.8	+1.3	+10.5
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.0	+5.4	+3.4	+5.0	-0.7	+4.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+7.1	+22.7	-0.1	+12.0	+3.1	+14.3
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+7.8	+24.9	-0.1	+13.0	+3.6	+15.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.3	+7.3	-0.6	+10.2	-0.9	+8.7
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.7	+4.1	0.0	+3.8	0.0	+3.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+2.9	+6.2	+0.4	+4.5	-1.0	+4.1
531	Department stores.....	+3.3	+7.0	+1.1	+4.6	-0.3	+4.4
54	Food stores.....	-0.8	+2.4	-0.2	+2.9	+0.1	+3.0
541	Grocery stores.....	-1.1	+2.5	-0.1	+3.2	+0.4	+3.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.7	+5.9	-0.8	+3.9	-0.3	+4.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.0	+8.0	-1.5	+5.6	-1.3	+5.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.6	+1.9	-0.3	+4.8	0.0	+4.2
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.6	+8.7	+0.9	+7.9	+1.9	+7.8

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		July 1985 prelim.	June 1985 final	July 1984	July 1985 prelim.	June 1985 final	July 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	37,399	37,997	35,131	39,137	38,964	37,135
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,642	11,488	10,117	12,137	12,080	11,595
531	Department stores.....	9,322	10,025	8,873	10,581	10,486	10,129
533	Variety stores.....	558	588	549	615	626	615
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	762	875	695	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	13,127	12,943	12,341	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	12,973	12,787	12,192	12,870	12,890	12,315
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,017	2,134	1,776	2,321	2,312	2,077
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	950	942	806	1,054	1,024	902
566	Shoe stores.....	373	425	347	442	462	422
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,087	2,074	1,916	2,176	2,140	2,006

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-07).

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).



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Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -0.6 percent to +1.6 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.5 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for July 1985 and final estimates for June 1985 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for July (BR-85-07). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. The complete report will include additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of business	Estimated coefficient of variation in percent of the advance-to-preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range ¹		Median	Range ²		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.7	-0.6	+1.6	+0.2	0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.6	0.9	0.7	-0.9	+1.0	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.0	1.7	1.4	-2.0	+2.7	0.0	1.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.3	3.6	2.0	-2.4	+5.0	+0.6	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.4	1.8	-2.0	+2.4	+0.1	1.1
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.2	2.2	1.4	-2.4	+2.9	+0.2	1.3
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.3	2.5	-4.6	+3.4	-0.4	1.6
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.4	0.7	0.5	-0.6	+0.7	0.0	0.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.6	0.5	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.6
531	Department stores.....	0.1	0.5	0.2	-1.1	+1.9	+0.3	0.7
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.1	1.0	-1.0	+0.6	+0.1	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.4	-1.2	+0.6	0.0	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-3.8	+3.0	-0.4	1.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.7	2.1	-1.7	+2.2	0.0	1.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.5	1.2	0.9	-2.5	+3.2	+0.1	1.4
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.5	1.4	0.6	-2.1	+2.2	-0.1	0.9

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of January-December 1983.

²The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, August 1984-July 1985. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period December 1983-November 1984.

Note: See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.