

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales



U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

May 1990

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The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for May adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$146.8 billion, a decrease of 0.7 percent ( $\pm 1.1\%$ ) from the previous month, but 1.5 percent above May 1989. Total sales in the March through May period were 3.4 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods decreased 1.1 percent ( $\pm 2.6\%$ ) from the previous month. Building materials decreased 4.2 percent from April and were 6.6 percent below May last year.

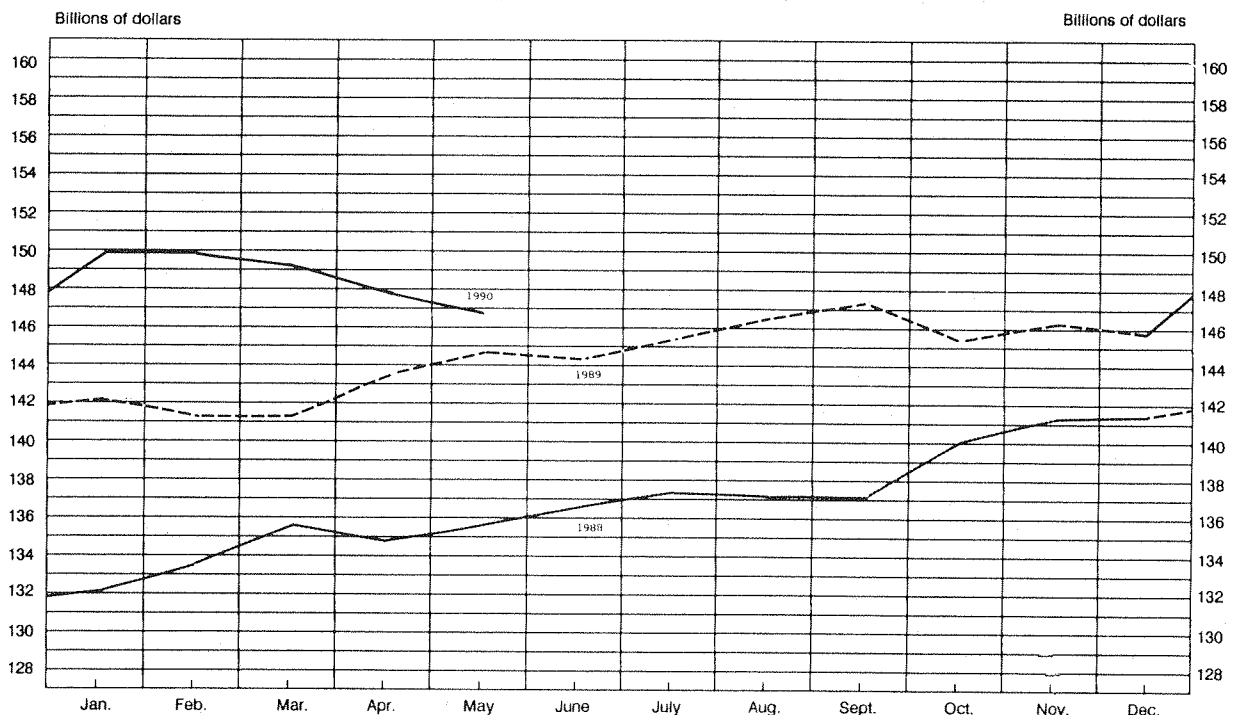
Nondurable goods decreased 0.5 percent ( $\pm 1.5\%$ ) from the previous month but were 3.3 percent above last year. General merchandise decreased 1.0 percent from April but was 3.3 percent above May 1989. Food stores were up 4.6 percent from the previous year.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for June is scheduled to be released July 13, 1990, at 8:30 a.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1988-May 1990

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (N-8-1) (202-377-3870) and through the Census Bureau's online information service-CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2464) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1990			1989		1990			1989	
		May <sup>2</sup> adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.	May <sup>2</sup> adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May <sup>2</sup> adv.	Apr. <sup>2</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	152,944	144,850	148,334	150,259	139,785	146,843	147,931	149,302	144,715	143,744
	Total (excl. auto group)..	118,604	112,459	115,008	114,902	107,196	116,060	116,965	117,818	113,156	111,933
	Durable goods, total.....	57,704	53,996	54,970	58,894	53,584	53,169	53,756	54,663	54,049	53,986
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	8,790	8,020	7,456	9,446	8,150	7,319	7,639	7,890	7,834	7,786
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	5,747	5,446	6,512	5,695	(*)	5,679	5,806	5,692	5,684
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,079	1,010	1,149	1,042	(*)	1,039	1,062	1,019	984
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	34,340	32,391	33,326	35,357	32,589	30,783	30,966	31,484	31,559	31,811
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	31,476	29,666	30,601	32,648	30,079	28,053	28,200	28,706	28,969	29,288
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	25,723	26,738	28,166	26,120	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	2,725	2,725	2,709	2,510	(*)	2,766	2,778	2,590	2,523
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,584	7,189	7,541	7,331	6,908	7,755	7,841	7,804	7,510	7,494
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,989	4,176	4,148	3,956	(*)	4,173	4,214	4,087	4,138
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,560	2,676	2,608	2,381	(*)	2,932	2,847	2,780	2,706
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	692	698	701	632	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	95,240	90,854	93,364	91,365	86,201	93,674	94,175	94,639	90,666	89,758
53	General merchandise group stores..	17,013	15,908	16,189	16,214	15,305	17,079	17,252	17,621	16,538	16,684
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.) <sup>3</sup>	13,741	13,000	13,248	13,056	12,482	13,852	14,024	14,322	13,377	13,538
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts)	(*)	13,406	13,667	13,445	12,871	(*)	14,415	14,791	13,719	13,915
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	567	544	555	519	(*)	571	584	571	563
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	2,341	2,397	2,603	2,304	(*)	2,657	2,715	2,590	2,583
54	Food stores.....	31,468	29,629	30,949	29,784	27,917	30,437	30,743	30,380	29,100	28,752
541	Grocery stores.....	29,590	27,784	29,123	28,083	26,370	28,617	28,881	28,552	27,452	27,130
554	Gasoline service stations.....	10,076	9,783	9,772	10,425	9,636	9,642	9,803	9,992	10,005	9,655
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,781	7,606	7,565	7,322	7,027	7,932	7,745	7,937	7,587	7,566
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	741	709	766	736	(*)	770	826	785	791
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,721	2,686	2,655	2,545	(*)	2,782	2,824	2,718	2,696
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,037	2,099	1,917	1,811	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,504	1,477	1,434	1,384	(*)	1,387	1,428	1,420	1,425
58	Eating and drinking places.....	15,453	14,902	15,229	14,909	14,382	14,930	15,007	15,168	14,419	14,382
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	5,392	5,291	5,277	5,056	4,701	5,339	5,410	5,298	5,016	4,938
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,564	1,603	1,686	1,547	(*)	1,704	1,716	1,688	1,674
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	353	370	356	339	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57 594	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	35,341	36,136	35,718	33,461	(*)	38,426	39,071	36,840	36,942

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

NA Not available. <sup>2</sup> Revised

<sup>1</sup> Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. 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-90-04.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

<sup>4</sup> GAF 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					
		May 1990 advance from--		Apr. 1990 preliminary from--		Mar. 1990 through May 1990	
		Apr. 1990 prelim.	May 1989 final	Mar. 1990 final	Apr. 1989 final	Dec. 1989 through Feb. 1990	Mar. 1989 through May 1989
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.7	+1.5	-0.9	+2.9	-0.3	+3.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	-0.8	+2.6	-0.7	+4.5	+0.1	+4.6
	Durable goods, total.....	-1.1	-1.6	-1.7	-0.4	-1.4	+0.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-4.2	-6.6	-3.2	-1.9	-2.6	-0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.6	-2.5	-1.6	-2.7	-2.0	-1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-0.5	-3.2	-1.8	-3.7	-2.2	-2.0
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.1	+3.3	+0.5	+4.6	+2.2	+4.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.5	+3.3	-0.5	+4.9	+0.3	+5.0
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-1.0	+3.3	-2.1	+3.4	-1.6	+4.6
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-1.2	+3.6	-2.1	+3.6	-1.2	+4.9
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	-2.5	+3.6	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-1.0	+4.6	+1.2	+6.9	+1.7	+5.9
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.9	+4.2	+1.2	+6.5	+1.6	+5.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.6	-3.6	-1.9	+1.5	-2.0	+1.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+2.4	+4.5	-2.4	+2.4	+2.0	+5.7
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.5	+3.5	-1.1	+4.3	+1.4	+4.5
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-1.3	+6.4	+2.1	+9.6	+0.4	+7.2

**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 <sup>1</sup>		
		Apr. 1990 prelim.	Mar. 1990 final	Apr. 1989	Apr. 1990 prelim.	Mar. 1990 final	Apr. <sup>r</sup> 1989
	Retail trade, total.....	53,769	55,359	50,659	56,370	56,837	53,374
53	General merchandise group stores.....	14,612	14,902	14,036	15,907	16,288	15,354
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	12,596	12,826	12,044	13,588	13,926	13,049
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	12,987	13,232	12,421	13,980	14,320	13,414
533	Variety stores.....	445	427	413	455	460	452
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,571	1,649	1,579	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	16,559	17,574	15,647	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	16,313	17,343	15,468	16,975	16,805	15,914
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,187	4,232	3,783	4,232	4,415	4,121
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,449	1,460	1,375	1,485	1,526	1,485
566	Shoe stores.....	989	955	858	903	917	913
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,262	3,181	2,763	3,346	3,213	2,952

NA Not available. <sup>r</sup> Revised

<sup>1</sup> Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. 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-90-04.

<sup>2</sup> Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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 - 0.4 percent to + 1.2 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.4 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 April 1990 and final estimates for March 1990 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for April (BR-90-04). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up .8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is - .4 percent to + 2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with 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						Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Advance-to- preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Aver. of absolute diff.	
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Median	Median	Median	From To			
		From	To					From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.4	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-0.3	+0.5	+0.1	0.2
	Durable goods, total..	1.4	2.0	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.2	-0.9	+1.7	-0.1	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores.....	1.1	3.0	1.7	3.8	3.2	3.1	-1.9	+3.1	0.0	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	2.4	2.0	3.2	2.6	3.0	-2.1	+2.9	-0.1	0.9
551,2,5, 6,7,9 57	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.3	2.0	1.6	4.0	2.8	3.3	-2.5	+3.3	-0.1	1.0
	Furniture, home furn. and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.8	2.1	4.2	3.9	3.1	-1.9	+5.0	+0.5	1.5
	Nondur. stores, total...	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.2	+0.7	+0.1	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	-0.9	+1.3	0.0	0.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.5	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.6	-0.4	+1.5	+0.2	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.6	-0.5	+1.3	+0.2	0.4
554	Gasoline service stations...	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.9	2.1	2.7	-1.8	+1.9	0.0	0.7
56	Apparel and acc. stores.....	1.1	3.6	1.7	2.5	2.0	1.9	-3.9	+3.8	+0.2	1.4
58	Eating and drinking .....	0.4	1.9	0.8	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary .....	0.6	1.8	0.7	2.5	1.9	2.1	-1.7	+2.1	+0.3	0.7

<sup>1</sup>The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1988 - October 1989.

<sup>2</sup>The 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, May 1989 - April 1990. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period October 1988 - September 1989.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.