

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, MARCH 1960

Total sales of retail stores in March were \$17.2 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, was virtually unchanged from February and about 1 percent above March 1959.

The March sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 2,000 retail firms which, in total, operate some 39,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger sample group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are subject to revision, on the basis of estimates subsequently derived from the full sample, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent.

The advance Census figures for March are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics indicated that, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, sales in March were unchanged from February as small gains at food and general merchandise stores about offset declines at lumber, building, hardware dealers and furniture and appliance stores. Estimates for February for the full sample indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were virtually unchanged from January.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MARCH 1960

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1960		1959
	March ¹	February ²	March
Retail stores, total ³	17,223	15,834	17,190
Durable-goods stores, total ³	5,756	5,216	5,831
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	11,467	10,618	11,359
Food group.....	4,320	4,062	4,108
Grocery stores.....	3,861	3,612	3,658
Eating and drinking places.....	1,220	1,162	1,157
General merchandise group.....	1,668	1,434	1,733
Department stores.....	968	808	986
Apparel group.....	934	802	1,101
Furniture and appliance group.....	823	794	808
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group.....	1,006	902	1,134
Automotive group.....	3,492	3,115	3,464
Gasoline service stations.....	1,369	1,289	1,318
Drug and proprietary stores.....	608	607	580

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Mar. 1960 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change Feb. 1960 from--	
	Feb. 1960	Mar. 1959	1960		1959		Jan. 1960	Feb. 1959
			Mar. ¹	Feb. ²	Jan.	Feb.		
Retail stores, total ³	0	+1	18,047	18,104	18,090	17,575	0	+3
Durable-goods stores, total ³	-2	-3	5,876	6,018	5,891	5,869	+2	+3
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	+1	+3	12,171	12,086	12,199	11,706	-1	+3
Food group.....				4,394	4,395	4,274	0	+3
Eating and drinking places.....				1,321	1,332	1,243	-1	+6
General merchandise group.....				1,902	1,967	1,855	-3	+3
Apparel group.....				1,132	1,164	1,082	-3	+5
Furniture and appliance group.....				913	916	889	0	+3
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,241	1,242	1,251	0	-1
Automotive group.....				3,382	3,230	3,249	+5	+4
Gasoline service stations.....				1,426	1,449	1,368	-2	+4
Drug and proprietary stores.....				627	627	569	0	+10

Source: Office of Business Economics

¹ Advance sample estimates. ² Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

⁴ Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

Note: Effective with January 1960, the statistics include retail sales in Alaska and Hawaii which in 1958, according to preliminary results of the Retail Census, accounted for approximately 0.1 and 0.3 percent, respectively of the United States total.