



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

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The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in October were estimated at \$38.7 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 \$38.8 billion, about 3 percent above September and about 11 percent above October sales last year. Adjusted total August-through-October sales averaged about 3 percent above the prior 3 months and 9 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for September was about \$0.4 billion more than the \$37.3 billion published earlier in the September Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released October 10, 1972. The seasonally adjusted sales for September as revised were about 1 percent below August.

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 0.5 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.8 percent for the general merchandise group to 2.8 percent for the Building materials group.

Even for figures derived from the full sample, sales 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)

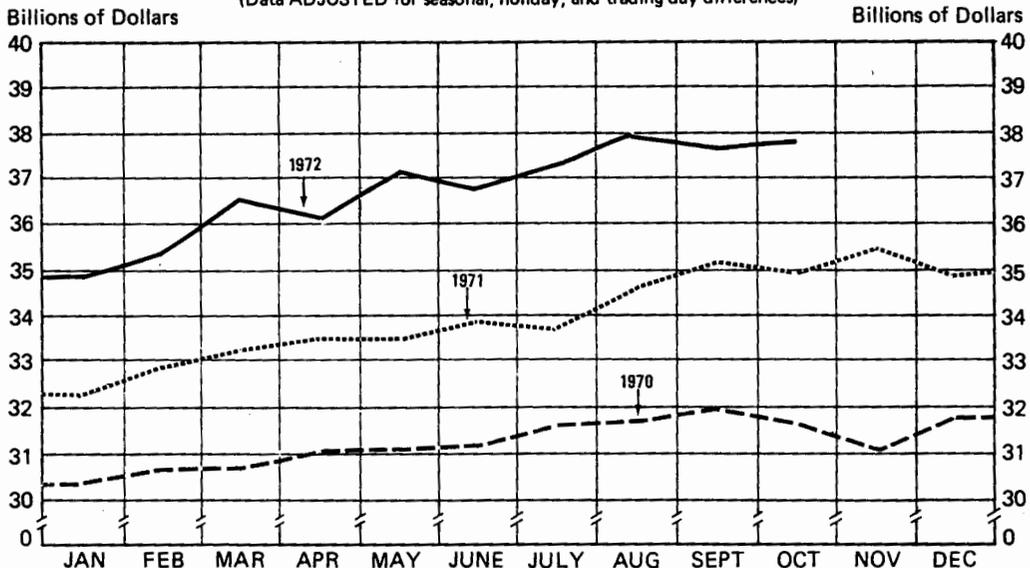


Table 1. Sales of Retail Stores in the United States, by Kind-of-Business Group

Part A. NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1972		1971
	October ¹	September ²	October
Total, retail stores ³	38,662	37,453	35,659
Total (excluding automotive group).....	30,585	30,252	28,330
Durable goods stores, total ³	13,497	12,482	12,089
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	25,165	24,971	23,570
Food group.....	7,828	8,241	7,566
Grocery stores.....	7,253	7,656	7,022
Eating and drinking places.....	2,875	2,891	2,722
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	6,511	6,143	5,862
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	5,942	5,624	5,291
Department stores.....	3,991	3,818	3,568
Apparel group.....	1,861	1,867	1,741
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,782	1,760	1,610
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,576	2,456	2,215
Automotive group.....	8,077	7,201	7,329
Gasoline service stations.....	2,643	2,607	2,509
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,192	1,195	1,115

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change from--	
	1972			1971		August 1972	September 1971
	October ¹	September ²	August ²	October	September		
Total, retail stores ³	38,750	37,683	37,969	34,964	35,219	-1	+7
Total (excluding automotive group).....	30,862	30,171	30,246	27,855	27,854	0	+8
Durable goods stores, total ³	13,095	12,598	12,842	11,695	11,833	-2	+6
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	25,655	25,085	25,127	23,269	23,386	0	+7
Food group.....		7,994	8,039	7,391	7,516	-1	+6
Eating and drinking places.....		2,780	2,797	2,632	2,573	-1	+8
General merchandise group with nonstores.....		6,326	6,288	5,817	5,872	+1	+8
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....		5,854	5,772	5,247	5,315	+1	+10
Apparel group.....		1,856	1,813	1,700	1,683	+2	+10
Furniture and appliance group.....		1,750	1,797	1,583	1,497	-3	+17
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....		2,230	2,246	2,011	1,996	-1	+12
Automotive group.....		7,512	7,723	7,109	7,365	-3	+2
Gasoline service stations.....		2,612	2,622	2,494	2,523	0	+4
Drug and proprietary stores.....		1,216	1,246	1,133	1,138	-2	+7

¹Advance sample estimates. ²Preliminary estimates of full sample. ³Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately. ⁴During months of model changeover, seasonal adjustment factors are less reliable than in other months.

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	October 1972 from--		August 1972 through October 1972 from--	
	September 1972	October 1971	May 1972 through July 1972	August 1971 through October 1971
Total, retail stores.....	+3	+11	+3	+9
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+2½	+11	+2	+9
Durable goods stores, total.....	+4	+12	+4	+11
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+2½	+10	+2	+8

Source: Bureau of the Census