

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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## APRIL 1974

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in April were estimated at \$44.3 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 \$44.4 billion, about 1 percent above March and about 8 percent above April sales last year. Adjusted total February-through-April sales were about 3 percent above the prior 3 months and 6 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for March was about \$0.1 billion less than the \$43.9 billion published earlier in the March Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released April 10, 1974. The seasonally adjusted sales for March as revised were about 2 percent above February.

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

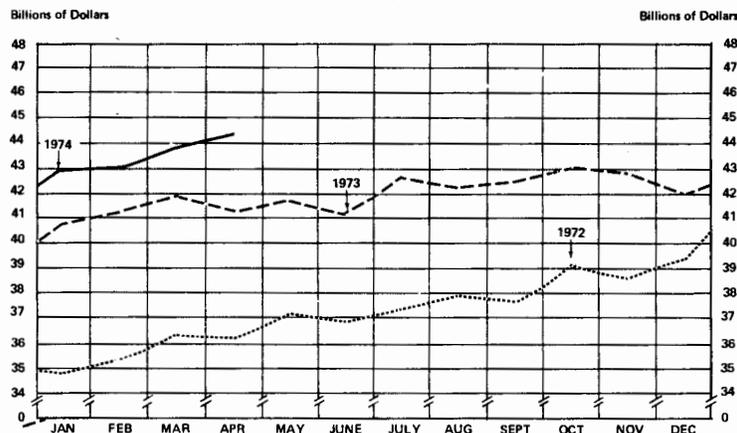
from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability 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 0.8 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.6 percent for the Food group to 2.4 percent for the Apparel group.

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
	April <sup>1</sup>	March <sup>2</sup>	April
Total, retail stores <sup>3</sup> .....	44,335	42,618	40,686
Total (excluding automotive group).....	35,905	34,879	31,697
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	14,547	13,538	14,535
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	29,788	29,080	26,151
Food group.....	9,305	9,770	8,171
Grocery stores.....	8,651	9,107	7,579
Eating and drinking places.....	3,257	3,257	2,950
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,313	6,729	6,467
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,746	6,172	5,975
Department stores.....	4,546	4,130	4,055
Apparel group.....	2,177	1,860	2,007
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,048	2,101	1,856
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,863	2,551	2,566
Automotive group.....	8,430	7,739	8,989
Gasoline service stations.....	3,239	3,028	2,808
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,349	1,339	1,219

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change March 1974 from--	
	1974		1973			February 1974	March 1973
	April <sup>1</sup>	March <sup>2</sup>	February	April	March		
Total, retail stores <sup>3</sup> .....	44,409	43,792	43,134	41,185	41,979	+2	+4
Total (excluding automotive group) <sup>1</sup> ..	36,625	36,443	35,898	32,630	33,210	+2	+10
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	14,019	13,603	13,327	14,339	14,612	+2	-7
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	30,390	30,189	29,807	26,846	27,367	+1	+10
Food group.....	9,629	9,634	9,634	8,616	8,431	0	+14
Eating and drinking places.....	3,337	3,326	3,326	3,060	3,089	0	+8
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,537	7,237	7,237	6,696	7,137	+4	+6
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,990	6,677	6,677	6,166	6,621	+5	+6
Apparel group.....	2,164	2,074	2,074	1,878	2,175	+4	-1
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,217	2,032	2,032	2,024	2,014	+9	+10
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,757	2,797	2,797	2,518	2,614	-1	+5
Automotive group.....	7,349	7,236	7,236	8,555	8,769	+2	-16
Gasoline service stations.....	3,093	3,059	3,059	2,868	2,821	+1	+10
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,386	1,370	1,370	1,280	1,241	+1	+12

<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	April 1974 from--		February 1974 through April 1974 from--	
	March 1974	April 1973	November 1973 through January 1974	February 1973 through April 1973
Total, retail stores.....	+1	+8	+3	+6
Total (excluding automotive group).....	0	+12	+4	+11
Durable goods stores, total.....	+3	-2	0	-6
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+1	+13	+4	+12

Source: Bureau of the Census