



Advance Monthly Retail Sales

For release June 10, 1974 2:30 P.M.
(301) 763-7660

CB-74-141

MAY 1974

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in May were estimated at \$46.5 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 April and about 6 percent above May sales last year. Adjusted total March-through-May 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 April was about \$0.5 billion less than the \$44.4 billion published earlier in the April Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released May 10, 1974. The seasonally adjusted sales for April as revised were virtually unchanged from March.

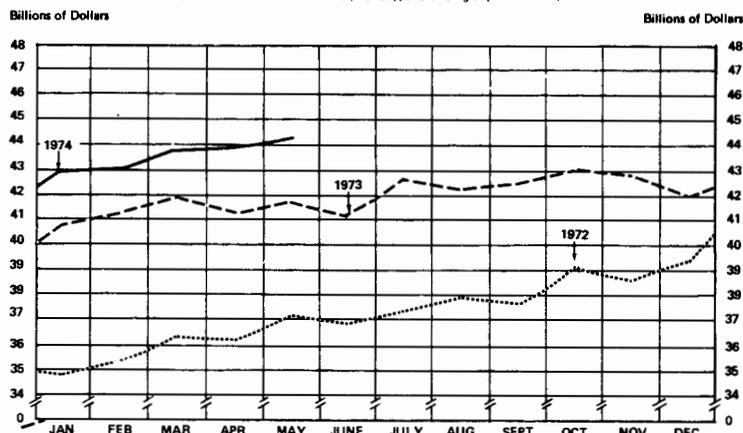
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

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 0.5 percent for the Food group to 2.2 percent for the Gasoline 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
	May ¹	April ²	May
Total, retail stores ³	46,511	43,872	43,178
Total (excluding automotive group).....	37,805	35,649	33,750
Durable goods stores, total ³	15,319	14,322	15,465
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	31,192	29,550	27,713
Food group.....	10,053	9,267	8,745
Grocery stores.....	9,376	8,600	8,139
Eating and drinking places.....	3,626	3,272	3,238
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,413	7,166	6,713
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,838	6,617	6,194
Department stores.....	4,640	4,478	4,229
Apparel group.....	2,039	2,121	1,908
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,181	2,026	1,953
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	3,064	2,826	2,847
Automotive group.....	8,706	8,223	9,428
Gasoline service stations.....	3,393	3,190	2,947
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,375	1,333	1,281

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change April 1974 from--	
	1974			1973		March 1974	April 1973
	May ¹	April ²	March	May	April		
Total, retail stores ³	44,383	43,958	43,872	41,723	41,185	0	+7
Total (excluding automotive group).....	36,603	36,359	36,469	33,220	32,630	0	+11
Durable goods stores, total ³	14,126	13,818	13,660	14,299	14,339	+1	-4
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	30,257	30,140	30,212	27,424	26,846	0	+12
Food group.....	9,605	9,594	9,594	8,665	8,616	0	+11
Eating and drinking places.....	3,412	3,318	3,318	3,096	3,060	+3	+12
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,437	7,543	7,543	6,917	6,696	-1	+11
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,865	6,992	6,992	6,386	6,166	-2	+11
Apparel group.....	2,003	2,149	2,149	1,962	1,878	-7	+7
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,152	2,191	2,191	1,995	2,024	-2	+6
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,728	2,764	2,764	2,560	2,518	-1	+8
Automotive group.....	7,599	7,403	7,403	8,503	8,555	+3	-11
Gasoline service stations.....	3,245	3,154	3,154	2,884	2,868	+3	+13
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,377	1,376	1,376	1,291	1,280	0	+8

¹Advance sample estimates.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³Totals 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	May 1974 from--		March 1974 through May 1974 from--	
	April 1974	May 1973	December 1973 through February 1974	March 1973 through May 1973
	Total, retail stores.....	+1	+6	+3
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+1	+10	+3	+10
Durable goods stores, total.....	+2	-1	+4	-4
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0	+10	+3	+11

Source: Bureau of the Census

