



# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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## MARCH 1975

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in March were estimated at \$45.6 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 \$46.6 billion, about 1 percent below February but about 6 percent above March sales last year. Adjusted January-through-March total sales were about 3 percent above the prior 3 months and 7 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. Adjusted sales estimate for February was about \$40.7 billion above the \$46.1 billion published earlier in the February Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released March 10, 1975. The seasonally adjusted sales for February, as revised, were about 2 percent above January.

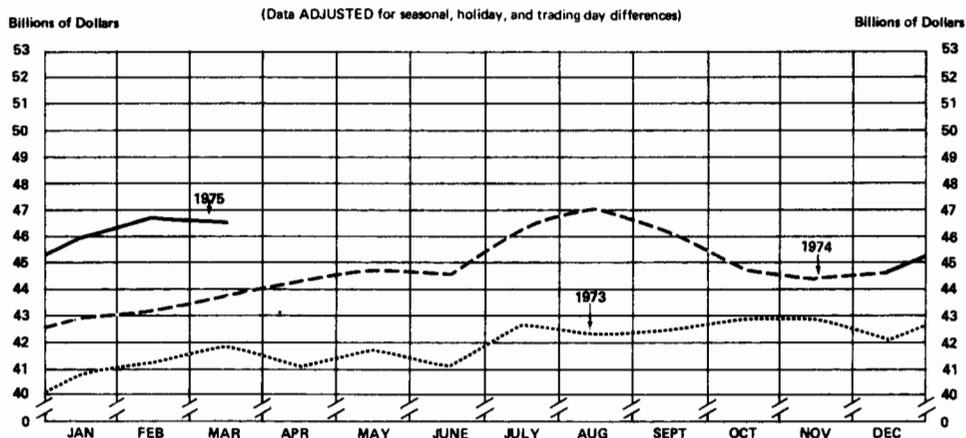
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

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 0.7 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.5 percent for the Food group to 2.3 percent for the Furniture 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



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

Data on 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 Advance Monthly Retail Trade Report are available from Subscriber Services Section (Publications), Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Washington, D. C., 20233 at 25 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)		
	1975		1974
	March <sup>1</sup>	February <sup>2</sup>	March
Total, retail stores <sup>3</sup> .....	45,599	39,812	42,709
Total (excluding automotive group).....	37,533	32,591	34,911
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	13,937	12,264	13,603
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	31,662	27,548	29,106
Food stores, total.....	10,760	9,704	9,734
Grocery stores.....	10,035	9,061	9,072
Eating and drinking places.....	3,740	3,306	3,238
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,000	5,524	6,735
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,461	5,036	6,174
Department stores.....	4,314	3,317	4,132
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	2,149	1,610	1,848
Furniture home furnishings and equipment stores, total.....	2,031	1,815	2,077
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total.....	2,533	2,058	2,561
Automotive dealers, total.....	8,066	7,221	7,798
Gasoline service stations.....	3,398	3,039	3,088
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,401	1,327	1,329

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change February 1975 from--	
	1975		1974			January 1975	February 1974
	March <sup>1</sup>	February <sup>2</sup>	January	March	February		
Total, retail stores <sup>3</sup> .....	46,550	46,830	45,955	43,872	43,134	+2	+9
Total (excluding automotive group).....	38,917	38,546	38,259	36,469	35,898	+1	+7
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	13,995	14,552	14,075	13,660	13,327	+3	+9
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	32,555	32,278	31,880	30,212	29,807	+1	+8
Food stores, total.....	10,671	10,671	10,672	9,594	9,634	0	+11
Eating and drinking places.....	3,849	3,849	3,784	3,318	3,326	+2	+16
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,529	7,529	7,261	7,543	7,237	+4	+4
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,996	6,996	6,704	6,992	6,677	+4	+5
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	2,196	2,196	2,118	2,149	2,074	+4	+6
Furniture home furnishings and equipment stores, total.....	2,076	2,076	2,040	2,191	2,032	+2	+2
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total.....	2,737	2,737	2,886	2,764	2,797	-5	-2
Automotive dealers, total.....	8,284	8,284	7,696	7,403	7,236	+8	+14
Gasoline service stations.....	3,449	3,449	3,465	3,154	3,059	0	+13
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,444	1,444	1,436	1,376	1,370	+1	+5

<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	March 1975 from--		January 1975 through March 1975 from--	
	February 1975	March 1974	October 1974 through December 1974	January 1974 through March 1974
Total, retail stores.....	-1	+6	+3	+7
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+1	+6	+2	+7
Durable goods stores, total.....	-4	+2	+7	+5
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+1	+8	+2	+8

Source: Bureau of the Census