



Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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MAY 1975

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in May were estimated at \$50.6 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 \$47.5 billion, about 2 percent above April and about 6 percent above May sales last year. Adjusted March-through-May total sales were about 2 percent above the prior 3 months and 5 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for April was about \$0.1 billion below the \$46.6 billion published earlier in the April Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released May 9, 1975. The seasonally adjusted sales for April, as revised, were about 1 percent above March.

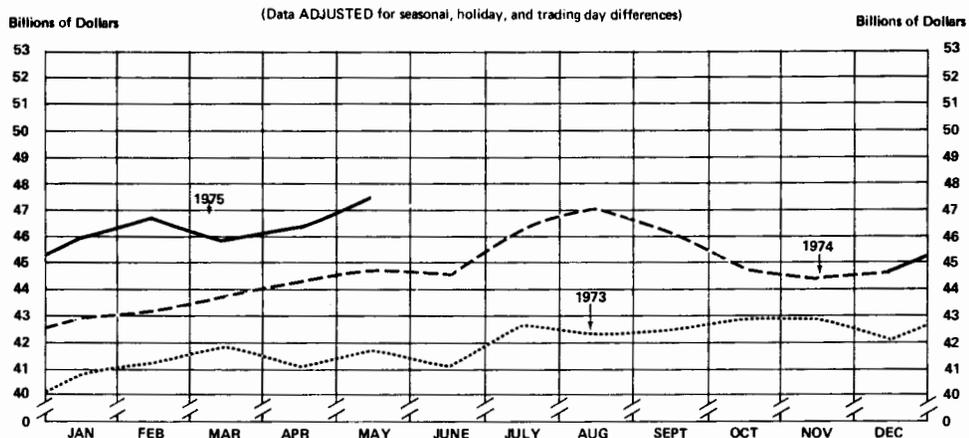
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month, by a small sub-sample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

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 0.6 percent for the Food group to 2.8 percent for the Building Materials 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
	May ¹	April ²	May
Total, retail stores ³	50,556	45,679	47,033
Total (excluding automotive group).....	41,586	37,310	38,246
Durable goods stores, total ³	15,673	14,506	15,457
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	34,883	31,173	31,576
Food stores, total.....	11,446	10,096	10,217
Grocery stores.....	10,666	9,374	9,510
Eating and drinking places.....	4,185	3,763	3,606
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,961	7,080	7,439
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	7,374	6,530	6,870
Department stores.....	5,093	4,458	4,677
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	2,255	1,945	2,044
Furniture home furnishings and equipment stores, total.....	2,110	2,000	2,175
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total.....	3,143	2,830	3,095
Automotive dealers, total.....	8,970	8,369	8,787
Gasoline service stations.....	3,766	3,480	3,408
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,453	1,374	1,393

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change April 1975 from--	
	1975			1974		March 1975	April 1974
	May ¹	April ²	March	May	April		
Total, retail stores ³	47,516	46,495	45,926	44,894	44,283	+1	+5
Total (excluding automotive group)..	39,493	38,744	38,590	37,040	36,639	0	+6
Durable goods stores, total ³	14,361	13,984	13,353	14,289	13,941	+5	0
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	33,155	32,511	32,573	30,605	30,342	0	+7
Food stores, total.....	10,513	10,805	10,805	9,795	9,689	-3	+9
Eating and drinking places.....	3,887	3,821	3,821	3,402	3,429	+2	+13
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,661	7,599	7,599	7,558	7,438	+1	+3
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	7,097	7,058	7,058	7,004	6,863	+1	+3
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	2,174	2,099	2,099	2,075	2,010	+4	+8
Furniture home furnishings and equipment stores, total.....	2,121	2,046	2,046	2,215	2,163	+4	-2
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total.....	2,713	2,522	2,522	2,828	2,760	+8	-2
Automotive dealers, total.....	7,751	7,336	7,336	7,854	7,644	+6	+1
Gasoline service stations.....	3,544	3,497	3,497	3,312	3,236	+1	+10
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,421	1,488	1,488	1,389	1,408	-5	+1

¹Advance sample estimates. not shown separately.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³Totals include data for kinds of business

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	May 1975 from--		March 1975 through May 1975 from--	
	April 1975	May 1974	December 1974 through February 1975	March 1974 through May 1974
Total, retail stores.....	+2	+6	+2	+5
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+2	+7	+2	+6
Durable goods stores, total.....	+3	+1	-1	0
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+2	+8	+3	+8

Source: Bureau of the Census