

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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MARCH 1978

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in March, after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at \$62.8 billion. This adjusted figure was about 2 percent above February 1978 and 8 percent greater than March a year ago. The adjusted March estimate, excluding the automotive group, was about 2 percent above February and 10 percent above March last year.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores increased 1 percent above February, while sales of nondurable goods stores increased about 3 percent. Compared with sales for March 1977, durable goods stores increased 4 percent, while nondurable stores increased 11 percent.

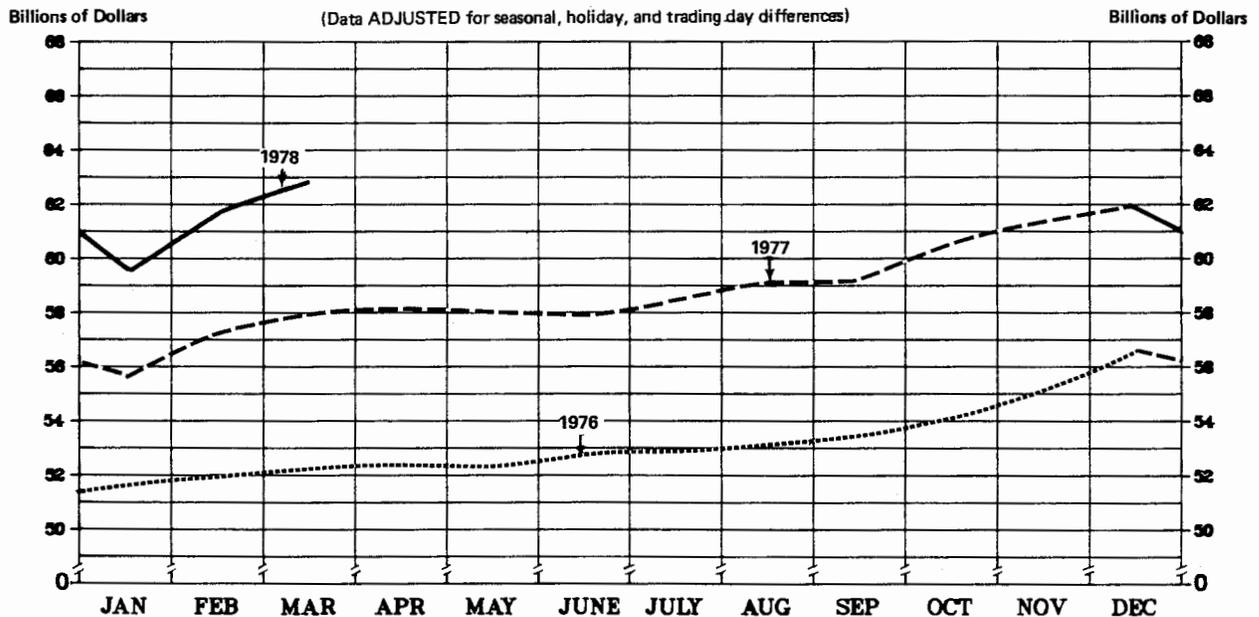
The revised estimate of retail sales for February, based on preliminary results from the full sample of retail stores, was about \$61.7 billion, \$1.6 billion above the advance estimate published earlier. Seasonally adjusted sales for February as revised, were about 3 percent above January and 8 percent above February 1977. Excluding the automotive group, retail sales were 3 percent above January and 9 percent over February 1977. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted February sales were 3 percent above the previous month and 8 percent above the same month a year earlier. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales for February were 4 percent above January and 6 percent higher than February 1977.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the sub-sample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates prior to publication on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

In the past, differences between advance and full-sample estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have averaged less than 1 percent. However, most modifications being applied to the current advance monthly estimates are based on the relationship between the advance and the redesigned full sample data for only the months since May 1977. The differences now, therefore, may vary from the past experience.

Preliminary estimates for February 1978 and final estimates for January 1978 based on the full sample will also be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade report for February (BR-78-2). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of the sample design and the techniques used in developing the estimates. In addition, the complete report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES FOR THE UNITED STATES: JANUARY 1976 - MARCH 1978



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 at 25 cents each.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1978			1977		1978			1977	
		Mar. ² advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.
	Retail trade, total.....	63,406	52,490	52,146	57,203	48,853	62,847	61,692	59,875	57,990	57,291
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	49,803	41,812	42,170	44,146	38,524	50,537	49,454	47,912	45,855	45,456
	Durable goods stores, total.....	21,587	17,260	16,314	20,328	16,349	20,709	20,604	19,802	19,863	19,382
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	3,125	2,435	2,304	2,865	2,198	3,335	3,407	3,224	3,123	2,991
521,3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	1,666	1,591	2,043	1,595	(*)	2,183	2,096	2,186	2,090
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	383	389	477	363	(*)	515	529	526	489
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	13,603	10,678	9,976	13,057	10,329	12,310	12,238	11,963	12,135	11,835
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	(*)	9,838	9,071	12,036	9,556	(*)	11,180	10,850	11,092	10,859
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	8,798	8,228	10,659	8,600	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	840	905	1,021	773	(*)	1,058	1,113	1,043	976
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	2,878	2,551	2,513	2,787	2,406	2,901	2,954	2,793	2,819	2,780
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores....	(*)	1,548	1,515	1,722	1,474	(*)	1,769	1,704	1,719	1,682
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	744	770	846	720	(*)	871	842	874	841
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	368	373	418	333	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	41,819	35,230	35,832	36,875	32,504	42,138	41,088	40,073	38,127	37,909
53	General merchandise group stores.....	7,361	5,498	5,368	6,347	4,903	7,949	7,777	7,432	6,995	6,930
531	Department stores.....	5,899	4,401	4,325	5,044	3,873	6,370	6,305	6,066	5,577	5,550
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	487	450	584	459	(*)	667	628	655	628
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	610	593	(NA)	(NA)	(*)	805	738	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	14,329	12,542	12,880	12,695	11,461	13,897	13,823	13,636	12,784	12,612
541	Grocery stores.....	13,334	11,702	12,043	11,858	10,729	12,908	12,873	12,704	11,938	11,785
554	Gasoline service stations.....	4,786	4,326	4,537	4,477	4,014	4,965	4,967	4,796	4,642	4,605
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,727	2,064	2,217	2,524	2,110	2,763	2,735	2,723	2,780	2,798
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	402	458	475	419	(*)	537	533	550	561
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	808	829	977	827	(*)	1,047	1,017	1,068	1,071
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	392	413	527	435	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	364	413	437	346	(*)	485	502	457	462
58	Eating and drinking places.....	5,629	4,836	4,857	5,073	4,542	5,791	5,597	5,415	5,290	5,255
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,015	1,789	1,820	1,792	1,652	1,997	1,953	1,944	1,825	1,804
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	934	945	1,012	950	(*)	1,108	1,104	1,079	1,125
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise) ³	(*)	438	440	601	418	(*)	552	609	559	526

NOTE: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

²Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-78-2).²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.³Includes sales made by mail-order catalog desks located within department stores of mail-order firms.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		March 1978 advance from--		February 1978 preliminary from--		January 1978 through March 1978 from--	
		Feb. 1978 preliminary	Mar. 1977 final	Jan. 1978 final	Feb. 1977 final	Oct. 1977 through Dec. 1977	Jan. 1977 through Mar. 1977
	Retail trade, total.....	+2.84	+8	+3	+8	0	+8
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+2.84	+10	+3	+9	+1	+9
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+1.51	+4	+4	+6	-2	+5
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-2.00	+7	+6	+14	+1	+12
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1.00	+1	+2	+3	-3	+3
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-2.00	+3	+6	+6	-4	+5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+3.00	+11	+3	+8	+1	+9
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+2.00	+14	+5	+12	-3	+12
531	Department stores.....	+1.00	+14	+4	+14	-2	+13
54	Food stores.....	+1.00	+9	+1	+10	+3	+10
541	Grocery stores.....	0	+8	+1	+9	+3	+10
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0	+7	+4	+8	+2	+6
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.00	-1	0	-2	-6	-1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+3.00	+9	+3	+7	+3	+9
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	+2.00	+9	0	+8	+2	+9

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies by Kind of Business
for the United States: FEBRUARY 1978

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted		Adjusted ¹	
		Feb. 1978 preliminary	Jan. 1978 final	Feb. 1978 preliminary	Jan. 1977 final
	Retail trade, total.....	17,471	17,556	21,255	20,703
53	General merchandise group stores.....	4,876	4,764	6,918	6,644
531	Department stores.....	4,179	4,109	5,987	5,723
533	Variety stores.....	360	329	490	480
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	337	326	441	441
54	Food stores.....	6,885	7,022	7,586	7,299
541	Grocery stores.....	6,797	6,939	7,494	7,213
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	663	698	973	925
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	278	276	409	373
566	Shoe stores.....	163	183	229	233
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	823	862	932	980

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-78-2).

Table 4. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Selected Kinds of Business for Specified Areas and Cities

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Area	Not adjusted		Area	Not adjusted	
	Feb. 1978 preliminary	Jan. 1978 final		Feb. 1978 preliminary	Jan. 1978 final
Standard Consolidated Areas¹			Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas¹--Con.		
Chicago, Ill.--Northwestern Indiana, total.....	1,982	1,994	Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn-Wis., total.....	626	626
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,430	1,444	Nondurable goods stores.....	413	413
GAP ²	440	460	GAP ²	167	163
New York, N.Y.--Northeastern N.J., total.....	3,312	3,439	Nassau-Suffolk, N.Y., total.....	737	750
Nondurable goods stores.....	2,464	2,563	Nondurable goods stores.....	527	546
GAP ²	828	831	GAP ²	145	141
Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas¹			New York, N.Y.--N.J., total.....	1,763	1,838
Anaheim-Santa Ana-Garden Grove, Calif., total.....	633	636	Nondurable goods stores.....	1,330	1,396
Nondurable goods stores.....	401	416	GAP ²	493	500
GAP ²	153	155	Newark, N.J., total.....	454	482
Atlanta, Ga., GAP ²	131	125	Nondurable goods stores.....	324	328
Baltimore, Md., total.....	551	531	GAP ²	103	100
Nondurable goods stores.....	399	397	Philadelphia, Pa.-N.J., total.....	1,242	1,247
GAP ²	109	103	Nondurable goods stores.....	866	891
Boston, Mass., total ³	846	890	GAP ²	277	277
Nondurable goods stores.....	642	668	Pittsburgh, Pa., total.....	567	494
GAP ²	178	189	Nondurable goods stores.....	398	373
Buffalo, N.Y., total.....	261	245	GAP ²	129	118
Nondurable goods stores.....	195	198	St. Louis, Mo.-Ill., total.....	524	535
Chicago, Ill., total.....	1,838	1,850	Nondurable goods stores.....	424	424
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,332	1,343	GAP ²	123	123
GAP ²	416	437	San Diego, Calif., total.....	432	435
Cincinnati, Ohio-Ky.-Ind., total.....	392	368	Nondurable goods stores.....	269	279
Nondurable goods stores.....	285	278	GAP ²	120	120
GAP ²	107	90	San Francisco-Oakland, Calif., total.....	926	919
Cleveland, Ohio, total.....	504	493	Nondurable goods stores.....	621	633
Nondurable goods stores.....	359	357	GAP ²	245	240
GAP ²	119	109	Seattle-Everett, Wash., total.....	448	470
Detroit, Mich., total.....	1,255	1,177	Nondurable goods stores.....	313	325
Nondurable goods stores.....	800	796	Washington, D.C.-Md.-Va., total.....	835	824
GAP ²	299	279	Nondurable goods stores.....	547	562
Houston, Tex., total.....	819	822	GAP ²	210	213
Nondurable goods stores.....	500	518	Cities		
GAP ²	191	197	Chicago, Ill., total.....	618	611
Kansas City, Mo.-Kans., total.....	472	476	Nondurable goods stores.....	462	460
Nondurable goods stores.....	298	311	GAP ²	150	149
GAP ²	91	95	Detroit, Mich., total.....	174	158
Los Angeles-Long Beach, Calif., total.....	1,759	1,823	Nondurable goods stores.....	115	111
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,233	1,283	GAP ²	36	33
GAP ²	465	490	Los Angeles, Calif., total.....	563	599
Miami, Fla., total.....	460	485	Nondurable goods stores.....	444	463
Nondurable goods stores.....	287	311	GAP ²	146	151
GAP ²	109	114	New York, N.Y., total.....	1,148	1,203
Milwaukee, Wis., total.....	412	401	Nondurable goods stores.....	883	928
Nondurable goods stores.....	262	271	GAP ²	351	355
GAP ²	93	88	Philadelphia, Pa., total.....	277	278
			Nondurable goods stores.....	228	230
			GAP ²	59	62

¹Definitions of standard consolidated areas and standard metropolitan statistical areas are shown in the Monthly Retail Trade Report BR-78-2. ²Includes the following: General merchandise group stores (SIC 53); apparel and accessory stores (SIC 56); furniture, home furnishings and equipment stores (SIC 57); and miscellaneous shopping goods stores (SIC 594). GAP represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise. ³Statistics for the Boston SMSA include retail establishments in all Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, and Suffolk Counties.

