

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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Advance U.S. retail sales for April, after adjustment for seasonal variations, holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes were \$94,219 million, 1.6 percent above the revised March level of \$92,741 million and 6.5 percent above a year ago. This is the second monthly increase following three consecutive monthly declines. Total sales excluding the automotive group, increased 0.7 percent from March and 4.6 percent above April 1982. The March estimates were revised upward by \$1,226 million which represents an increase of 1.7 percent over the previous month and 5.7 percent above March 1982.

Sales of durable goods for April increased 4.0 percent with all of the major durable goods groups showing increases over the previous month sales. These increases were led by the automotive group which showed a 5.5 percent increase over the March level to a monthly record of \$17,605 million. The revised March sales showed an increase of 7.7 percent above the February 1983 sales. Furniture and building materials also posted gains over previous month sales levels, up 3.8 percent and 1.6 percent respectively. These groups continue to benefit from increases in housing activity.

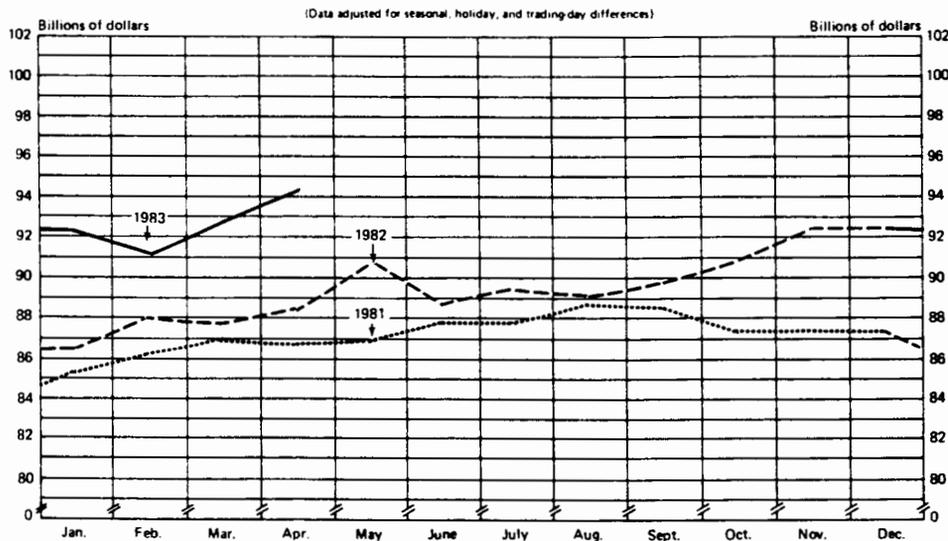
Nondurable goods sales increased 0.5 percent over March and were 4.0 percent above year ago sales. Bad weather in many parts of the country affected the general merchandise group sales which decreased 1.1 percent from the previous month.

Apparel group sales increased 1.7 percent over March which was the third consecutive monthly increase and were 3.3 percent above April 1982 sales. Gasoline service station sales showed a month-to-month increase of 3.1 percent primarily because of the new Federal excise tax which was effective April 1. Compared to the previous year sales, April sales declined 0.5 percent, which is the smallest year-to-year decrease since February 1982.

For a description of the sample design and reliability of the data see page 4.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for May is scheduled to be released June 10, 1983, at 2:30 p.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1981—April 1983



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U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

The 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, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$39 per year. Add \$9.75 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at \$1.75 each.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1983			1982		1983			1982	
		Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.
	Retail trade, total.....	92,802	93,238	78,884	87,964	86,562	84,219	92,741	91,164	88,468	87,701
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	74,956	74,123	64,348	72,011	70,101	76,614	76,051	75,668	73,239	73,092
	Durable goods stores, total.....	29,649	30,509	24,159	26,983	27,030	29,989	28,841	27,490	26,718	25,973
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	4,442	4,053	3,159	4,187	3,740	4,438	4,366	4,222	4,119	4,032
521,3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	2,980	2,323	2,800	2,544	(*)	3,229	3,101	2,857	2,771
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	628	525	736	661	(*)	680	702	707	715
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	17,846	19,115	14,536	15,953	16,468	17,605	16,690	15,496	15,229	14,609
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	16,025	17,328	13,076	14,165	14,859	15,851	14,874	13,664	13,516	12,955
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	15,353	11,707	12,433	13,210	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,787	1,460	1,788	1,609	(*)	1,816	1,832	1,713	1,654
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	3,981	4,013	3,440	3,637	3,741	4,240	4,083	3,973	3,885	3,858
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores....	(*)	2,429	2,011	2,158	2,180	(*)	2,417	2,296	2,229	2,202
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	1,286	1,159	1,180	1,236	(*)	1,358	1,375	1,320	1,319
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	598	521	558	575	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	63,153	62,729	54,725	60,981	59,539	64,230	63,900	63,674	61,750	61,728
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,378	10,227	7,747	10,181	9,421	11,123	11,248	11,131	10,702	10,726
531	Department stores.....	8,501	8,417	6,267	8,297	7,751	9,111	9,249	9,056	8,752	8,778
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	704	549	722	645	(*)	751	758	713	735
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	1,106	931	1,162	1,025	(*)	1,248	1,317	1,237	1,213
54	Food stores.....	21,799	21,446	19,323	20,812	20,283	21,631	21,450	21,347	20,782	20,590
541	Grocery stores.....	20,485	20,123	18,146	19,438	18,956	20,343	20,163	20,073	19,457	19,266
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,297	8,009	7,353	8,359	8,465	8,364	8,114	8,216	8,409	8,6
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,221	4,209	3,203	4,266	3,937	4,420	4,346	4,332	4,278	4,354
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	569	479	625	549	(*)	659	664	678	665
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,622	1,233	1,594	1,473	(*)	1,676	1,651	1,592	1,610
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	780	600	848	784	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	904	641	881	796	(*)	859	878	801	837
58	Eating and drinking places.....	9,805	9,580	8,413	8,787	8,449	9,641	9,706	9,715	8,674	8,621
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,147	3,195	2,930	2,926	2,899	3,231	3,250	3,209	2,950	2,979
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,441	1,329	1,527	1,475	(*)	1,551	1,545	1,635	1,609
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	441	294	387	425	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	21,127	16,749	20,734	19,645	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
594											

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

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, RR-83-03).

<sup>2</sup>Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

<sup>3</sup>GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

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

**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)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Apr. 1983 advance from--		Mar. 1983 preliminary from--		Feb. 1983 through Apr. 1983	
		Mar. 1983 prelim.	Apr. 1982 final	Feb. 1983 final	Mar. 1982 final	Nov. 1982 through Jan. 1983	Feb. 1982 through Apr. 1982
	Retail trade, total.....	+1.6	+6.5	+1.7	+5.7	+0.3	+5.3
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.7	+4.6	+0.5	+4.0	+0.4	+3.8
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+4.0	+12.2	+4.9	+11.0	+0.7	+10.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.6	+7.7	+3.4	+8.3	+3.7	+7.5
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+5.5	+15.6	+7.7	+14.2	0.0	+12.7
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+6.6	+17.3	+8.9	+14.8	-0.2	+13.4
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+3.8	+9.1	+2.8	+5.8	+1.9	+6.3
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+0.5	+4.0	+0.4	+3.5	+0.2	+3.2
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-1.1	+3.9	+1.1	+4.9	-0.8	+4.4
531	Department stores.....	-1.5	+4.1	+2.1	+5.4	-0.3	+4.4
54	Food stores.....	+0.8	+4.1	+0.5	+4.2	+0.9	+3.8
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.9	+4.6	+0.4	+4.7	+1.0	+4.4
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+3.1	-0.5	-1.2	-6.0	-4.9	-4.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.7	+3.3	+0.3	-0.2	+1.1	-0.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.7	+11.1	-0.1	+12.6	+2.6	+11.7
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.6	+9.5	+1.3	+9.1	+5.0	+9.5

**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business for the United States**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Mar. 1983 prelim.	Feb. 1983 final	Mar. 1982	Mar. 1983 prelim.	Feb. 1983 final	Mar. 1982
	Retail trade, total.....	32,517	27,026	30,101	33,565	33,083	31,746
53	General merchandise group stores.....	9,307	6,991	8,557	10,257	10,104	9,735
531	Department stores.....	8,093	6,018	7,450	8,913	8,697	8,428
533	Variety stores.....	563	434	521	598	606	593
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	651	539	586	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	11,698	10,454	10,923	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	11,533	10,308	10,779	11,476	11,340	10,910
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,737	1,186	1,477	1,773	1,746	1,635
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	749	518	625	771	758	689
566	Shoe stores.....	435	275	345	399	389	355
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,715	1,542	1,524	1,761	1,744	1,609

<sup>1</sup> Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, RR-83-03).

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).

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### Sample Design and Reliability of Data

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 subsample 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.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -1.7 percent to +1.4 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.7 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for March 1983 and final estimates for February 1983 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-83-03). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. The complete report will include additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of business	Estimated coefficient of variation in percent of the advance-to-preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.8	-1.7	+1.4	-0.2	0.7
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-1.1	+0.9	-0.1	0.5
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.2	2.1	1.5	-3.7	+2.3	-0.2	1.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.6	4.2	2.4	-4.7	+4.9	+0.4	2.5
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.7	2.0	-4.5	+2.7	-0.2	1.6
551, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.1	2.3	1.6	-4.6	+3.0	-0.2	1.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.6	6.7	2.7	-2.7	+3.9	-0.2	1.9
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.7	-0.8	+0.9	-0.1	0.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.7	0.5	-1.8	+2.2	-0.1	1.1
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	-1.3	+2.6	+0.1	0.9
54	Food stores.....	0.7	1.6	1.0	-1.6	+1.4	-0.1	0.7
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.7	0.4	-1.6	+1.4	-0.2	0.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.7	1.2	1.0	-3.6	+3.2	-0.1	1.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.2	3.0	1.9	-3.6	+8.7	-0.4	2.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.5	1.0	-3.0	+4.0	-0.5	1.5
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	2.5	1.1	-1.9	+2.4	-0.2	0.9

<sup>1</sup>The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of January-December 1982.

<sup>2</sup>The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, April 1982-March 1983. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period January-December 1982.

Note: See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.