



# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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Advance U.S. retail sales for May, after adjustment for seasonal variations, holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes were \$96,866 million, 2.1 percent above the revised April level of \$94,864 million and 6.7 percent above a year ago. The April estimates were revised upward by \$645 million which represents an increase of 1.7 percent over March. Because of three consecutive monthly increases greater than 1.5 percent, the sales for the March through May period were 3.3 percent higher than the prior 3 months. Total sales in May, excluding the automotive group, increased 1.3 percent from April and 4.6 percent above May 1982.

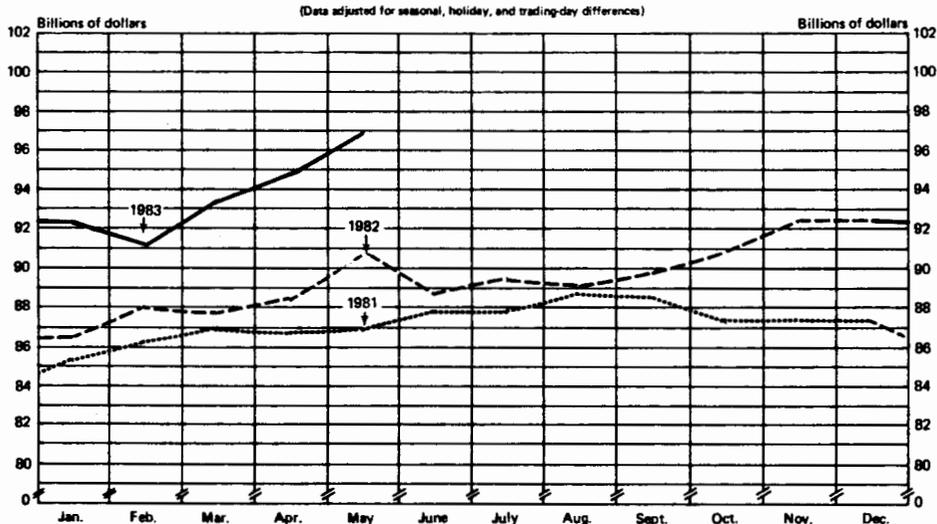
Sales of durable goods were up 3.9 percent month-to-month, with all of the durable goods categories showing increases. The automotive group sales amounted to \$19,062 million, 5.4 percent over April and 16.0 percent over the exceptionally strong sales of May 1982. The recent surge in automotive sales has been influenced by the continued below-market financing. Furniture and building materials group sales increased 2.3 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively, when compared to previous month levels.

Nondurable goods sales increased 1.3 percent over April and were 4.0 percent over the year ago sales. General merchandise group sales were 3.5 percent above the weather-depressed previous month level and 5.5 percent above May 1982 sales. This is the largest monthly increase in this group since July 1977. The apparel group sales increased 1.3 percent over the strong April sales which were revised to an increase of 3.6 percent above March. Gasoline service station sales showed a gain of 2.5 percent from the previous month, due primarily to increased prices, but were still slightly below sales of a year ago. The only kind-of-business group showing a month-to-month decline was drug stores, with sales 0.8 percent below the April level.

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

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for June is scheduled to be released July 13, 1983, at 2:30 p.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1981—May 1983



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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	
		May <sup>2</sup> adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.	May <sup>2</sup> adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.
	Retail trade, total.....	96,167	93,391	93,760	90,812	87,964	96,866	94,864	93,263	90,813	88,468
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	76,617	75,062	74,514	74,070	72,011	77,804	76,782	76,461	74,383	73,239
	Durable goods stores, total.....	32,129	30,157	30,832	28,488	26,983	31,650	30,467	29,160	28,127	26,718
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	5,053	4,557	4,088	4,768	4,187	4,598	4,533	4,400	4,281	4,119
521,3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	3,232	2,983	3,129	2,800	(*)	3,342	3,232	2,944	2,857
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	724	633	825	736	(*)	684	685	735	707
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	19,550	18,329	19,246	16,742	15,953	19,062	18,082	16,802	16,430	15,229
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	17,642	16,503	17,459	14,957	14,165	17,178	16,323	14,986	14,664	13,516
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	14,350	15,524	13,145	12,433	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,826	1,787	1,785	1,788	(*)	1,759	1,816	1,766	1,713
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	3,994	3,889	4,035	3,664	3,637	4,240	4,144	4,106	3,917	3,885
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores.....	(*)	2,317	2,437	2,183	2,158	(*)	2,401	2,425	2,246	2,229
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	1,286	1,297	1,184	1,180	(*)	1,418	1,370	1,326	1,320
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	599	602	573	558	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	64,038	63,234	62,928	62,324	60,981	65,216	64,397	64,103	62,686	61,750
53	General merchandise group stores.....	11,177	10,496	10,248	10,707	10,181	11,641	11,245	11,272	11,032	10,702
531	Department stores.....	9,201	8,595	8,423	8,757	8,297	9,554	9,212	9,256	9,009	8,752
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	725	706	720	722	(*)	752	753	738	713
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	1,176	1,119	1,230	1,162	(*)	1,281	1,263	1,285	1,237
54	Food stores.....	21,488	21,673	21,497	21,404	20,812	21,668	21,506	21,501	21,113	20,782
541	Grocery stores.....	20,218	20,375	20,168	20,009	19,438	20,402	20,233	20,208	19,733	19,457
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,632	8,283	8,077	8,619	8,359	8,555	8,350	8,183	8,559	8,409
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,160	4,286	4,185	4,150	4,266	4,532	4,476	4,322	4,417	4,278
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	620	565	657	625	(*)	692	654	707	678
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,640	1,624	1,557	1,594	(*)	1,677	1,678	1,644	1,592
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	816	786	832	848	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	876	882	811	881	(*)	862	838	834	801
58	Eating and drinking places.....	9,887	9,684	9,635	9,214	8,787	9,562	9,522	9,762	8,817	8,674
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,139	3,123	3,208	2,930	2,926	3,180	3,206	3,263	2,975	2,950
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,506	1,452	1,591	1,527	(*)	1,584	1,563	1,612	1,635
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	382	441	364	387	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAP <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	21,409	21,192	21,305	20,734	(*)	(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, BR-83-04).

<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>GAP 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					
		May 1983 advance from--		Apr. 1983 preliminary from--		Mar. 1983 through May 1983	
		Apr. 1983 prelim.	May 1982 final	Mar. 1983 final	Apr. 1982 final	Dec. 1982 through Feb. 1983	Mar. 1982 through May 1982
	Retail trade, total.....	+2.1	+6.7	+1.7	+7.2	+3.3	+6.7
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+1.3	+4.6	+0.4	+4.8	+1.5	+4.7
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+3.9	+12.5	+4.5	+14.0	+8.0	+12.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.4	+7.4	+3.0	+10.1	+6.3	+8.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+5.4	+16.0	+7.6	+18.7	+11.9	+16.6
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+5.2	+17.1	+8.9	+20.8	+13.1	+17.9
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+2.3	+8.2	+0.9	+6.7	+2.6	+7.1
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+1.3	+4.0	+0.5	+4.3	+1.2	+4.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+3.5	+5.5	-0.2	+5.1	+0.9	+5.2
531	Department stores.....	+3.7	+6.0	-0.5	+5.3	+1.4	+5.6
54	Food stores.....	+0.8	+2.6	0.0	+3.5	+1.2	+3.5
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.8	+3.4	+0.1	+4.0	+1.3	+4.1
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+2.5	0.0	+2.0	-0.7	-1.4	-2.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.3	+2.6	+3.6	+4.6	+3.0	+2.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.4	+8.4	-2.5	+9.8	+0.6	+10.5
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.8	+6.9	-1.7	+8.7	+2.9	+8.4

**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>		
		Apr. 1983 prelim.	Mar. 1983 final	Apr. 1982	Apr. 1983 prelim.	Mar. 1983 final	Apr. 1982
	Retail trade, total.....	32,710	32,513	31,179	33,422	33,568	31,683
53	General merchandise group stores.....	9,550	9,311	9,237	10,208	10,262	9,730
531	Department stores.....	8,266	8,099	7,977	8,803	8,920	8,406
533	Variety stores.....	575	561	588	603	596	587
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	709	651	672	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	11,741	11,693	11,204	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	11,594	11,529	11,031	11,411	11,472	11,009
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,718	1,717	1,666	1,786	1,757	1,631
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	735	750	702	748	772	682
566	Shoe stores.....	406	412	404	392	378	347
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,694	1,727	1,535	1,772	1,773	1,552

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-83-4).

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 0.6 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 April 1983 and final estimates for March 1983 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for April (BR-83-04). 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	-0.1	0.6
	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, May 1982-April 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.

