

Advance Monthly Retail Sales



U.S. Department of Commerce
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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CB-92-91

ATTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES. The annual revision of the monthly retail sales estimates normally occurring in March, will be published in the press release the week of May 26. The U.S. total and most kinds of retail trade will be revised for the months of January 1989 through March 1992.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Thursday, March 12, 1992

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for February adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$157.7 billion, an increase of 1.3 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) from the previous month and were 4.6 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) above February a year ago. Total sales in the December through February period were 3.9 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. The January 1992 from December 1991 estimate of monthly change was revised from +0.6 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) as published in the January advance to +2.1 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$).

Durable goods increased 2.3 percent ($\pm 3.2\%$) from the previous month and were 8.1 percent above the previous year.

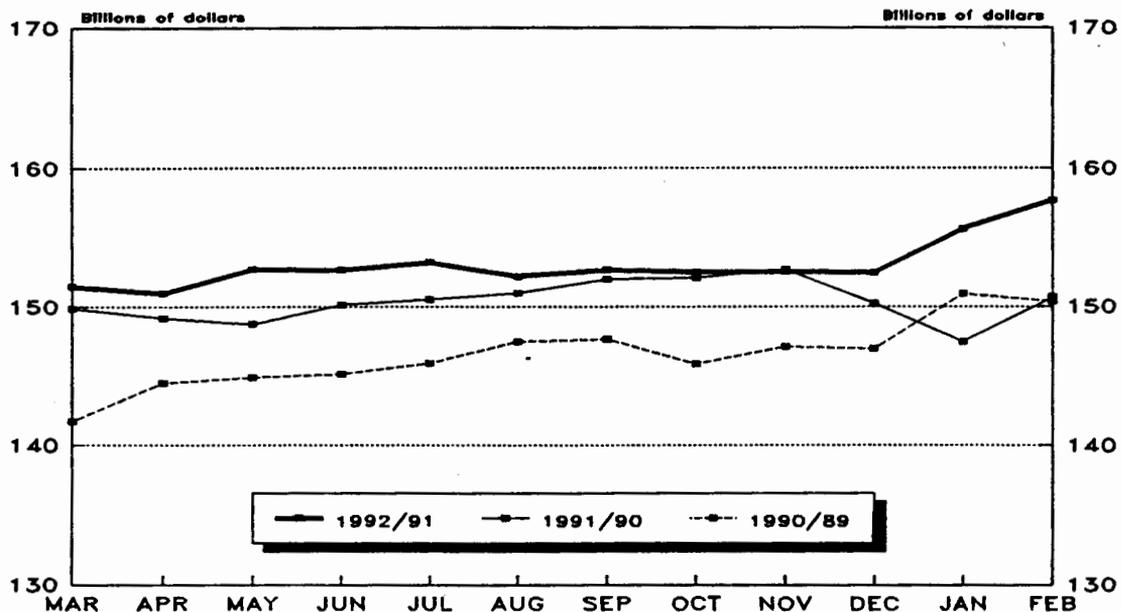
Nondurable goods increased 0.8 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) from January and were 2.7 percent above February 1991. General merchandise stores increased 1.4 percent from the previous month and were 8.2 percent above last year.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for March is scheduled to be released April 14, 1992 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

March 1989 - February 1992

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call (202) 377-1986. The data are also available through the Census Bureau's online information service - CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2464) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, By Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1992		1991			1992		1991		
		Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb. ¹	Jan. ¹
	Retail trade, total.....	139,529	138,262	180,980	128,589	130,903	157,670	155,609	152,440	150,872	147,498
	Total (excl. auto group)...	109,183	108,917	153,087	101,477	105,247	124,244	122,858	120,285	119,917	118,629
	Durable goods, total.....	50,729	49,121	58,253	45,320	43,954	57,512	56,211	54,687	53,189	50,463
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	6,668	6,449	7,032	5,683	5,626	8,626	8,163	7,959	7,678	7,197
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	4,887	5,043	4,087	4,087	(*)	6,056	5,919	5,470	5,046
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	987	1,138	852	891	(*)	1,211	1,048	1,133	1,087
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	30,346	29,345	27,883	27,112	25,656	33,426	32,951	32,155	30,765	28,869
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	28,143	27,113	25,488	25,024	23,457	30,825	30,362	29,637	28,180	26,327
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	23,615	22,380	21,832	20,760	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,232	2,395	2,088	2,199	(*)	2,589	2,518	2,575	2,542
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,040	7,097	9,822	6,495	6,705	7,770	7,671	7,484	7,517	7,259
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	3,778	4,619	3,612	3,667	(*)	4,058	4,088	4,123	3,956
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,608	3,899	2,273	2,422	(*)	2,844	2,647	2,696	2,627
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	763	1,001	660	706	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	88,800	89,141	122,727	83,269	86,949	100,158	99,398	97,753	97,483	97,035
53	General merchandise group stores.....	14,802	13,431	32,920	12,965	12,335	19,427	19,155	17,849	17,947	17,572
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	12,017	10,895	26,864	10,504	10,007	15,875	15,609	14,664	14,609	14,316
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	11,197	27,563	10,863	10,310	(*)	16,019	15,062	15,365	14,708
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	472	1,079	454	433	(*)	622	579	596	583
539	Misc. general mdsc. stores.....	(*)	2,064	4,977	2,007	1,895	(*)	2,924	2,606	2,742	2,673
54	Food stores.....	29,255	30,298	32,524	27,452	29,451	30,950	31,203	31,120	30,390	30,705
541	Grocery stores.....	27,380	28,432	30,095	25,658	27,676	28,943	29,161	29,077	28,414	28,739
554	Gasoline service stations.....	9,291	9,759	10,451	9,484	10,667	10,704	10,382	10,378	10,889	11,348
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,256	5,998	12,683	5,784	5,641	8,156	7,972	7,845	8,015	7,487
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	634	1,421	554	611	(*)	766	750	784	738
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,047	4,211	2,000	1,966	(*)	2,634	2,665	2,703	2,524
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,726	4,432	1,693	1,531	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,147	1,894	1,140	1,120	(*)	1,436	1,418	1,538	1,391
58	Eating and drinking places.....	14,920	14,905	15,845	13,809	13,927	16,288	16,272	16,301	15,639	15,355
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,158	6,189	8,113	5,686	5,771	6,441	6,367	6,363	6,147	5,962
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,560	2,218	1,537	1,629	(*)	1,728	1,642	1,830	1,822
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	305	492	289	312	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	31,276	67,025	29,700	29,126	(*)	40,570	38,689	39,028	37,759

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

NA Not available.

¹Revised.

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-92-01.

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 data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

⁴GAF 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

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

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Feb. 1992 advance from--		Jan. 1992 preliminary from--		Dec. 1991 through Feb. 1992 from--	
		Jan. 1992 prelim.	Feb. 1991 final	Dec. 1991 final	Jan. 1991 final	Sept. 1991 through Nov. 1991	Dec. 1990 through Feb. 1991
	Retail trade, total.....	+1.3	+4.6	+2.1	+5.5	+1.8	+3.9
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+1.3	+3.6	+2.0	+3.4	+1.5	+2.5
	Durable goods, total.....	+2.3	+8.1	+2.8	+11.4	+3.0	+7.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+5.7	+12.3	+3.9	+13.4	+6.4	+10.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1.4	+8.7	+2.5	+14.1	+2.7	+8.1
551, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+1.5	+9.4	+2.4	+15.3	+2.8	+9.9
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1.3	+3.4	+2.5	+5.7	+2.7	+3.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.8	+2.7	+1.7	+2.4	+1.1	+1.8
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1.4	+8.2	+7.3	+9.0	+3.2	+8.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+1.7	+8.7	+6.4	+9.0	+3.4	+6.9
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	+6.4	+8.9	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.8	+1.8	+0.3	+1.6	+0.5	+1.6
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.7	+1.9	+0.3	+1.5	+0.5	+1.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+3.1	-1.7	0.0	-8.5	-0.3	-7.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+2.3	+1.8	+1.6	+6.5	+1.0	+3.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.1	+4.1	-0.2	+6.0	+2.9	+5.5
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.2	+4.8	+0.1	+6.8	+1.4	+6.5

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Large (Group II) Companies, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Jan. 1992 prelim.	Dec. 1991 final	Jan. 1991	Jan. 1992 prelim.	Dec. 1991 final	Jan. ^f 1991
	Retail trade, total.....	51,918	83,280	49,228	60,703	58,794	57,486
53	General merchandise group stores.....	12,263	30,745	11,275	17,508	16,499	16,080
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	10,602	26,108	9,724	15,189	14,236	13,911
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	10,891	26,777	10,015	15,581	14,632	14,307
533	Variety stores.....	337	833	320	459	432	447
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,324	3,804	1,231	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	17,480	18,592	17,034	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	17,230	18,166	16,820	17,247	17,301	17,093
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,314	7,733	3,039	4,763	4,574	4,342
562, 3, 8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,206	2,674	1,127	1,675	1,586	1,554
566	Shoe stores.....	689	1,196	655	921	884	860
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,817	5,443	3,450	3,951	3,953	3,597

NA Not available.

^fRevised.

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-92-01.

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: The large (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).

Official 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.

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 -0.8 percent to +1.2 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.4 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 January 1992 and final estimates for December 1991 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for January (BR-92-01). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with 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						Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Advance-to-preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter	Range ²		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range ¹		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range ²		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.
		From	To	Median	Median	Median	Median	From	To	Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.
	Retail trade, total.....	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	-0.8	+1.2	+0.2	0.5
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.7	+1.3	+0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total.....	1.8	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.3	-2.5	+2.2	+0.2	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores.....	1.2	2.0	1.7	3.3	2.5	2.5	-3.4	+4.0	+0.4	2.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	2.2	4.1	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	-3.0	+2.6	+0.5	1.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.6	4.1	2.9	4.8	3.9	3.5	-3.2	+2.6	+0.5	1.1
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.8	4.3	2.4	4.5	4.2	3.1	-2.5	+2.3	-0.2	1.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.6	+0.9	+0.2	0.4
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	-1.4	+1.7	+0.1	0.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.9	1.5	1.0	1.7	1.4	1.5	-0.5	+0.6	0.0	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.9	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.5	-0.5	+0.7	0.0	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	1.1	4.7	1.3	3.3	2.6	2.8	-1.4	+1.9	+0.3	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	2.9	2.0	3.0	2.6	2.0	-2.7	+4.8	+0.5	1.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	3.1	2.7	2.7	-0.9	+2.3	+0.3	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.5	3.2	0.8	2.4	1.7	2.0	-3.7	+1.1	+0.1	1.0

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1990 - March 1991.

²The 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, February 1991 - January 1992. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period April 1990 - March 1991.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion of the measures of sampling variability.

