

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE**

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, MARCH 1954

Total sales of retail stores in March were \$13.3 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. March 1954 sales, adjusted for seasonal factors and trading day differences, were about 2 percent below February and about 5 percent below March a year ago.

The March sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly Bureau of the Census survey conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,800 retail firms which, in total, operate some 37,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. Therefore, the advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision.

The unadjusted preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1; these figures, adjusted by the Office of Business Economics for seasonal factors and trading day differences, are shown in table 2.

Little change from February was shown in the seasonally adjusted sales of most major groups other than apparel. Apparel sales in March were at about the average monthly rate during the last quarter of 1953.

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR MARCH 1954

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (Millions of dollars)			
	1954			March 1953
	March (Advance estimate)	February ¹	January ²	
Retail stores, total ³	13,303	12,062	12,338	13,956
Food group.....	3,345	3,111	3,357	3,301
Grocery stores.....	2,815	2,611	2,837	2,667
General merchandise group.....	1,344	1,141	1,167	1,466
Department stores ⁴	714	595	624	810
Apparel group.....	712	593	678	893
Furniture and appliance group....	677	633	670	676
Lumber, building, hardware group ⁵	1,041	855	786	1,096
Automotive group.....	2,539	2,267	2,124	2,848
Gasoline service stations.....	873	798	855	810
Drug and proprietary stores.....	408	393	407	381

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Cer 3

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (Millions of dollars)			Percent change, Mar. 1954 from--		
	1954			March 1953	February 1954	March 1953
	March (Advance estimate)	February ¹	January ²			
Retail stores, total ³	13,670	13,932	13,622	14,437	-2	-5
Durable goods stores, total ³ ...	4,600	4,710	4,436	5,211	-2	-12
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	9,070	9,221	9,186	9,225	-2	-2
Food group.....	3,370	3,395	3,378	3,376	-1	0
General merchandise group.....	1,505	1,527	1,505	1,582	-1	-5
Apparel group.....	810	863	845	916	-6	-12
Furniture and appliance group....	745	756	784	768	-1	-3
Lumber, building, hardware group ⁵	1,070	1,070	1,024	1,231	0	-13
Automotive group.....	2,510	2,516	2,285	2,802	0	-10
Gasoline service stations.....	920	913	936	845	+1	+9
Drug and proprietary stores.....	415	414	430	397	0	"

¹ Preliminary revision.

² Final revision.

³ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

⁴ Based on preliminary estimate supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

⁵ Includes farm equipment dealers.

Source: Office of Business Economics