

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Luther H. Hodges, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Richard M. Scammon, Director

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, DECEMBER 1961

The Department of Commerce announced today that December 1961 retail store sales totaled \$23.1 billion, bringing sales for the full year 1961 to \$219.1 billion, virtually the same as sales for the year 1960. After adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, total retail sales amounted to \$19.0 billion, about 1 percent below November and 6 percent above December 1960.

The December sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 2,000 retail firms which, in total, operate some 39,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger sample group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are subject to revision of the estimates subsequently derived from the full sample, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent.

The advance Census figures for December are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics indicated that, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, sales by durable-goods stores declined 4 percent in December as a reduction in automotive dealers' sales from the near record November rate was only partly offset by higher sales at other durable-goods outlets. Sales changes at nondurable-goods stores were generally small; holiday selling at department stores established a new record. Estimates for November for the full sample indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were about 3 percent above October.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR DECEMBER 1961

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)				
	12 months		December ¹ 1961	November ² 1961	December 1960 ^r
	1961	1960 ^r			
Retail stores, total ³	219,145	219,529	23,055	19,279	22,153
Durable-goods stores, total ³	67,492	70,733	6,352	6,141	6,091
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	151,653	148,796	16,703	13,138	16,062
Food group.....	55,491	53,837	5,235	4,598	5,087
Grocery stores.....	49,960	48,339	4,719	4,147	4,579
Eating and drinking places.....	16,423	16,096	1,434	1,366	1,352
General merchandise group.....	24,931	24,007	3,874	2,462	3,604
Department stores.....	14,489	13,942	4,229	1,451	2,104
Apparel group.....	13,690	13,708	2,025	1,247	1,979
Furniture and appliance group.....	10,463	10,598	1,244	978	1,123
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. gr.	14,163	14,819	1,155	1,194	1,137
Automotive group.....	37,075	39,509	3,178	3,432	2,998
Gasoline service stations.....	17,962	17,594	1,530	1,521	1,511
Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,713	7,530	859	651	818

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Dec. 1961 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Nov. 1961 from--	
	Nov. 1961	Dec. 1960	1961			1960	Oct. 1961	Nov. 1960
			Dec. ¹	Nov. ²	Oct.	Nov. ^r		
Retail stores, total ³	-1	+6	19,002	19,168	18,587	18,398	+3	+4
Durable-goods stores, total ³	-4	+9	5,972	6,244	5,865	5,917	+6	+6
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³ ...	+1	+5	13,030	12,924	12,722	12,481	+2	+4
Food group.....				4,697	4,646	4,594	+1	+2
Eating and drinking places.....				1,405	1,369	1,346	+3	+4
General merchandise group.....				2,173	2,101	1,980	+3	+10
Apparel group.....				1,175	1,173	1,130	0	+4
Furniture and appliance group.....				882	880	841	0	+5
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,220	1,198	1,245	+2	-2
Automotive group.....				3,644	3,278	3,348	+11	+9
Gasoline service stations.....				1,526	1,521	1,464	0	+4
Drug and proprietary stores.....				680	644	638	+6	+7

Source: Office of Business Economics

^r Monthly sales by kind of business revised for 1960. See Monthly Retail Trade Rep for January 1961.

¹ Advance sample estimates.

² Preliminary estimates of full sample.

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

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