



Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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DECEMBER 1974

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in December were estimated at \$52.3 billion. The Bureau, part of the Department's Social and Economic Statistics Administration (SESA), said this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes was \$44.8 billion, about 1 percent above November and about 6 percent above December sales last year. Adjusted October-through-December total sales were about 3 percent below the prior 3 months but 5 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for November was about \$0.8 billion below the \$45.3 billion published earlier in the November Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released December 10, 1974. The seasonally adjusted sales for November as revised were about 3 percent below October.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

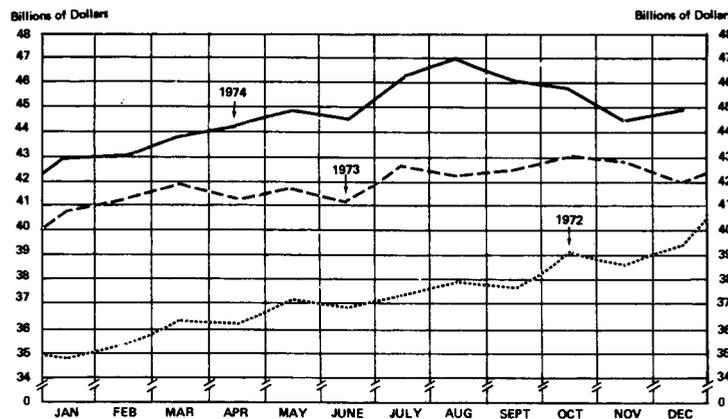
from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability between sub-sample and later full sample results can be a cause of difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimate, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between the month-to-month change in advance and full-sample estimates for total retail sales seldom exceed 1.0 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.7 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.4 percent for the Food group to 2.3 percent for the Building materials group.

Even for figures derived from the full sample sale movements from one month to the next can be relatively irregular. Data for 3 months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

MONTHLY SALES OF ALL RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES

(Data ADJUSTED for seasonal, holiday, and trading day differences)



Inquiries concerning these figures should be addressed to Mr. Irving True, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-7660.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE | Social and Economic Statistics Administration | BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Data on the retail trade, published in the Weekly Retail Sales Report, 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, Government Printing Office, Washington, O.C., 20402, at \$30.10 per year. Add \$7.55 for each subscription to a foreign address. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Report are available from Subscriber Services Section (Publications), Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Washington, D.C., 20233 at 25 cents each.

Table 1. Sales of Retail Stores in the United States, by Kind-of-Business Group

Part A. NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)				
	1974		1973	12-month total	
	Dec. ¹	Nov. ²	Dec.	1974	% changes 1974/1973
Total, retail stores ³	52,312	46,371	49,824	537,861	+7
Total (excluding automotive group).....	46,187	39,390	43,446	444,870	+10
Durable goods stores, total ³	13,435	13,167	13,409	167,477	-2
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	38,877	33,204	36,415	370,384	+11
Food group.....	10,774	10,770	9,932	119,924	+13
Grocery stores.....	10,005	10,076	9,214	111,517	+13
Eating and drinking places.....	3,809	3,594	3,272	41,830	+10
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	12,252	8,706	11,618	89,457	+7
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	11,657	8,045	11,063	82,732	+7
Department stores.....	8,091	5,401	7,734	55,945	+7
Apparel group.....	3,279	2,175	3,386	24,769	+3
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,641	2,200	2,552	25,693	+7
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,442	2,562	2,486	32,620	+5
Automotive group.....	6,125	6,981	6,378	92,991	-8
Gasoline service stations.....	3,349	3,359	2,908	39,812	+16
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,863	1,392	1,741	16,748	+8

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change November 1974 from--	
	1974			1973		October 1974	November 1973
	Dec. ¹	Nov. ²	Oct.	Dec.	Nov.		
Total, retail stores ³	44,808	44,490	45,803	42,116	42,976	-3	+4
Total (excluding automotive group).....	37,551	37,555	38,289	34,716	34,793	-2	+8
Durable goods stores, total ³	13,348	13,052	13,645	13,270	14,090	-4	-7
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	31,460	31,438	32,158	28,846	28,886	-2	+9
Food group.....	10,519	10,519	10,431	9,264	9,135	+1	+15
Eating and drinking places.....	3,717	3,717	3,623	3,387	3,331	+3	+12
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	7,370	7,370	7,533	7,002	7,213	-2	+2
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	6,826	6,826	6,960	6,464	6,661	-2	+2
Apparel group.....	1,966	1,966	2,087	2,051	2,006	-6	-2
Furniture and appliance group.....	2,105	2,105	2,111	1,975	2,046	0	+3
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,641	2,641	2,674	2,661	2,617	-1	+1
Automotive group ⁴	6,935	6,935	7,514	7,400	8,183	-8	-15
Gasoline service stations.....	3,356	3,356	3,507	2,902	2,966	-4	+13
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,416	1,416	1,429	1,297	1,322	-1	+7

¹Advance sample estimates. ²Preliminary estimates of full sample. ³Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately. ⁴During months of model changeover, seasonal adjustment factors are less reliable than in other months.

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	December 1974 from--		October 1974 through December 1974 from--	
	November 1974	December 1973	July 1974 through September 1974	October 1973 through December 1973
Total, retail stores.....	+1	+6	-3	+5
Total (excluding automotive group).....	0	+8	0	+9
Durable goods stores, total.....	+2	+1	-11	-4
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0	+9	0	+10

Source: Bureau of the Census

