

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

## August 1984

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, Friday, September 14, 1984

CB-84-168

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for August, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$106.2 billion, down 0.8 percent from the revised July level of \$107.1 billion but 8.1 percent above a year ago. The revised July sales were down 2.0 percent from June, 1.1 lower than the July advance estimate previously reported. Although both July and August declined, June through August was 1.0 percent above the prior three months and 9.1 above the same period last year. Excluding the automotive group, the August level was the same as the previous month, but 6.1 percent above August 1983.

Durable goods declined 2.2 percent from July, but were 14.5 above the previous year. The automotive group was responsible for the decline, down 4.0 percent, however still showing a 17.1 percent increase above August 1983. This is the second monthly decrease of about 4 percent mainly due to low dealer inventories. Building materials dealers declined for the third consecutive month, down 0.2 percent, but were 12.7 above last year. Following a 2.6 percent drop in July, the furniture group rose 1.4 and was 10.9 percent higher than August 1983.

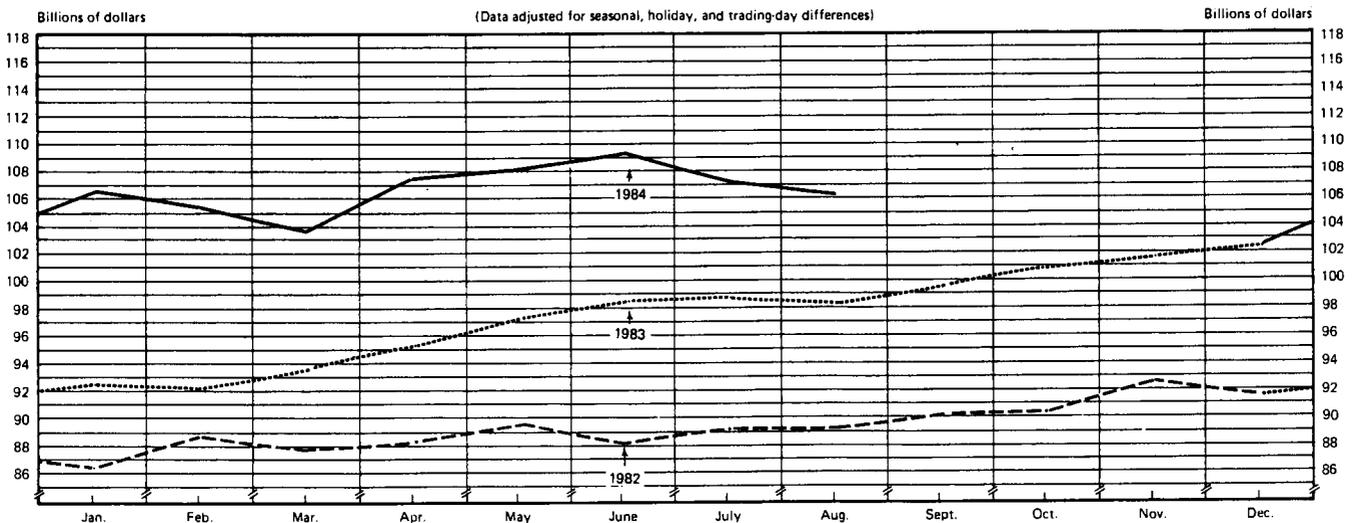
The nondurable goods group showed a slight decrease from July, down 0.1 percent, but was 5.0 percent above a year ago. After a record decline of 4.1 percent in July, the general merchandise group rebounded with a 1.5 percent gain. Food stores showed the sharpest decline since February 1976, down 1.7 in August, but still more than 4 percent above last year. The apparel group continued downward, declining 3.0 percent, following a drop of 4.3 percent in July. Gasoline service stations sales fell for the third consecutive month, down 0.5 percent from July, and were 4.7 percent below August 1983. Lower pump prices have caused the year long decline. Eating and drinking establishments rose 2.3 percent while drug store sales were down 0.7.

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

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for September is scheduled to be released October 12, 1984, at 8:30 a.m.

### ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1982-August 1984



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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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1984			1983		1984			1983	
		Aug. <sup>2</sup> adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug.	July	Aug. <sup>2</sup> adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug.	July
	Retail trade, total.....	110,235	106,246	111,980	100,131	99,444	106,232	107,142	109,322	98,277	98,832
	Total (excl. auto group)..	87,449	83,241	87,168	80,924	79,823	85,089	85,114	86,346	80,224	79,931
	Durable goods, total.....	38,785	38,416	41,202	33,587	33,387	36,569	37,375	38,687	31,951	32,597
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	6,351	6,332	6,695	5,660	5,591	5,742	5,756	5,823	5,094	5,117
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,722	4,815	4,198	4,097	(*)	4,194	4,227	3,676	3,688
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	896	978	818	868	(*)	864	872	812	825
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	22,786	23,005	24,812	19,207	19,621	21,143	22,028	22,976	18,053	18,901
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	20,713	20,965	22,713	17,244	17,673	19,250	20,120	21,011	16,237	17,092
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	18,680	20,285	15,225	15,583	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,040	2,099	1,963	1,948	(*)	1,908	1,965	1,816	1,809
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,020	4,700	4,926	4,544	4,279	4,888	4,821	4,951	4,408	4,340
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	2,775	2,944	2,742	2,497	(*)	2,855	2,918	2,621	2,548
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	1,612	1,650	1,477	1,493	(*)	1,610	1,665	1,454	1,465
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	753	765	665	708	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	71,450	67,830	70,778	66,544	66,057	69,663	69,767	70,635	66,326	66,235
53	General merchandise group stores..	12,851	11,231	12,805	11,521	10,665	12,965	12,770	13,320	11,878	11,845
531	Department stores.....	10,592	9,267	10,583	9,447	8,699	10,667	10,531	10,955	9,709	9,666
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	720	792	772	730	(*)	791	836	774	784
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,244	1,430	1,302	1,236	(*)	1,448	1,529	1,395	1,395
54	Food stores.....	23,768	23,378	23,767	21,921	23,049	22,794	23,179	22,984	21,819	21,915
541	Grocery stores.....	22,455	21,993	22,371	20,608	21,731	21,488	21,818	21,614	20,505	20,618
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,954	9,054	9,173	9,356	9,368	8,439	8,478	8,736	8,851	8,731
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,958	4,304	4,811	4,555	4,043	4,754	4,899	5,117	4,430	4,467
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	575	711	615	590	(*)	680	730	657	680
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,790	1,976	1,711	1,595	(*)	1,998	2,127	1,706	1,726
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	986	1,077	1,091	907	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	702	793	809	678	(*)	815	832	768	769
58	Eating and drinking places.....	11,559	11,061	10,962	10,420	10,520	10,634	10,396	10,351	9,729	9,723
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,452	3,355	3,454	3,201	3,126	3,483	3,509	3,507	3,273	3,253
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,700	1,721	1,656	1,703	(*)	1,688	1,694	1,646	1,633
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	324	339	378	310	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	23,425	25,995	23,713	21,818	(*)	(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-84-07).

<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>GAF 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					
		Aug. 1984 advance from--		July 1984 preliminary from--		June 1984 through Aug. 1984	
		July 1984 prelim.	Aug. 1983 final	June 1984 final	July 1983 final	Mar. 1984 through May 1984	June 1983 through Aug. 1983
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.8	+8.1	-2.0	+8.4	+1.0	+9.1
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	0.0	+6.1	-1.4	+6.5	+0.8	+7.1
	Durable goods, total.....	-2.2	+14.5	-3.4	+14.7	+1.8	+15.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.2	+12.7	-1.2	+12.5	+1.8	+12.9
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-4.0	+17.1	-4.1	+16.5	+1.8	+17.7
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-4.3	+18.6	-4.2	+17.7	+1.8	+18.9
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1.4	+10.9	-2.6	+11.1	+2.2	+13.0
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.1	+5.0	-1.2	+5.3	+0.5	+5.9
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1.5	+9.2	-4.1	+7.8	+2.2	+9.7
531	Department stores.....	+1.3	+9.9	-3.9	+8.9	+2.5	+10.5
54	Food stores.....	-1.7	+4.5	+0.8	+5.8	+1.1	+5.4
541	Grocery stores.....	-1.5	+4.8	+0.9	+5.8	+1.4	+5.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.5	-4.7	-3.0	-3.0	-4.0	-2.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-3.0	+7.3	-4.3	+9.7	-0.3	+9.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+2.3	+9.3	+0.4	+6.9	+2.3	+8.1
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.7	+6.4	+0.1	+7.9	+0.8	+7.8

**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		July 1984 prelim.	June 1984 final	July 1983	July 1984 prelim.	June 1984 final	July 1983
	Retail trade, total.....	35,110	37,426	33,768	37,111	37,571	34,646
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,128	11,601	9,568	11,537	12,056	10,664
531	Department stores.....	8,886	10,152	8,328	10,086	10,498	9,243
533	Variety stores.....	547	614	559	607	648	608
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	695	835	681	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	12,347	12,684	12,369	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	12,198	12,533	12,220	12,359	12,121	11,716
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,785	2,036	1,624	2,074	2,170	1,832
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	806	902	725	887	964	775
566	Shoe stores.....	355	413	335	432	435	395
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,916	1,973	1,739	2,004	2,026	1,813

<sup>1</sup> Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-84-07).

NA Not available.

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.

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 -1.1 percent to +1.1 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.5 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 July 1984 and final estimates for June 1984 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for July (BR-84-07). 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.....	0.7	0.9	0.7	-1.1	+1.1	-0.1	0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.6	1.0	0.7	-0.8	+1.3	0.0	0.6
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.0	2.2	1.4	-1.4	+3.2	+0.4	1.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.9	3.1	2.7	-1.5	+5.1	+1.3	2.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.4	2.2	1.8	-1.0	+4.2	+0.6	1.1
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.9	1.3	-1.3	+4.8	+0.7	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.2	4.1	2.4	-3.5	+2.5	-0.5	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.8	0.6	-0.6	+1.2	0.0	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.9	0.5	-1.3	+1.0	+0.1	0.5
531	Department stores.....	0.1	0.6	0.3	-1.1	+1.0	+0.2	0.5
54	Food stores.....	0.7	1.1	0.9	-0.9	+1.3	-0.2	0.5
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.7	0.5	-0.8	+1.1	-0.2	0.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.1	1.0	-3.8	+3.0	-0.1	1.6
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.6	3.7	2.0	-3.0	+2.1	0.0	1.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.4	1.1	-2.4	+3.0	-0.1	1.2
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.4	1.6	0.9	-2.1	+1.5	-0.4	0.7

<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 1983.

<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, August 1983-July 1984. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period March 1983-February 1984.

Note: See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.