

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

September 1985

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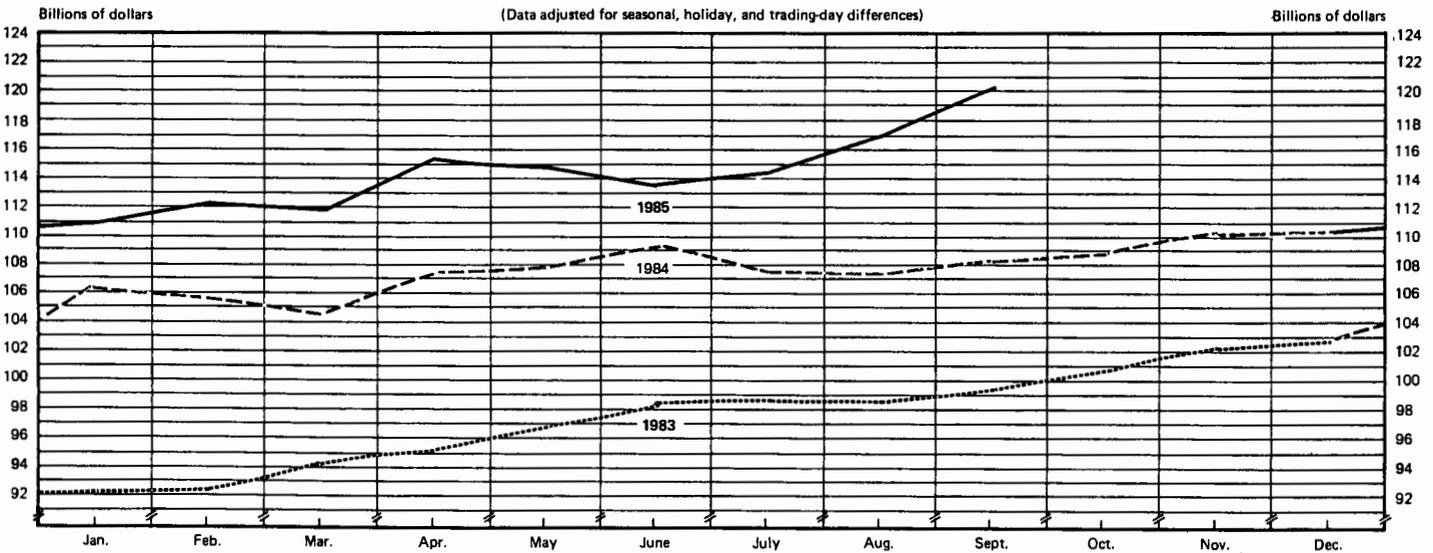
Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for September adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$120.2 billion, up 2.7 percent from August and 10.9 percent above September last year. The revised August sales were 2.3 percent above July. Excluding the automotive group, September sales were little changed from August but were 4.8 percent above the year-ago level. Third quarter sales were 2.2 percent above the second quarter and were 8.8 percent above the same quarter last year.

Durable goods increased 6.2 percent during the month after a 4.6 gain in August. The increases for both months were primarily due to automotive sales, which rose 9.6 percent in September and 6.6 percent in August. The furniture group and building materials dealers were little changed in September but increased 6.1 and 7.8 percent, respectively, from the previous year.

Non-durable goods were at about the same level as August but were 4.5 percent above the same month a year ago. After an increase of 3.5 percent in August, general merchandise sales dropped 1.9 percent in September, but were up 2.6 from September 1984. Food store sales gained 2.5 percent in September and were 5.1 above last year. Eating and drinking places rose 2.1 percent from the previous month and were 5.9 above September 1984. Gasoline stations showed little change during the month but were 5.0 percent above last year.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for October is scheduled to be released November 14, 1985, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1983-September 1985



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U.S. Department of Commerce
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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 \$37 per year. Add \$9.25 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. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted				Adjusted ¹					
		1985			1984		1985			1984	
		Sept. ² adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept.	Aug.	Sept. ² adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept.	Aug.
	Retail trade, total.....	114,826	121,189	115,490	104,025	111,159	120,227	117,040	114,417	108,373	107,396
	Total (excl. auto group)..	85,992	92,789	87,655	82,928	87,257	90,023	89,470	88,544	85,866	84,893
	Durable goods, total.....	45,374	45,813	44,646	36,668	40,119	47,003	44,270	42,341	38,301	38,071
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	6,530	6,816	6,879	6,026	6,420	6,184	6,107	6,080	5,738	5,741
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	5,105	5,072	4,493	4,713	(*)	4,494	4,403	4,156	4,120
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	868	882	779	838	(*)	853	831	815	820
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	28,834	28,400	27,835	21,097	23,902	30,204	27,570	25,873	22,507	22,503
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	26,754	26,127	25,561	19,075	21,708	28,103	25,465	23,800	20,489	20,479
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	23,828	23,172	17,452	19,613	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,273	2,274	2,022	2,194	(*)	2,105	2,073	2,018	2,024
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,539	5,918	5,641	5,303	5,381	5,818	5,739	5,704	5,485	5,279
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,241	3,047	2,923	3,058	(*)	3,078	3,097	2,992	2,938
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,262	2,211	2,017	1,972	(*)	2,240	2,187	2,134	1,986
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	726	774	668	697	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	69,452	75,376	70,844	67,357	71,040	73,224	72,770	72,076	70,072	69,325
53	General merchandise group stores..	11,993	13,608	11,549	11,902	12,525	13,335	13,589	13,131	12,994	12,711
531	Department stores.....	10,117	11,457	9,737	10,077	10,572	11,179	11,411	11,077	10,953	10,700
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	772	671	671	739	(*)	752	724	762	732
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,379	1,141	1,154	1,214	(*)	1,426	1,330	1,279	1,279
54	Food stores.....	22,792	24,815	24,085	22,223	23,480	23,999	23,419	23,485	22,836	22,585
541	Grocery stores.....	21,463	23,355	22,684	20,876	22,063	22,593	21,971	22,109	21,411	21,174
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,753	9,262	9,248	8,331	8,771	8,736	8,697	8,627	8,323	8,220
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,595	6,294	5,239	5,394	5,605	6,016	5,982	5,859	5,611	5,448
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	638	576	627	626	(*)	674	675	684	670
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,582	2,257	2,272	2,250	(*)	2,539	2,505	2,345	2,259
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,828	1,404	1,376	1,556	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,000	775	898	910	(*)	925	889	874	858
58	Eating and drinking places.....	11,074	11,895	11,620	10,537	11,502	11,096	10,873	10,901	10,474	10,591
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,776	3,996	3,834	3,468	3,640	4,065	4,065	3,961	3,753	3,684
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,685	1,652	1,561	1,695	(*)	1,611	1,607	1,631	1,654
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	344	326	361	398	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF.....	(*)	29,362	25,597	25,782	26,904	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-08).

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.

³GAF 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					
		Sept. 1985 advance from--		Aug. 1985 preliminary from--		July 1985 through Sept. 1985	
		Aug. 1985 prelim.	Sept. 1984 final	July 1985 final	Aug. 1984 final	Apr. 1985 through June 1985	July 1984 through Sept. 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	+2.7	+10.9	+2.3	+9.0	+2.2	+8.8
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.6	+4.8	+1.0	+5.4	+0.8	+5.0
	Durable goods, total.....	+6.2	+22.7	+4.6	+16.3	+4.6	+16.4
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.3	+7.8	+0.4	+6.4	+1.7	+6.5
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+9.6	+34.2	+6.6	+22.5	+7.0	+22.9
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+10.4	+37.2	+7.0	+24.3	+7.7	+24.9
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1.4	+6.1	+0.6	+8.7	0.0	+8.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.6	+4.5	+1.0	+5.0	+0.9	+4.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-1.9	+2.6	+3.5	+6.9	+0.5	+4.7
531	Department stores.....	-2.0	+2.1	+3.0	+6.6	+0.7	+4.4
54	Food stores.....	+2.5	+5.1	-0.3	+3.7	+1.1	+4.1
541	Grocery stores.....	+2.8	+5.5	-0.6	+3.8	+1.3	+4.4
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.4	+5.0	+0.8	+5.8	-0.4	+5.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.6	+7.2	+2.1	+9.8	+0.3	+7.7
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+2.1	+5.9	-0.3	+2.7	+0.6	+4.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.0	+8.3	+2.6	+10.3	+3.6	+9.0

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 ¹		
		Aug. 1985 prelim.	July 1985 final	Aug. 1984	Aug. 1985 prelim.	July 1985 final	Aug. 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	40,614	37,312	37,795	39,677	39,051	37,361
53	General merchandise group stores.....	12,575	10,636	11,603	12,590	12,130	11,774
531	Department stores.....	10,985	9,318	10,133	10,941	10,577	10,235
533	Variety stores.....	654	560	619	639	617	617
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	936	758	851	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	13,550	13,140	12,782	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	13,393	12,987	12,631	12,683	12,884	12,251
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,596	2,003	2,168	2,388	2,306	2,035
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,087	939	902	1,035	1,042	877
566	Shoe stores.....	526	373	453	484	442	419
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,199	2,099	1,993	2,258	2,189	2,046

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-08).

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 -0.6 percent to +1.6 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 August 1985 and final estimates for July 1985 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for August (BR-85-08). 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 ¹		Median	Range ²		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-0.6	+1.6	+0.2	0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+1.1	-0.1	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-1.1	+3.8	+0.4	0.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-3.7	+5.8	-0.1	1.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-1.8	+4.9	+1.0	1.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-1.8	+5.3	+1.1	1.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.8	+3.4	-0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	0.0	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.6
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-1.1	+1.9	+0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-1.0	+1.0	-0.2	0.6
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-1.3	+0.9	-0.2	0.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-2.4	+4.2	+0.2	1.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.6	+2.8	-0.1	1.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.5	+2.8	0.0	1.1
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-1.1	+2.2	+0.4	1.1

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1984-July 1985.

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, September 1934-August 1985. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1934-July 1985.

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