

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

September 1987

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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 \$128.8 billion, a decrease of 0.4 percent (+1.3%) from the previous month and were 0.3 percent below September 1986. Total sales less automotive were 4.6 percent above September 1986. Total sales in the July through September period increased 2.4 percent from the prior three months and were 3.7 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods decreased 0.9 percent (+2.6%) from the previous month and were 7.8 percent below the previous year. Excluding automotive sales, durable goods were 1.8 percent above a year ago; automotive sales were 13.2 percent below September 1986. Furniture stores were up 0.3 percent from the previous year while building materials were unchanged.

Nondurable goods decreased 0.1 percent (+1.0%) from the previous month but were 5.3 percent above the previous year. The general merchandise group was 6.4 percent above a year ago while food stores were 2.3 percent above September 1986. Gasoline service stations were 13.9 percent above the previous year.

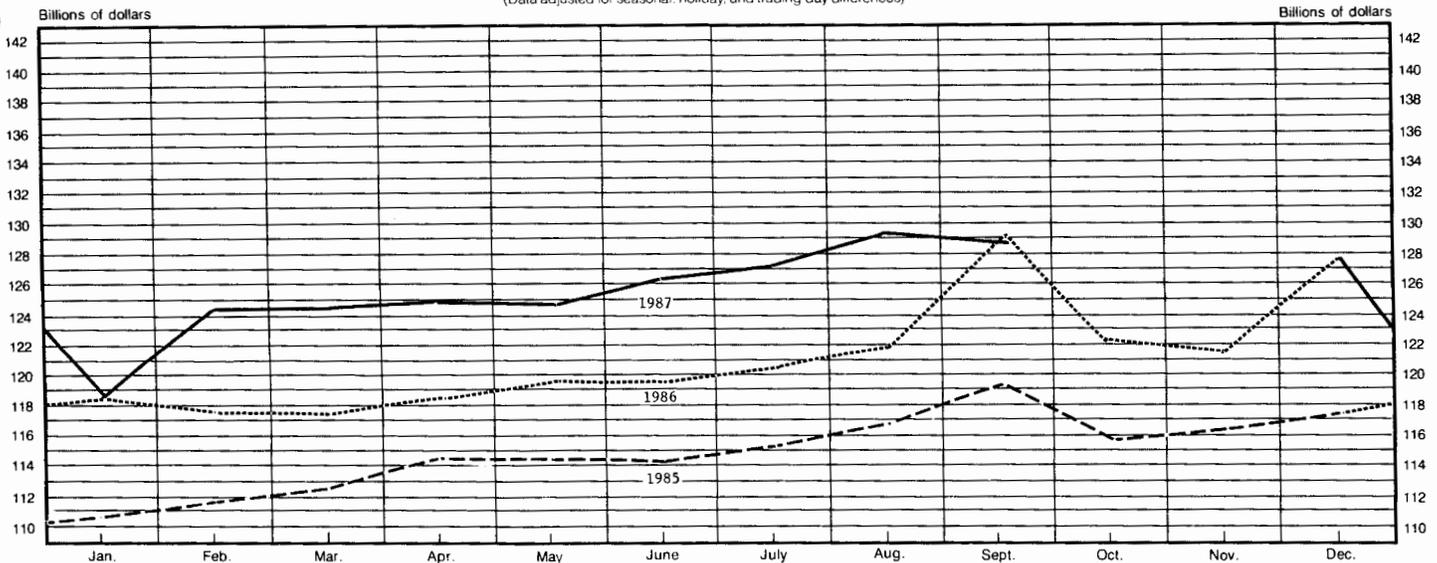
Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling as well as nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for October is scheduled to be released November 13, 1987, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1985-September 1987

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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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. 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 ^d					
		1987			1986		1987			1986	
		Sept. ² adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept.	Aug.	Sept. ² adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept. ² adv.	Aug. ² adv.
	Retail trade, total.....	125,748	130,996	128,950	125,444	124,721	128,760	129,267	127,061	129,118	121,735
	Total (excl. auto group)..	95,243	98,902	97,297	90,401	95,660	98,101	98,160	97,623	93,794	93,472
	Durable goods, total.....	50,532	52,617	52,208	54,806	49,027	50,829	51,283	49,735	55,139	47,951
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	8,005	8,102	8,392	7,993	7,980	7,523	7,434	7,467	7,522	7,410
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	6,559	6,710	5,965	6,030	(*)	5,909	5,881	5,478	5,507
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,007	1,047	880	942	(*)	975	986	910	912
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	30,505	32,094	31,653	35,043	29,061	30,659	31,107	29,438	35,324	28,263
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	28,149	29,630	29,141	32,730	26,688	28,376	28,767	27,133	33,061	26,037
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	27,053	26,212	30,438	24,257	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	2,464	2,512	2,313	2,373	(*)	2,340	2,305	2,263	2,226
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	6,598	6,733	6,700	6,572	6,681	6,726	6,792	6,846	6,704	6,682
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,639	3,666	3,570	3,656	(*)	3,578	3,684	3,577	3,550
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,613	2,595	2,509	2,592	(*)	2,702	2,673	2,641	2,672
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	847	877	774	823	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	75,216	78,379	76,742	70,638	75,694	77,931	77,984	77,326	73,979	73,784
53	General merchandise group stores..	12,590	13,626	12,081	11,757	13,055	13,794	13,870	13,708	12,969	13,114
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	10,794	11,682	10,331	10,122	11,213	11,758	11,824	11,687	11,111	11,213
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.) ³	(*)	12,529	11,087	10,936	12,115	(*)	12,694	12,556	11,991	12,127
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	698	640	571	672	(*)	720	710	662	678
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,246	1,110	1,064	1,170	(*)	1,326	1,311	1,196	1,223
54	Food stores.....	24,965	25,654	26,591	23,837	25,396	25,412	25,523	25,280	24,838	24,408
541	Grocery stores.....	23,595	24,250	25,145	22,403	23,904	23,979	24,105	23,834	23,336	22,919
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,834	8,101	8,116	6,911	7,149	7,865	7,812	7,635	6,904	6,828
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,908	7,279	6,354	6,449	7,106	7,188	7,148	7,163	6,788	6,892
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	724	670	705	746	(*)	804	807	808	813
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,969	2,684	2,756	2,835	(*)	3,011	2,972	2,868	2,846
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,791	1,537	1,422	1,709	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,433	1,165	1,257	1,433	(*)	1,349	1,352	1,247	1,328
58	Eating and drinking places.....	12,926	13,810	13,632	12,119	13,452	12,926	12,787	12,657	12,204	12,263
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,227	4,331	4,335	3,910	4,072	4,506	4,451	4,437	4,155	4,168
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,619	1,683	1,549	1,695	(*)	1,603	1,597	1,634	1,635
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	263	249	271	280	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	32,124	29,382	28,598	30,835	(*)	32,567	32,543	30,710	30,887

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

NA Not available. [†]Revised

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-87-08.

²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

⁴GAF 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. 1987 advance from--		Aug. 1987 preliminary from--		July 1987 through Sept. 1987	
		Aug. 1987 prelim.	Sept. 1986 final	July 1987 final	Aug. 1986 final	Apr. 1987 through June 1987	July 1986 through Sept. 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.4	-0.3	+1.7	+6.2	+2.4	+3.7
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	-0.1	+4.6	+0.6	+5.0	+0.9	+4.7
	Durable goods, total.....	-0.9	-7.8	+3.1	+6.9	+4.8	+1.4
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.2	0.0	-0.4	+0.3	+0.2	+0.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.4	-13.2	+5.7	+10.1	+7.5	+0.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-1.4	-14.2	+6.0	+10.5	+7.9	+0.3
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.0	+0.3	-0.8	+1.6	+1.0	+1.6
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.1	+5.3	+0.9	+5.7	+0.9	+5.2
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.5	+6.4	+1.2	+5.8	+1.2	+5.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.6	+5.8	+1.2	+5.4	+1.6	+5.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+1.1	+4.7	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.4	+2.3	+1.0	+4.6	+0.2	+3.0
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.5	+2.8	+1.1	+5.2	0.0	+3.4
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.7	+13.9	+2.3	+14.4	+4.1	+12.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.6	+5.9	-0.2	+3.7	+1.8	+5.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+1.1	+5.9	+1.0	+4.3	+0.3	+4.9
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.2	+8.4	+0.3	+6.8	+1.7	+7.4

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. 1987 prelim.	July 1987 final	Aug. 1986	Aug. 1987 prelim.	July 1987 final	Aug. ² 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	46,463	44,678	44,300	46,620	46,078	43,652
53	General merchandise group stores.....	12,673	11,161	12,188	12,889	12,709	12,240
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	11,337	10,016	10,910	11,452	11,330	10,888
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	12,146	10,739	11,761	12,269	12,148	11,738
533	Variety stores.....	559	500	521	583	566	533
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	777	645	757	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	14,460	15,045	14,076	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	14,268	14,849	13,863	14,515	14,237	13,499
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,023	3,352	3,880	3,836	3,866	3,600
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,651	1,473	1,557	1,648	1,624	1,501
566	Shoe stores.....	865	680	921	795	804	832
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,492	2,496	2,318	2,574	2,579	2,392

NA Not available. ² Revised

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-87-08.

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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 -1.6 percent to +1.0 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.6 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 1987 and final estimates for July 1987 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for August (BR-87-08). 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.

Whenever a statement such as "up 0.8 percent (+ 1.3%)" appears in the text, this indicates a range from -0.5 percent to +2.1 percent. All ranges given are 90 percent confidence intervals. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with 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	-1.6	+1.0	-0.1	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+0.6	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-2.1	+0.8	-0.3	0.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-2.6	+4.2	+0.5	1.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.4	+2.7	+0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.7	+0.8	0.0	0.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-0.6	+1.1	+0.1	0.4
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-0.7	+0.6	+0.1	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-0.6	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-0.7	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-5.2	+3.1	-0.5	1.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.3	+2.2	+0.6	0.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.1	+1.5	0.0	1.0
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	+0.2	0.6

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 January-December 1983.

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 1986-August 1987. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1985-July 1986.

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