

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales



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The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for September adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$153.3 billion, an increase of 0.7 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) from the previous month and 0.9 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) above September 1990. Total sales in the third quarter were 1.2 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) above the same quarter a year ago.

Durable goods increased 2.0 percent ( $\pm 3.9\%$ ) from the previous month.

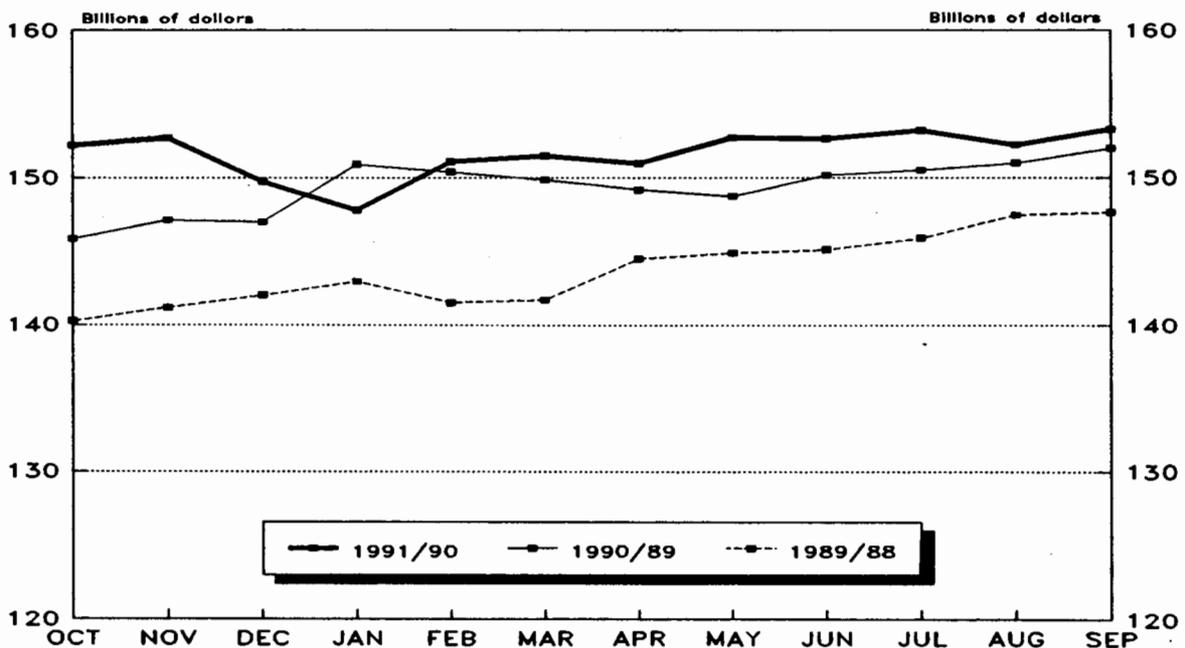
Nondurable goods were unchanged from the previous month but were 1.4 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) above last year. General merchandise stores were up 4.8 percent above September 1990 while gasoline service stations were down 6.6 percent in the same period.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for October is scheduled to be released November 14, 1991 at 8:30 a.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

October 1988 - September 1991

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



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This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call (202) 377-1986. The data are also available through the Census Bureau's online information service - CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2564) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

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>				
		1991			1990		1991			1990	
		Sept. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept.	Aug.	Sept. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept. <sup>r</sup>	Aug. <sup>r</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	147,470	159,875	154,643	146,335	158,243	153,296	152,228	153,195	151,995	150,984
	Total (excl. auto group)...	116,013	126,863	120,381	115,330	123,811	121,878	121,725	121,957	120,291	119,803
	Durable goods, total.....	53,348	56,538	57,277	52,561	57,880	54,240	53,193	54,117	54,306	53,859
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	8,060	8,556	8,787	7,707	8,543	7,863	7,717	7,882	7,639	7,743
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	6,498	6,583	5,640	6,315	(*)	5,756	5,805	5,460	5,569
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,128	1,146	1,096	1,113	(*)	1,087	1,080	1,115	1,094
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	31,457	33,012	34,262	31,005	34,432	31,418	30,503	31,238	31,704	31,181
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	28,847	30,206	31,395	28,439	31,625	28,818	27,943	28,593	29,168	28,620
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	26,570	27,674	25,017	27,928	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,806	2,867	2,566	2,807	(*)	2,560	2,645	2,536	2,561
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,273	7,688	7,562	7,377	7,750	7,672	7,603	7,680	7,716	7,649
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	4,221	4,088	4,131	4,380	(*)	4,090	4,121	4,281	4,236
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,701	2,790	2,580	2,689	(*)	2,734	2,782	2,753	2,727
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	843	907	800	869	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	94,122	103,337	97,366	93,774	100,363	99,056	99,035	99,078	97,689	97,125
53	General merchandise group stores.....	16,422	18,569	16,153	15,970	17,702	18,536	18,443	18,541	17,680	17,925
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	13,501	15,238	13,118	12,898	14,356	15,136	14,998	15,044	14,189	14,443
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	15,684	13,476	13,302	14,802	(*)	15,407	15,472	14,586	14,891
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	596	541	530	613	(*)	599	600	612	614
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	2,735	2,494	2,542	2,733	(*)	2,846	2,897	2,879	2,868
54	Food stores.....	29,622	32,476	31,993	30,010	31,622	30,837	30,779	30,991	30,711	30,343
541	Grocery stores.....	27,691	30,363	29,889	28,124	29,557	28,785	28,726	28,934	28,698	28,338
554	Gasoline service stations.....	11,065	11,635	11,298	11,781	12,112	10,934	10,854	10,618	11,711	11,277
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,637	8,932	7,339	7,599	8,542	8,150	8,184	8,188	7,887	8,024
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	708	619	718	705	(*)	763	750	795	790
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,844	2,571	2,625	2,782	(*)	2,796	2,828	2,715	2,782
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,954	2,335	2,204	2,661	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,818	1,347	1,500	1,773	(*)	1,528	1,510	1,500	1,540
58	Eating and drinking places.....	15,793	17,528	16,797	15,176	16,654	15,904	15,978	15,816	15,222	15,195
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	5,856	6,263	6,065	5,454	5,770	6,250	6,288	6,285	5,858	5,799
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,949	1,884	1,666	1,820	(*)	1,849	1,794	1,759	1,753
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	354	341	368	399	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	40,654	36,010	35,986	39,381	(*)	39,893	40,060	38,991	39,221

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

NA Not available.

<sup>r</sup>Revised.

<sup>1</sup>Data 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-91-08.

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

<sup>4</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					
		Sept. 1991 advance from--		Aug. 1991 preliminary from--		July 1991 through Sept. 1991 from--	
		Aug. 1991 prelim.	Sept. 1990 final	July 1991 final	Aug. 1990 final	Apr. 1991 through June 1991	July 1990 through Sept. 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.7	+0.9	-0.6	+0.8	+0.5	+1.2
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.1	+1.3	-0.2	+1.6	+0.8	+1.9
	Durable goods, total.....	+2.0	-0.1	-1.7	-1.2	-0.1	-0.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.9	+2.9	-2.1	-0.3	+0.2	+1.3
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+3.0	-0.9	-2.4	-2.2	-0.6	-1.7
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+3.1	-1.2	-2.3	-2.4	-0.4	-1.9
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.9	-0.6	-1.0	-0.6	+0.9	-0.8
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.0	+1.4	0.0	+2.0	+0.9	+2.2
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.5	+4.8	-0.5	+2.9	+2.2	+4.0
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+0.9	+6.7	-0.3	+3.8	+2.6	+5.2
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	-0.4	+3.5	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.2	+0.4	-0.7	+1.4	-0.5	+1.4
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.2	+0.3	-0.7	+1.4	-0.5	+1.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.7	-6.6	+2.2	-3.8	+1.6	-2.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.4	+3.3	0.0	+2.0	+0.8	+2.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.5	+4.5	+1.0	+5.2	+0.7	+4.3
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.6	+6.7	0.0	+8.4	+0.6	+8.2

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Aug. 1991 prelim.	July 1991 final	Aug. 1990	Aug. 1991 prelim.	July 1991 final	Aug. <sup>†</sup> 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	61,063	56,728	58,470	59,377	59,455	57,567
53	General merchandise group stores.....	17,050	14,688	16,171	16,923	17,021	16,399
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	14,818	12,760	13,917	14,556	14,633	13,987
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	15,249	13,105	14,350	14,950	15,098	14,422
533	Variety stores.....	444	395	471	446	447	470
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,788	1,533	1,783	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	18,126	17,718	17,285	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	17,903	17,494	17,064	17,165	17,168	16,599
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,202	4,149	4,902	4,656	4,725	4,524
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,636	1,500	1,572	1,593	1,645	1,564
566	Shoe stores.....	1,168	840	1,166	963	946	999
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,834	3,686	3,493	3,900	3,872	3,539

NA Not available.

<sup>†</sup>Revised.

<sup>1</sup>Data 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-91-08.

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

Note: The large (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).

Official 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 +1.2 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.4 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 1991 and final estimates for July 1991 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for August (BR-91-08). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. 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					Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change				
		Advance-to- preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.
		From	To				From	To			
	Retail trade, total.....	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	-1.1	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.7	+1.3	+0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total.....	1.8	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.3	-2.5	+2.2	+0.2	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores.....	1.2	2.0	1.7	3.3	2.5	2.5	-3.4	+4.0	+0.4	2.0
55 ex. 554 551,2,5, 6,7,9	Automotive dealers.....	2.2	4.1	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	-3.0	+2.6	+0.5	1.0
	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.6	4.1	2.9	4.8	3.9	3.5	-3.2	+2.6	+0.5	1.1
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.8	4.3	2.4	4.5	4.2	3.1	-2.5	+2.3	-0.2	1.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.6	+0.9	+0.2	0.4
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	-1.4	+1.7	+0.1	0.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.9	1.5	1.0	1.7	1.4	1.5	-0.5	+0.6	0.0	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.9	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.5	-0.5	+0.7	0.0	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	1.1	4.7	1.3	3.3	2.6	2.8	-1.4	+1.9	+0.3	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	2.9	2.0	3.0	2.6	2.0	-2.7	+4.8	+0.5	1.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	3.1	2.7	2.7	-0.9	+2.3	+0.3	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.5	3.2	0.8	2.4	1.7	2.0	-3.7	+1.1	+0.1	1.0

<sup>1</sup>The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1990 - March 1991.

<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, September 1990 - August 1991. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period April 1990 - March 1991.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion of the measures of sampling variability.

