

Advance Monthly Retail Sales



U.S. Department of Commerce
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

MARCH 1992

CB-92-121

INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES. The annual revision of the monthly retail sales estimates normally occurring in March, will be published in the press release the week of May 26. The U.S. total and most kinds of retail trade will be revised for the months of January 1989 through March 1992. *gfa*

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT., Tuesday, April 14, 1992

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for March adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$157.1 billion, a decrease of 0.4 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) from the previous month but were 3.5 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. Total sales in the first quarter were 4.5 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) above the same quarter a year ago. The February from January 1992 estimate of monthly change was unchanged from the +1.3 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) as published in the February advance.

Durable goods increased 0.2 percent ($\pm 3.2\%$) from the previous month and were 6.6 percent above the previous year.

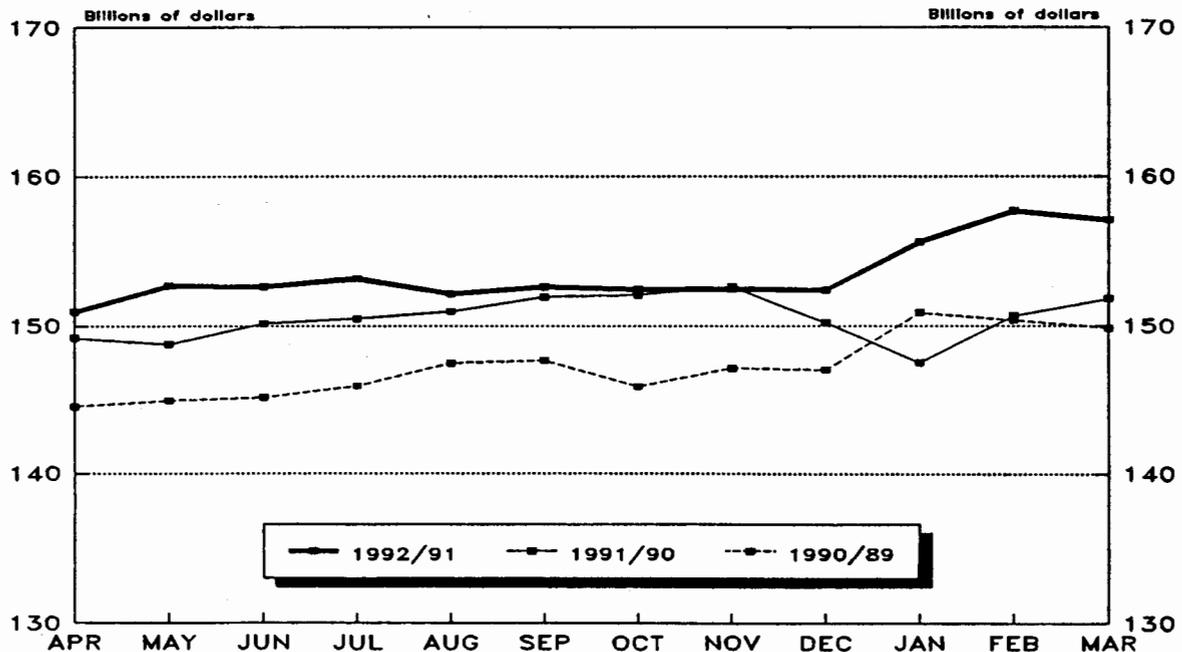
Nondurable goods decreased 0.7 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) from February but were 1.7 percent above March 1991. General merchandise stores decreased 3.0 percent from the previous month but were 4.9 percent above last year. Eating and drinking was up 6.2 percent from the previous year.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for April is scheduled to be released May 13, 1992 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

April 1989 - March 1992

(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 ¹				
		1992			1991		1992			1991	
		Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar. ² adv.	Feb. ² adv.
	Retail trade, total.....	152,427	139,667	138,167	149,299	128,589	157,114	157,711	155,657	151,868	150,699
	Total (excl. auto group)...	117,255	109,289	109,027	117,108	101,477	123,563	124,252	122,863	120,656	119,944
	Durable goods, total.....	57,277	50,641	48,909	52,909	45,320	57,487	57,375	56,178	53,943	53,088
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	8,019	6,784	6,393	6,876	5,683	8,586	8,711	8,207	7,571	7,597
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	5,139	4,819	4,944	4,097	(*)	6,563	6,085	5,463	5,412
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	918	935	1,020	852	(*)	1,155	1,144	1,105	1,125
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	35,172	30,378	29,140	32,191	27,112	33,551	33,459	32,794	31,212	30,755
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	32,734	28,195	26,937	29,734	25,024	30,998	30,882	30,232	28,645	28,180
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	24,269	23,552	25,651	21,832	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,183	2,203	2,457	2,088	(*)	2,577	2,562	2,567	2,575
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,646	7,099	7,098	7,234	6,495	7,965	7,804	7,747	7,558	7,471
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	3,909	3,804	4,002	3,612	(*)	4,240	4,166	4,088	4,091
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,466	2,577	2,554	2,273	(*)	2,774	2,798	2,740	2,687
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	736	753	754	660	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	95,150	89,026	89,258	96,390	83,269	99,627	100,336	99,479	97,925	97,611
53	General merchandise group stores.....	16,762	14,828	13,474	16,778	12,965	18,942	19,527	19,116	18,060	17,946
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	13,786	11,988	10,917	13,734	10,504	15,403	15,899	15,551	14,673	14,650
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	12,341	11,217	14,189	10,863	(*)	16,238	16,024	15,143	15,067
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	500	465	586	454	(*)	628	614	594	591
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	2,340	2,092	2,458	2,007	(*)	3,000	2,951	2,793	2,705
54	Food stores.....	30,543	29,169	30,269	31,276	27,452	31,171	31,046	31,150	30,884	30,548
541	Grocery stores.....	28,521	27,293	28,427	29,267	25,658	29,133	29,035	29,126	28,920	28,572
554	Gasoline service stations.....	9,698	9,219	9,686	10,241	9,484	10,208	10,289	10,315	10,814	10,952
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,263	6,343	6,005	7,890	5,784	8,070	8,277	8,078	7,893	7,965
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	598	631	704	554	(*)	791	783	775	779
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,165	2,070	2,674	2,000	(*)	2,772	2,688	2,712	2,699
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,929	1,722	2,304	1,693	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,192	1,141	1,629	1,140	(*)	1,509	1,463	1,470	1,522
58	Eating and drinking places.....	16,271	15,264	14,995	15,560	13,809	16,519	16,609	16,334	15,560	15,603
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,412	6,148	6,242	6,298	5,686	6,516	6,438	6,382	6,285	6,154
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,598	1,592	1,716	1,537	(*)	1,798	1,765	1,833	1,819
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	300	305	370	289	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	33,125	31,321	36,726	29,700	(*)	41,395	40,719	39,105	38,911

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

NA Not available.

¹Revised.

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-92-02.

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					
		Mar. 1992 advance from--		Feb. 1992 preliminary from--		Jan. 1992 through Mar. 1992 from--	
		Feb. 1992 prelim.	Mar. 1991 final	Jan. 1992 final	Feb. 1991 final	Oct. 1991 through Dec. 1991	Jan. 1991 through Mar. 1991
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.4	+3.5	+1.3	+4.7	+2.9	+4.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-0.6	+2.4	+1.1	+3.6	+2.6	+3.2
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.2	+6.6	+2.1	+8.1	+4.6	+8.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-1.4	+13.4	+6.1	+14.7	+9.7	+14.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+0.3	+7.5	+2.0	+8.8	+3.8	+9.9
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+0.4	+8.2	+2.2	+9.6	+3.9	+10.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+2.1	+5.4	+0.7	+4.5	+5.6	+5.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.7	+1.7	+0.9	+2.8	+1.9	+2.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-3.0	+4.9	+2.2	+8.8	+6.2	+7.5
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-3.1	+5.0	+2.2	+8.5	+5.4	+7.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	+1.3	+7.8	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.4	+0.9	-0.3	+1.6	+0.4	+1.3
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.3	+0.7	-0.3	+1.6	+0.5	+1.2
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.8	-5.6	-0.3	-6.1	-2.1	-7.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-2.5	+2.2	+2.5	+3.9	+3.5	+4.6
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.5	+6.2	+1.7	+6.4	+2.7	+6.3
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.2	+3.7	+0.9	+4.6	+1.8	+5.1

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 ¹		
		Feb. 1992 prelim.	Jan. 1992 final	Feb. 1991	Feb. 1992 prelim.	Jan. 1992 final	Feb. 1991
	Retail trade, total.....	52,749	51,879	47,817	61,541	60,739	58,119
53	General merchandise group stores.....	13,588	12,281	11,903	17,817	17,542	16,429
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	11,686	10,622	10,219	15,417	15,196	14,193
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	12,026	10,911	10,567	15,803	15,587	14,636
533	Variety stores.....	362	333	344	465	457	459
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,540	1,326	1,340	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	16,780	17,470	15,629	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	16,521	17,241	15,386	17,336	17,258	16,926
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,583	3,308	3,217	4,854	4,798	4,608
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,263	1,205	1,140	1,686	1,681	1,603
566	Shoe stores.....	720	689	680	965	943	963
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,838	3,825	3,457	4,032	3,984	3,749

NA Not available.

¹Revised.

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-92-02.

²Includes 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 monthly retail sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail survey panel. Due to this, the advance estimates will differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on 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 -0.8 percent to +1.5 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 February 1992 and final estimates for January 1992 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for February (BR-92-02). 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 ²		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range ¹		Median	Median	Median	Median	From			To
		From	To								
	Retail trade, total.....	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	-0.8	+1.5	+0.2	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	Automotive dealers.....	2.2	4.1	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	-3.0	+2.6	+0.5	1.0
551, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9	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

¹The 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.

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, March 1991 - February 1992. 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.

