

Advance Monthly Retail Sales



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

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The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$183.6 billion, a decrease of 0.8 percent ($\pm 1.1\%$) from the previous month but were 7.6 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) above the same month a year ago. Total sales in the February through April period were 8.6 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) above the same period a year ago. The February to March 1994 percent change was revised from +0.4 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) as published in the March advance, to +1.7 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$).

Durable goods were up 13.8 percent from the previous year. Building materials were up 12.2 percent from April 1993 while automotive dealers and furniture were up 18.0 percent and 11.4 percent, respectively, in the same period.

Nondurable goods were up 4.0 percent from April 1993. General merchandise stores were up 6.4 percent from the previous year.

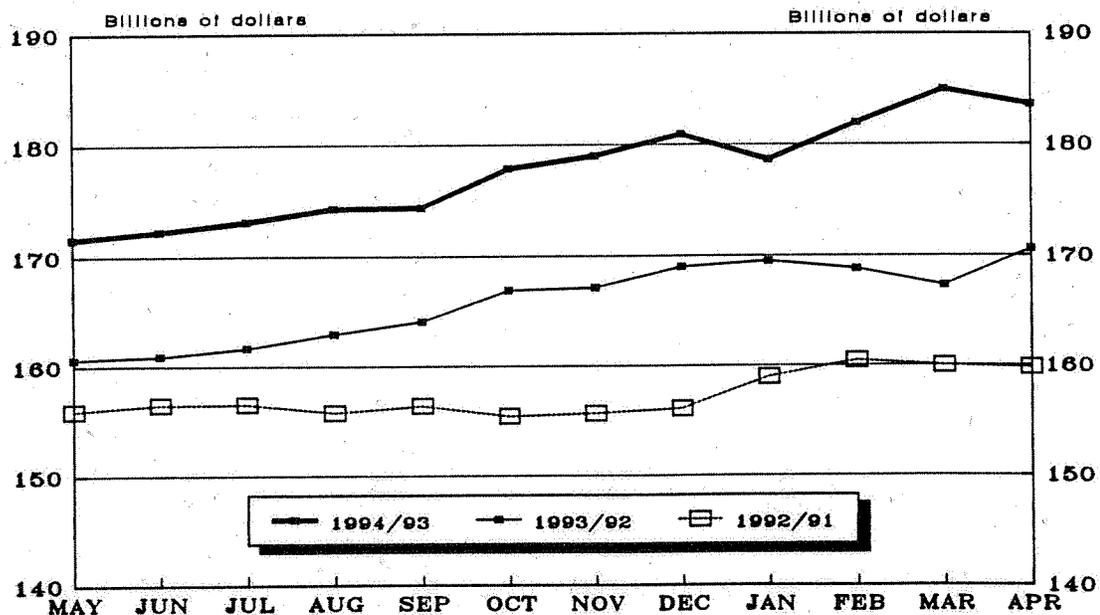
The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for May is scheduled to be released June 14, 1994 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

May 1991 - April 1994

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



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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) 482-1986. 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				
		1994			1993		1994			1993	
		Apr. ² adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ² adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr. ¹	Mar. ¹
	Retail trade, total.....	181,840	184,389	156,643	170,324	164,642	183,608	185,000	181,958	170,627	167,294
	Total (excl. auto group)...	136,030	137,471	118,866	130,937	126,958	140,485	141,143	139,346	134,086	132,091
	Durable goods, total.....	73,690	74,346	60,819	65,319	61,834	71,831	72,972	70,860	63,113	60,950
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	11,126	10,051	7,414	10,031	8,592	10,350	10,616	9,832	9,228	9,073
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	7,424	5,676	7,178	6,415	(*)	7,709	7,343	6,823	6,703
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,046	865	1,075	967	(*)	1,127	1,140	1,012	1,052
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	45,810	46,918	37,777	39,387	37,684	43,123	43,857	42,612	36,541	35,203
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	42,445	43,533	34,989	36,193	34,632	39,817	40,458	39,269	33,419	32,126
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	39,428	31,684	32,184	30,895	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,385	2,788	3,194	3,052	(*)	3,399	3,343	3,122	3,077
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	9,563	10,003	8,770	8,589	8,757	10,130	10,176	10,053	9,091	8,946
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	4,954	4,296	4,533	4,513	(*)	4,979	4,887	4,640	4,563
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,088	3,620	3,216	3,366	(*)	4,214	4,209	3,519	3,477
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	822	698	774	739	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	108,150	110,043	95,824	105,005	102,808	111,777	112,028	111,098	107,514	106,344
53	General merchandise group stores.....	21,228	21,685	17,714	20,272	19,174	23,266	23,246	23,206	21,858	21,203
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	16,208	16,573	13,297	15,208	14,287	17,694	17,763	17,729	16,353	15,717
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	17,019	13,667	15,688	14,736	(*)	18,320	18,247	16,761	16,229
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	498	414	616	542	(*)	527	535	617	620
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	4,614	4,003	4,448	4,345	(*)	4,956	4,942	4,888	4,866
54	Food stores.....	33,183	33,654	30,131	32,283	31,846	33,500	33,551	33,576	32,504	32,241
541	Grocery stores.....	31,355	31,768	28,473	30,487	30,224	31,640	31,673	31,707	30,733	30,591
554	Gasoline service stations.....	11,267	11,003	9,880	11,080	10,923	11,664	11,521	11,279	11,470	11,402
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	8,450	8,561	6,557	8,740	7,762	8,784	8,900	8,956	8,735	8,488
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	723	597	657	582	(*)	814	812	684	678
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	3,071	2,415	3,352	2,971	(*)	3,159	3,259	3,319	3,167
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,625	1,944	2,492	2,241	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,537	1,113	1,568	1,355	(*)	1,465	1,455	1,441	1,411
58	Eating and drinking places.....	18,625	18,662	16,334	17,460	17,070	18,551	18,718	18,169	17,408	17,190
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,755	7,044	6,293	6,749	6,734	6,809	6,886	6,796	6,695	6,661
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,634	1,445	1,706	1,676	(*)	1,738	1,714	1,800	1,806
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	2,709	2,179	2,185	2,498	(*)	2,731	2,591	2,398	2,481
53,56,57 594	GAF ⁴	(*)	45,610	38,096	42,966	40,626	(*)	48,644	48,590	45,966	44,552

*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, but not for price changes. 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-94-03.

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 (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

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, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Apr. 1994 advance from-		Mar. 1994 preliminary from-		Feb. 1994 through Apr. 1994 from-	
		Mar. 1994 prelim.	Apr. 1993 final	Feb. 1994 final	Mar. 1993 final	Nov. 1993 through Jan. 1994	Feb. 1993 through Apr. 1993
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.8	+7.6	+1.7	+10.6	+2.2	+8.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	-0.5	+4.8	+1.3	+6.9	+1.6	+5.4
	Durable goods, total.....	-1.6	+13.8	+3.0	+19.7	+2.6	+16.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-2.5	+12.2	+8.0	+17.0	-0.6	+12.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.7	+18.0	+2.9	+24.6	+4.3	+20.9
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-1.6	+19.1	+3.0	+25.9	+4.2	+22.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.5	+11.4	+1.2	+13.7	+1.7	+12.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.2	+4.0	+0.8	+5.3	+2.0	+4.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.1	+6.4	+0.2	+9.6	+1.8	+7.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.4	+8.2	+0.2	+13.0	+2.1	+10.2
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ¹	(NA)	(NA)	+0.4	+12.9	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.2	+3.1	-0.1	+4.1	+0.7	+3.2
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.1	+3.0	-0.1	+3.5	+1.0	+2.9
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.2	+1.7	+2.1	+1.0	+5.4	+0.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.3	+0.6	-0.6	+4.9	+1.0	+2.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.9	+6.6	+3.0	+8.9	+4.2	+7.2
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-1.1	+1.7	+1.3	+3.4	-0.2	+2.0

NA Not available.

¹Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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

To obtain space for additional charts, this table has been discontinued. These data are published in the Monthly Retail Trade, Sales and Inventories Report.

Business

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Sample Design and Reliability of Data

Advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

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 -1.0 percent to +1.3 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 March 1994 and final estimates for February 1994 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-94-03). 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.

A 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 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

IC 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.....	0.5	1.3	0.7	1.0	0.8	1.0	-1.0	+1.3	+0.2	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.5	0.9	0.7	1.1	0.8	1.0	-1.6	+0.7	-0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total.....	1.2	3.4	1.4	2.2	1.7	2.2	-0.9	+1.1	+0.2	0.5
	Building materials, group stores.....	0.9	2.6	1.6	4.1	2.9	3.4	-4.2	+2.5	-0.4	1.4
52	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	3.2	2.1	3.4	2.6	3.1	-1.3	+2.2	+0.6	1.1
55 ex. 554 551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.2	3.0	1.5	4.0	2.8	3.2	-1.5	+2.3	+0.5	1.1
	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.6	2.1	4.6	3.4	4.1	-3.4	+2.3	-0.1	1.5
57	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.4	0.8	0.6	1.1	0.8	1.1	-1.1	+0.5	0.0	0.3
	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	-0.3	+0.7	+0.1	0.2
	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	-0.4	+0.6	-0.1	0.2
53	Food stores.....	0.6	1.0	0.7	1.7	0.9	1.7	-0.5	+0.8	+0.1	0.3
531	Grocery stores.....	0.1	0.8	0.3	1.8	0.9	1.7	-0.6	+0.5	0.0	0.2
54	Gasoline service stations.....	0.5	1.9	0.9	2.7	1.8	3.0	-1.4	+1.2	-0.4	0.8
541	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.8	3.4	1.4	3.3	2.8	2.6	-2.4	+1.3	-0.4	1.1
554	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	2.0	1.2	4.6	4.0	3.9	-3.6	+2.4	0.0	1.0
56	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.4	1.8	1.0	2.5	1.5	2.5	-1.0	+1.3	+0.2	0.6
58											
591											

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 April 1993 - March 1994.

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, April 1993 - March 1994. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the period April 1993 - February 1994.

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.

