

U.S. Census Bureau News

U.S. Department of Commerce • Washington, D.C. 20233

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2008 AT 10:00 A.M. EST

Timothy Winters (Retail): (301) 763-2713
John Miller (Wholesale): (301) 763-2703
Chris Savage (Manufacturing): (301) 763-4832

CB08-183

MANUFACTURING AND TRADE INVENTORIES AND SALES October 2008

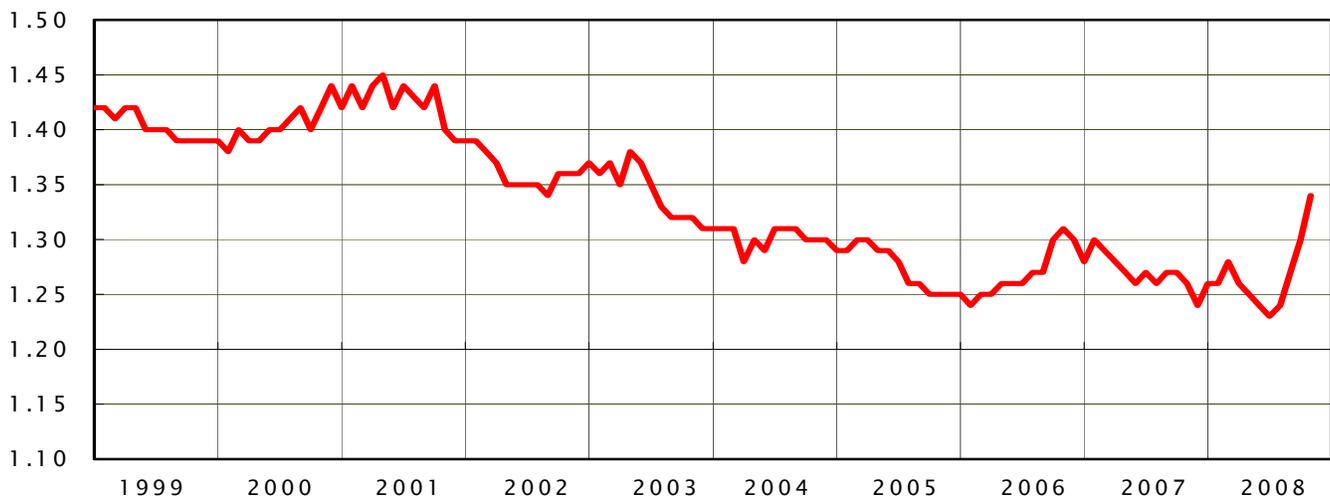
Sales. The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that the combined value of distributive trade sales and manufacturers' shipments for October, adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences but not for price changes, was estimated at \$1,118.7 billion, down 3.5 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from September 2008 and down 1.6 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from October 2007.

Inventories. Manufacturers' and trade inventories, adjusted for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were estimated at an end-of-month level of \$1,497.0 billion, down 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.1\%$) from September 2008, but up 4.6 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from October 2007.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The total business inventories/sales ratio based on seasonally adjusted data at the end of October was 1.34. The October 2007 ratio was 1.26.

Total Business Inventories/Sales Ratios: 1999 to 2008

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



The Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales Report for November is scheduled to be released January 14, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. EST.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/bussales>>. This report is also available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's STAT-USA (202-482-1986).

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales and Inventories for Manufacturers, Retailers, and Merchant Wholesalers
(In millions of dollars)

	Sales			Inventories ¹			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
	Oct. 2008	Sep. 2008	Oct. 2007	Oct. 2008	Sep. 2008	Oct. 2007	Oct. 2008	Sep. 2008	Oct. 2007
	(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)
Adjusted²									
Total business.....	1,118,681	1,159,637	1,137,202	1,496,951	1,505,253	1,431,373	1.34	1.30	1.26
Manufacturers ³	417,703	431,492	427,623	555,136	558,296	522,777	1.33	1.29	1.22
Retailers.....	323,581	334,415	342,153	503,633	504,102	503,046	1.56	1.51	1.47
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	377,397	393,730	367,426	438,182	442,855	405,550	1.16	1.12	1.10
Not Adjusted									
Total business.....	1,149,813	1,171,156	1,169,324	1,522,305	1,501,715	1,456,041	1.32	1.28	1.25
Manufacturers ³	431,748	448,947	444,046	558,664	559,375	525,845	1.29	1.25	1.18
Retailers.....	319,183	320,124	335,100	525,053	501,464	523,878	1.64	1.57	1.56
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	398,882	402,085	390,178	438,588	440,876	406,318	1.10	1.10	1.04

See footnotes and notes at the end of Table 3.

(p) Preliminary estimate.
(r) Revised estimate.

Table 2. Percent Changes for Sales and Inventories — Manufacturers, Retailers, and Merchant Wholesalers

	Adjusted						Not Adjusted					
	Sales			Inventories			Sales			Inventories		
	Oct. 08/ Sep. 08	Sep. 08/ Aug. 08	Oct. 08/ Oct. 07	Oct. 08/ Sep. 08	Sep. 08/ Aug. 08	Oct. 08/ Oct. 07	Oct. 08/ Sep. 08	Sep. 08/ Aug. 08	Oct. 08/ Oct. 07	Oct. 08/ Sep. 08	Sep. 08/ Aug. 08	Oct. 08/ Oct. 07
Total business.....	-3.5	-2.4	-1.6	-0.6	-0.4	4.6	-1.8	-3.1	-1.7	1.4	0.4	4.6
Manufacturers ³	-3.2	-3.1	-2.3	-0.6	-0.8	6.2	-3.8	-1.7	-2.8	-0.1	-1.4	6.2
Retailers.....	-3.2	-1.8	-5.4	-0.1	0.2	0.1	-0.3	-8.4	-4.7	4.7	2.7	0.2
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	-4.1	-2.1	2.7	-1.1	-0.4	8.0	-0.8	0.1	2.2	-0.5	0.3	7.9

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, Inventories, and Inventories/Sales Ratios, By Kind of Business

(In millions of dollars)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Sales			Inventories ¹			Percent Change In Inventories			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
		Oct. 2008 (p)	Sep. 2008 (r)	Oct. 2007 (r)	Oct. 2008 (p)	Sep. 2008 (r)	Oct. 2007 (r)	Oct. 08/ Sep. 08	Sep. 08/ Aug. 08	Oct. 08/ Oct. 07	Oct. 08 (p)	Sep. 08 (r)	Oct. 07 (r)
	Adjusted ²												
	Retail trade, total.....	323,581	334,415	342,153	503,633	504,102	503,046	-0.1	0.2	0.1	1.56	1.51	1.47
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	263,688	271,064	262,894	347,462	347,800	342,939	-0.1	0.4	1.3	1.32	1.28	1.30
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	59,893	63,351	79,259	156,171	156,302	160,107	-0.1	-0.4	-2.5	2.61	2.47	2.02
442,3	Furniture,home furn., elect. & appl. stores.....	17,699	17,968	19,291	33,692	33,608	33,594	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.90	1.87	1.74
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies.....	26,905	27,168	27,581	51,255	51,446	49,235	-0.4	0.7	4.1	1.91	1.89	1.79
445	Food & beverage stores.....	49,534	49,662	47,525	38,257	38,062	36,310	0.5	0.9	5.4	0.77	0.77	0.76
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	17,876	18,241	18,886	46,568	46,570	47,178	0.0	0.2	-1.3	2.61	2.55	2.50
452	General merchandise stores.....	49,548	49,764	48,504	76,184	76,047	76,785	0.2	1.1	-0.8	1.54	1.53	1.58
4521	Dept. str. (excl. leased depts.).....	16,234	16,423	17,413	35,802	35,789	37,804	0.0	1.2	-5.3	2.21	2.18	2.17
	Not Adjusted												
	Retail trade, total.....	319,183	320,124	335,100	525,053	501,464	523,878	4.7	2.7	0.2	1.64	1.57	1.56
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	262,162	257,663	259,733	372,964	355,162	368,303	5.0	3.8	1.3	1.42	1.38	1.42
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	57,021	62,461	75,367	152,089	146,302	155,575	4.0	0.1	-2.2	2.67	2.34	2.06
442,3	Furniture,home furn., elect. & appl. stores.....	16,644	16,807	18,164	36,825	33,910	36,618	8.6	3.6	0.6	2.21	2.02	2.02
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies.....	27,954	27,087	28,862	50,281	50,314	48,250	-0.1	0.1	4.2	1.80	1.86	1.67
445	Food & beverage stores.....	49,542	47,803	46,742	39,619	37,902	37,535	4.5	2.3	5.6	0.80	0.79	0.80
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	17,205	16,215	17,913	51,411	49,551	52,084	3.8	5.3	-1.3	2.99	3.06	2.91
452	General merchandise stores.....	47,672	44,161	46,110	87,509	79,804	88,183	9.7	9.3	-0.8	1.84	1.81	1.91
4521	Dept. str. (excl. leased depts.).....	15,535	14,017	16,400	42,604	38,258	44,836	11.4	12.1	-5.0	2.74	2.73	2.73

(p) Preliminary estimate.

(r) Revised estimate.

¹ Inventories are on a non-LIFO basis as of the end of the month.

² Adjusted for seasonal variations and, in the case of sales, for trading-day differences and holiday variations. Concurrent seasonal adjustment is being used to adjust all sales, shipment and inventory estimates. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-12-ARIMA program. The factors derived from the program are applied to the current and previous month estimates and for retail and wholesale estimates a year ago as well. For retail sales, concurrent seasonal adjustment is also used to adjust the advance estimates (published one month before the preliminary estimates) and the estimates one year before the advance month. This explains the revision to retail estimates from a year ago.

³ Manufacturers sales refer to the value of shipments by manufacturers. The shipments data from individual manufacturers are adjusted prior to tabulation for the number of trading days as well as for any variations in the length of the reporting period.

⁴ The 2002 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) defines merchant wholesalers as including manufacturers' sales branches and offices. However, the estimates included in this release exclude manufacturers' sales branches and offices. Note that this is not a change in coverage from prior releases and is consistent with the description used in the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey data products.

Note: U.S. and group totals include kinds of business not shown. The Manufacturing and Trade Inventory and Sales estimates are based on data from three surveys: the Monthly Retail Trade Survey, the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, and the Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders Survey. The sampling variability for retailers and merchant wholesalers can be used to construct a 90 percent confidence interval for the estimates. Over all possible samples, 90 percent of such intervals will cover the true estimate. These intervals are given in parentheses for the estimates on the front page. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is ± 1.2 percent, the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. Measures of reliability for Retail and Wholesale sales and inventory levels and changes are included in the detailed monthly press releases for those Industries. Manufacturers do not contribute to estimates of sampling variability because the manufacturer's mail panel is not a probability sample from a known frame and standard errors of the industry estimates cannot be calculated. Estimates from all three surveys are also subject to nonsampling errors, which can arise in any stage of the survey. Such errors include coverage error (failure to accurately represent all population units in the sample) response errors, coding errors, and nonresponse. Although no direct measurement of these errors has been obtained, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the collection, processing, and tabulation of the data to minimize their influence.