

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

OCTOBER 1984

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CB-84-202

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for October, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$107.7 billion, down 0.1 percent from the revised level of \$107.9 billion in September but were 6.7 percent above a year ago. This slight decrease follows a 1.2 percent increase in September. Excluding the automotive group, total sales declined 1.0 percent in October but were 5.6 percent above the previous year. The October through August sales were 0.9 percent below the prior three months but were 7.9 percent above the same period a year ago.

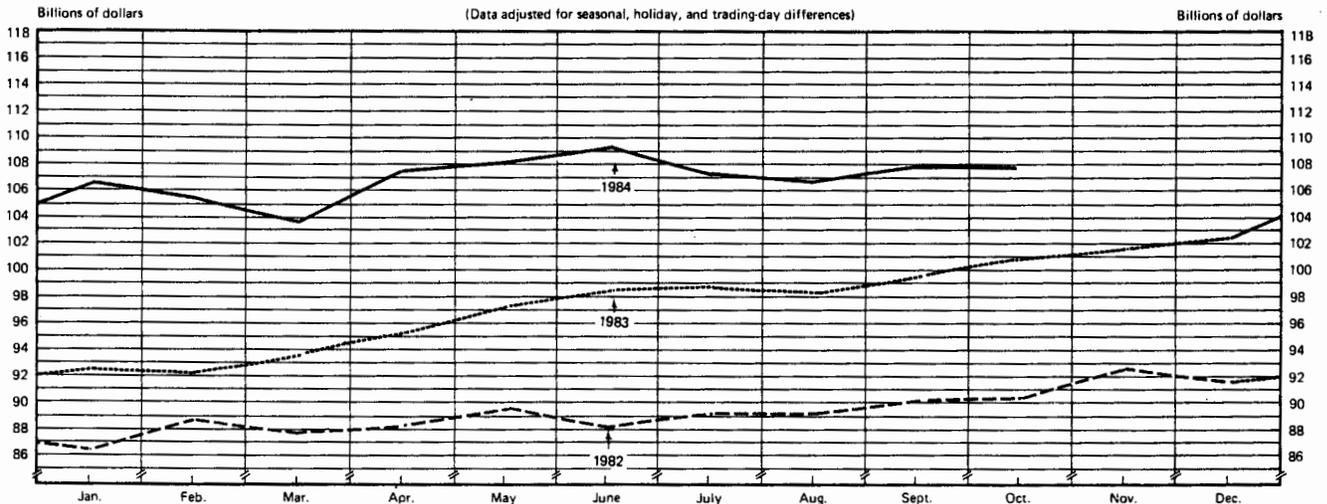
Durable goods increased 2.6 percent from September primarily on the strength of the automotive group which was up 3.5 percent from the previous month and 11.2 above last year. The increase in the automotive group follows three monthly declines. Building materials increased 0.2 percent while furniture stores showed the only decline in durable goods, down 0.9 percent during the month.

The nondurable goods group declined 1.6 percent in October, after the 2.0 percent increase last month. The general merchandise group was down 1.9 percent following a strong 3.6 percent increase in September. Food stores also declined during the month, down 1.6 percent, but were 5.0 percent above a year ago. After a 4.9 percent increase in September, the apparel group declined 2.3 percent, the third decrease in four months. Gasoline service station sales were down 1.1 percent in October and were 2.6 percent below the previous year, the fourth consecutive yearly decline. Eating and drinking establishments increased 0.1 percent in October and were 6.7 percent above the previous year. Drug stores were virtually unchanged during the month but were 9.4 percent above October last year.

For a description of the sample design and reliability of the data, see back page.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for November is scheduled to be released December 13, 1984, at 8:30 a.m.

## ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1982-October 1984



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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, at \$37 per year. Add \$9.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 75 cents each.

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>				
		1984			1983		1984			1983	
		Oct. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Sept. prel.	Aug. final	Oct.	Sept.	Oct. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Sept. prel.	Aug. final	Oct.	Sept.
	Retail trade, total.....	108,167	103,578	110,650	100,658	97,926	107,717	107,871	106,606	100,923	99,537
	Total (excl. auto group)..	86,193	83,621	87,825	81,439	79,267	85,890	86,781	85,427	81,303	80,680
	Durable goods, total.....	38,032	35,331	39,046	33,593	32,769	37,630	36,666	36,781	33,882	32,905
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	6,206	5,990	6,428	5,557	5,446	5,673	5,660	5,793	5,102	5,042
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,532	4,790	4,130	4,064	(*)	4,165	4,191	3,681	3,638
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	822	900	813	786	(*)	858	892	805	809
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	21,974	19,957	22,825	19,219	18,659	21,827	21,090	21,179	19,620	18,857
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	19,923	18,063	20,763	17,300	16,796	19,903	19,196	19,296	17,780	17,034
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	16,210	18,450	15,648	15,083	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	1,894	2,062	1,919	1,863	(*)	1,894	1,883	1,840	1,823
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,004	4,868	5,042	4,428	4,342	4,989	5,034	4,886	4,476	4,413
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	2,863	3,009	2,726	2,606	(*)	2,933	2,877	2,715	2,638
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	1,667	1,701	1,398	1,393	(*)	1,768	1,674	1,444	1,444
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	695	742	609	622	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	70,135	68,247	71,604	67,065	65,157	70,087	71,205	69,825	67,041	66,632
53	General merchandise group stores..	12,992	12,213	12,790	12,063	11,199	13,106	13,365	12,906	12,112	12,001
531	Department stores.....	10,790	10,112	10,535	9,873	9,187	10,866	10,991	10,609	9,893	9,784
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	723	800	752	687	(*)	831	786	778	781
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,378	1,455	1,438	1,325	(*)	1,543	1,511	1,441	1,436
54	Food stores.....	22,795	22,784	23,789	21,780	21,878	23,090	23,461	22,817	21,992	21,943
541	Grocery stores.....	21,430	21,451	22,417	20,524	20,611	21,668	22,046	21,452	20,669	20,611
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,687	8,601	9,091	8,836	8,839	8,508	8,601	8,568	8,731	8,760
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,931	4,801	4,970	4,617	4,312	4,892	5,005	4,771	4,570	4,451
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	652	641	695	608	(*)	705	674	679	659
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,983	1,950	1,888	1,705	(*)	2,051	1,910	1,831	1,734
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,050	1,186	974	927	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	819	855	808	803	(*)	804	804	788	783
58	Eating and drinking places.....	10,703	10,660	11,605	10,113	9,941	10,587	10,575	10,676	9,924	9,833
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,510	3,318	3,499	3,168	3,134	3,607	3,607	3,531	3,297	3,306
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,602	1,739	1,603	1,611	(*)	1,674	1,697	1,661	1,675
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	381	407	461	378	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57 594	GAF <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	25,235	26,403	24,181	22,877	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-84-09).<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>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					
		Oct. 1984 advance from--		Sept. 1984 preliminary from--		Aug. 1984 through Oct. 1984	
		Sept. 1984 prelim.	Oct. 1983 final	Aug. 1984 final	Sept. 1983 final	May 1984 through July 1984	Aug. 1983 through Oct. 1983
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.1	+6.7	+1.2	+8.4	-0.9	+7.9
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-1.0	+5.6	+1.6	+7.6	+0.2	+6.6
	Durable goods, total.....	+2.6	+11.1	-0.3	+11.4	-2.6	+12.5
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+0.2	+11.2	-2.3	+12.3	-1.7	+12.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+3.5	+11.2	-0.4	+11.8	-4.9	+13.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+3.7	+11.9	-0.5	+12.7	-5.2	+14.4
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.9	+11.5	+3.0	+14.1	+2.3	+12.1
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-1.6	+4.5	+2.0	+6.9	+0.1	+5.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-1.9	+8.2	+3.6	+11.4	+0.7	+9.4
531	Department stores.....	-1.1	+9.8	+3.6	+12.3	+1.0	+10.5
54	Food stores.....	-1.6	+5.0	+2.8	+6.9	+0.5	+5.5
541	Grocery stores.....	-1.7	+4.8	+2.8	+7.0	+0.4	+5.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.1	-2.6	+0.4	-1.8	-2.3	-2.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-2.3	+7.0	+4.9	+12.4	-2.5	+9.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.1	+6.7	-0.9	+7.5	+2.5	+8.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.0	+9.4	+2.2	+9.1	+2.2	+8.8

**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 <sup>1</sup>		
		Sept. 1984 prelim.	Aug. 1984 final	Sept. 1983	Sept. 1984 prelim.	Aug. 1984 final	Sept. 1983
	Retail trade, total.....	36,085	37,680	34,006	38,094	37,063	35,032
53	General merchandise group stores.....	11,056	11,577	10,083	12,107	11,677	10,813
531	Department stores.....	9,682	10,107	8,777	10,535	10,158	9,347
533	Variety stores.....	564	619	532	654	612	605
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	810	851	774	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	12,224	12,692	11,883	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	12,078	12,541	11,738	12,477	12,129	11,738
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,070	2,168	1,802	2,166	2,005	1,854
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	899	902	756	954	858	783
566	Shoe stores.....	426	453	411	422	419	403
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,890	1,993	1,733	2,075	2,036	1,863

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-84-09).

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 -1.1 percent to +1.1 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.5 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 September 1984 and final estimates for August 1984 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for September (BR-84-09). 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 complete report will include 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 <sup>1</sup>		Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.7	-1.1	+1.1	-0.1	0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.6	1.0	0.7	-0.8	+1.3	0.0	0.6
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.0	2.2	1.4	-1.4	+3.2	+0.4	1.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.9	3.1	2.7	-1.5	+5.1	+1.3	2.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.4	2.2	1.8	-1.0	+4.2	+0.6	1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.9	1.3	-1.3	+4.8	+0.7	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.2	4.1	2.4	-3.5	+2.5	-0.5	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.8	0.6	-0.6	+1.2	0.0	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.9	0.5	-1.3	+1.0	+0.1	0.5
531	Department stores.....	0.1	0.6	0.3	-1.1	+1.0	+0.2	0.5
54	Food stores.....	0.7	1.1	0.9	-0.9	+1.3	-0.2	0.5
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.7	0.5	-0.8	+1.1	-0.2	0.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.1	1.0	-3.8	+3.0	-0.1	1.6
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.6	3.7	2.0	-3.0	+2.1	0.0	1.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.4	1.1	-2.4	+3.0	-0.1	1.2
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.4	1.6	0.9	-2.1	+1.5	-0.4	0.7

<sup>1</sup>The 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.

<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, October 1983-September 1984. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period March 1983-February 1984.

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