

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Friday December 11, 1998

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
November 1998**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for November adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$229.4 billion, an increase of 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 6.3 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from November 1997. Total sales for the September through November period were up 5.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The September to October percent change was revised from +1.0 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to +1.2 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Durable goods increased 1.0 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from October and were 8.4 percent above last year. Building materials were up 10.7 percent from November a year ago, while furniture sales were up 7.4 percent during the same period.

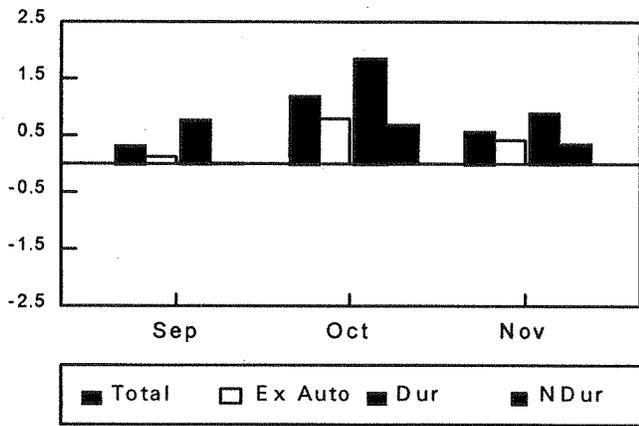
Nondurable goods increased 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from last month and were 4.8 percent above last year. General merchandise sales were up 7.1 percent from November a year ago, while gasoline sales were down 5.1 percent during the same period.

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.

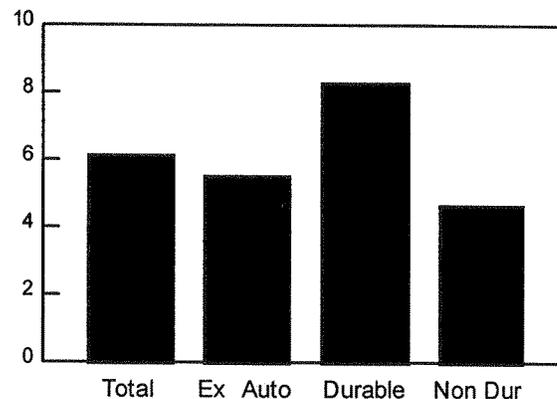
Percent Change in Retail Sales

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

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for December is scheduled to be released January 14, 1999 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Pienycoski, Service Sector Statistics Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone: (301) 457-2713 or (301) 457-2666.

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 on the internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, By Kind of Business

(In Millions of Dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1998			1997		1998			1997	
		Nov. ² (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov.	Oct.	Nov. ² (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov. (r)	Oct. (r)
	Retail trade, total.....	228,885	230,679	217,924	215,632	217,578	229,350	227,900	225,141	215,828	215,115
	Total (excl. auto group).....	178,221	173,790	163,678	169,362	164,550	172,655	171,912	170,546	163,494	163,329
	Durable goods, total.....	91,394	96,574	92,864	83,766	89,509	96,761	95,847	94,066	89,253	88,372
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers....	13,019	14,964	14,636	11,739	13,642	14,090	13,969	13,886	12,728	12,704
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	11,679	11,382	9,116	10,692	(*)	10,715	10,718	9,781	9,800
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,342	1,315	1,187	1,300	(*)	1,292	1,335	1,198	1,261
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	50,664	56,889	54,246	46,270	53,028	56,695	55,988	54,595	52,334	51,786
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	47,489	53,419	50,928	43,259	49,670	53,418	52,733	51,339	49,214	48,648
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	45,879	43,797	37,928	43,247	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,470	3,318	3,011	3,358	(*)	3,255	3,256	3,120	3,138
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	14,674	13,268	12,854	13,688	12,299	13,512	13,400	13,383	12,586	12,413
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	6,568	6,193	6,746	6,217	(*)	6,358	6,313	6,155	6,042
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	5,758	5,721	5,972	5,206	(*)	6,029	6,060	5,514	5,423
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	888	851	896	853	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	137,491	134,105	125,060	131,866	128,069	132,589	132,053	131,075	126,575	126,743
53	General merchandise group stores....	35,066	29,460	26,642	32,895	27,762	30,157	29,730	29,637	28,160	28,105
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	27,907	23,045	20,803	26,319	21,822	23,690	23,396	23,322	22,248	22,199
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	23,431	21,148	26,821	22,225	(*)	23,773	23,688	22,700	22,605
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	1,054	893	1,089	987	(*)	1,021	985	982	968
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	5,361	4,946	5,487	4,953	(*)	5,313	5,330	4,930	4,938
54	Food stores.....	36,948	37,888	36,359	35,910	36,228	37,623	37,393	37,246	36,082	36,010
541	Grocery stores.....	34,598	35,485	34,076	33,658	33,924	35,232	34,995	34,843	33,793	33,722
554	Gasoline service stations.....	11,991	12,797	12,364	12,581	13,640	12,426	12,424	12,414	13,092	13,256
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	11,487	10,587	9,554	11,137	9,986	10,386	10,306	10,084	9,924	9,862
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	998	860	1,049	921	(*)	977	972	916	918
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,613	2,409	2,809	2,600	(*)	2,554	2,533	2,596	2,567
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	4,277	3,668	4,666	3,942	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,684	1,598	1,689	1,607	(*)	1,754	1,661	1,699	1,701
58	Eating and drinking places.....	19,858	21,774	20,379	18,837	20,125	20,992	21,181	20,710	19,663	19,789
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	8,804	8,947	8,475	8,072	8,248	9,076	9,001	8,978	8,382	8,298
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,140	2,003	2,068	2,041	(*)	2,115	2,102	2,054	2,055
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	5,154	4,565	4,951	4,640	(*)	4,724	4,735	3,961	4,188
53,56,57,594	GAF(4).....	(*)	60,811	56,434	66,491	57,098	(*)	61,765	61,391	58,615	58,232

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

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

- (1) Data 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-98-10.
- (2) 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.
- (3) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.
- (4) GAF 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 ¹					
		Nov. 1998 Advance from --		Oct. 1998 Preliminary from --		Sept. 1998 through Nov. 1998 from --	
		Oct. 1998 (p)	Nov. 1997 (r)	Sept. 1998 (r)	Oct. 1997 (r)	June 1998 through Aug. 1998	Sept. 1997 through Nov. 1997
	Retail trade, total	0.6	6.3	1.2	5.9	1.2	5.5
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.4	5.6	0.8	5.3	1.0	5.1
	Durable goods, total	1.0	8.4	1.9	8.5	1.7	7.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	0.9	10.7	0.6	10.0	1.8	10.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.3	8.3	2.6	8.1	1.9	6.8
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.3	8.5	2.7	8.4	2.0	6.9
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	0.8	7.4	0.1	8.0	0.7	7.9
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.4	4.8	0.7	4.2	0.9	4.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	1.4	7.1	0.3	5.8	1.6	6.5
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	1.3	6.5	0.3	5.4	1.3	6.1
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	0.4	5.2	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.6	4.3	0.4	3.8	1.0	3.8
541	Grocery stores.....	0.7	4.3	0.4	3.8	1.0	3.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.0	-5.1	0.1	-6.3	-1.0	-6.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.8	4.7	2.2	4.5	-1.6	3.6
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.9	6.8	2.3	7.0	2.4	6.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.8	8.3	0.3	8.5	1.9	8.1

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

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

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Data

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 each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average difference

between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

SIC code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Estimated CV ¹ for Current M o. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ¹ for			Revision for month- to-month change ²	
			Current M o. to Previous M o.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current M o. to Current M o. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. auto)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.2
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.3
52	Building materials, group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.3	0.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.3	0.5
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and m isc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.2	0.6
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.3	0.5
	Nondurable goods, total	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	-0.1	0.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	-0.1	0.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	-0.5	0.9
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	0.1	0.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.1	0.3



(1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.

(2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions are based on the latest 12 months of data.