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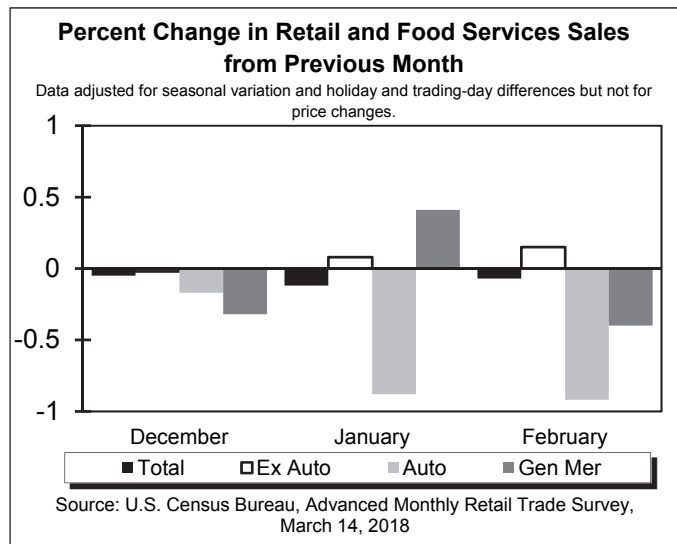
## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, FEBRUARY 2018

Release Number: CB18-34

**Intention to Revise:** Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised to reflect the introduction of a new sample, new seasonal factors, and the results of the 2016 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Estimates will be restated and the publication tables will be reformatted to incorporate the NAICS 2012 definitions. Revised adjusted and not adjusted estimates are scheduled to be released on our website on May 25, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. EDT. Please visit our Sample Revision FAQs <[www.census.gov/retail/marts\\_sample\\_revision\\_faqs.html](http://www.census.gov/retail/marts_sample_revision_faqs.html)> and our summary of NAICS restatement and publication table changes <[www.census.gov/retail/samp\\_rev/restatnpubtbls.pdf](http://www.census.gov/retail/samp_rev/restatnpubtbls.pdf)> for additional information.

**March 14, 2018** — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2018:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
February 2018	\$492.0 billion	-0.1%*
January 2018 (revised)	\$492.3 billion	-0.1%*
Next release: April 16, 2018		
* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.		
Data adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advanced Monthly Retail Trade Survey, March 14, 2018.		



### Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2018, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$492.0 billion, a decrease of 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* from the previous month, but 4.0 percent ( $\pm 0.7$  percent) above February 2017. Total sales for the December 2017 through February 2018 period were up 4.3 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from the same period a year ago. The December 2017 to January 2018 percent change was revised from down 0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* to down 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.3$  percent)\*.

Retail trade sales were down 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* from January 2018, but 4.2 percent ( $\pm 0.7$  percent) above last year. Nonstore Retailers were up 10.1 percent ( $\pm 1.4$  percent) from February 2017, while Gasoline Stations were up 7.9 percent ( $\pm 1.6$  percent) from last year.

#### Data Inquiries

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## General Information

The March 2018 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on April 16, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <[www.census.gov/economic-indicators/](http://www.census.gov/economic-indicators/)>. The full text and tables of this release can be found at <[www.census.gov/retail/](http://www.census.gov/retail/)>.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 4,700 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms.

## Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 4,700 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. For each detailed industry, we compute a ratio of current-to-previous month weighted sales using data from units for which we have obtained usable responses for both the current and previous month. For each detailed industry, the advance total sales estimates for the current month is computed by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS) at the appropriate industry level. Total estimates for broader industries are computed as the sum of the detailed industry estimates. The link relative estimate is used because imputation is not performed for most nonrespondents in MARTS. For a limited number of nonresponding companies that have influential effects on the estimates, sales may be estimated based on historical performance of that company. The monthly estimates are benchmarked to the annual survey estimates from the Annual Retail Trade Survey once available. The estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <[www.census.gov/retail/](http://www.census.gov/retail/)>.

## Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard

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error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$  percent or  $\pm 1.6$  percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is  $-0.4$  percent to  $+2.8$  percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value  $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$  (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

## API

The Census Bureau's application programming interface lets developers create custom apps to reach new users and makes key demographic, socio-economic and housing statistics more accessible than ever before.

[www.census.gov/developers/](http://www.census.gov/developers/)

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\* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

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**Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business**

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted <sup>2</sup>				
		2 Month Total		2018		2017			2018		2017		
		2018	% Chg. 2017	Feb. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total .....</b>	883,068	4.7	437,407	445,661	561,402	420,352	423,111	492,008	492,343	492,915	473,111	474,029
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	703,400	5.0	346,548	356,852	460,492	331,342	338,453	392,273	391,685	391,364	375,619	375,500
	Retail .....	776,111	5.0	383,875	392,236	501,671	368,259	370,674	434,260	434,711	435,315	416,855	417,645
	GAFO <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	91,600	151,394	91,190	89,431	(*)	108,045	107,628	105,159	106,106
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	179,668	3.5	90,859	88,809	100,910	89,010	84,658	99,735	100,658	101,551	97,492	98,529
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	165,935	3.6	84,062	81,873	93,826	82,318	77,874	92,274	93,143	93,826	90,162	90,974
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	68,862	80,811	67,655	65,629	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,936	7,084	6,692	6,784	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	17,508	4.9	8,580	8,928	11,560	8,336	8,348	9,739	9,822	9,847	9,430	9,359
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,688	5,361	4,585	4,471	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,240	6,199	3,751	3,877	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	15,067	4.4	7,385	7,682	12,069	7,078	7,350	8,263	8,271	8,183	7,904	8,022
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,371	8,311	5,134	5,277	(*)	5,941	5,899	5,782	5,909
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	50,859	6.0	25,358	25,501	28,996	24,129	23,873	32,807	32,204	32,777	31,359	30,820
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,738	25,249	21,245	21,466	(*)	27,797	28,306	27,029	26,900
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	115,197	3.7	55,578	59,619	66,924	53,865	57,266	61,024	61,061	61,177	59,144	59,039
4451	Grocery stores .....	103,863	3.4	49,880	53,983	57,989	48,490	51,925	54,336	54,418	54,707	52,821	52,662
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,894	6,148	3,703	3,672	(*)	4,652	4,511	4,414	4,456
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	52,964	1.6	25,649	27,315	30,529	25,565	26,564	27,491	27,591	27,653	27,372	27,245
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,944	24,322	21,126	22,254	(*)	22,739	22,688	22,474	22,433
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	73,290	9.6	35,375	37,915	38,675	32,597	34,246	40,943	41,437	40,668	37,948	37,799
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	34,912	4.0	18,784	16,128	34,390	17,856	15,700	22,177	22,080	21,888	21,145	21,697
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	633	1,048	617	593	(*)	796	759	735	758
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,364	4,577	2,684	2,405	(*)	3,288	3,267	3,285	3,387
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,188	13,258	6,343	5,841	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,062	4,062	2,626	2,100	(*)	2,946	2,941	2,873	3,013
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	11,453	-5.0	5,483	5,970	11,010	5,676	6,378	6,967	6,815	6,916	7,221	7,373
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	102,197	2.5	51,414	50,783	79,177	50,223	49,479	58,442	58,679	58,442	57,046	57,197
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	19,770	0.2	10,161	9,609	21,468	10,169	9,554	12,592	12,707	12,596	12,587	12,728
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,856	21,986	10,405	9,712	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	41,174	57,709	40,054	39,925	(*)	45,972	45,846	44,459	44,469
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	35,478	49,401	34,697	34,693	(*)	39,333	39,426	38,467	38,335
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,696	8,308	5,357	5,232	(*)	6,639	6,420	5,992	6,134
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	20,286	9.6	10,170	10,116	12,254	9,354	9,154	11,592	11,582	11,195	10,781	10,656
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	102,710	11.4	49,240	53,470	75,177	44,570	47,658	55,080	54,511	55,018	50,013	49,909
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	44,640	67,169	37,891	40,364	(*)	47,489	47,944	43,805	43,543
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ...</b>	106,957	2.3	53,532	53,425	59,731	52,093	52,437	57,748	57,632	57,600	56,256	56,384

(\*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business. (NA) Not available (a) Advance estimate (p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(S) Estimate does not meet publication standards because of high sampling variability (coefficient of variation is greater than 30%), poor response quality (total quantity response rate is less than 50%), or other concerns about the estimate's quality.

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics>(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for holiday and trading day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-13ARIMA-SEATS program. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/retail>

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample.

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture &amp; home furnishings (442), electronics &amp; appliances (443), clothing &amp; accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, book, and music (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

(5) Estimates include data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line are not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, March 14, 2018. Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at [www.census.gov/retail/how\\_surveys\\_are\\_collected.html](http://www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html).

**Table 2. Estimated Change in Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business**

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change <sup>1</sup>					
		Feb. 2018 Advance from --		Jan. 2018 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2017 through Feb. 2018 from --	
		Jan. 2018 (p)	Feb. 2017 (r)	Dec. 2017 (r)	Jan. 2017 (r)	Sep. 2017 through Nov. 2017	Dec. 2016 through Feb. 2017
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	-0.1	4.0	-0.1	3.9	0.6	4.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.2	4.4	0.1	4.3	1.1	4.9
	Retail .....	-0.1	4.2	-0.1	4.1	0.5	4.5
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	-0.9	2.3	-0.9	2.2	-1.3	2.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.9	2.3	-0.7	2.4	-1.4	2.5
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	-0.8	3.3	-0.3	4.9	-0.7	5.1
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	-0.1	4.5	1.1	3.1	0.2	3.5
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	1.9	4.6	-1.7	4.5	0.4	6.4
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	-0.1	3.2	-0.2	3.4	0.6	3.6
4451	Grocery stores .....	-0.2	2.9	-0.5	3.3	0.7	3.4
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	-0.4	0.4	-0.2	1.3	-1.0	1.1
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	-1.2	7.9	1.9	9.6	3.2	8.9
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	0.4	4.9	0.9	1.8	0.3	2.7
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	2.2	-3.5	-1.5	-7.6	-3.5	-4.8
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	-0.4	2.4	0.4	2.6	0.2	3.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.9	0.0	0.9	-0.2	-0.6	0.0
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	0.1	7.5	3.5	8.7	3.6	7.1
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	1.0	10.1	-0.9	9.2	2.9	10.3
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	0.2	2.7	0.1	2.2	1.4	3.1

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, March 14, 2018. Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <[www.census.gov/retail/how\\_surveys\\_are\\_collected.html](http://www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html)>.

**Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Feb. 2018**

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV <sup>(1)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error <sup>(1)</sup> for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change <sup>(2)</sup>	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.4	0.8	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.5	0.9	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.8
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	2.6	1.0	0.8	1.4	0.0	0.6
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.6	0.6	0.5	1.4	0.2	0.7
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;.... supplies dealers.....</b>	2.5	1.1	0.8	1.3	0.3	0.7
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	1.6	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.6	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	2.2	0.4	0.4	1.6	0.1	0.4
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.8	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.3
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	2.4	0.7	0.4	0.8	-0.1	0.6
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	2.6	1.1	0.9	1.3	-0.3	0.5
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	2.9	2.4	1.0	2.5	0.6	1.3
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.7	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.6
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.3	1.1	0.6	1.4	0.0	0.4

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading day variation.

Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median revisions are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, March 14, 2018. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <[www.census.gov/retail/how\\_surveys\\_are\\_collected.html](http://www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html)>.