ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, NOVEMBER 2018

Release Number: CB18-189

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

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">🛒 **ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**November 2018**</td><td>**$513.5 billion**</td><td>**0.2%***</td></tr>
<tr><td>**October 2018 (revised)**</td><td>**$512.4 billion**</td><td>**1.1%**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">**Next release: January 16, 2019**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">* 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, December 14, 2018.</td></tr>
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Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales from Previous Month
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, December 14, 2018
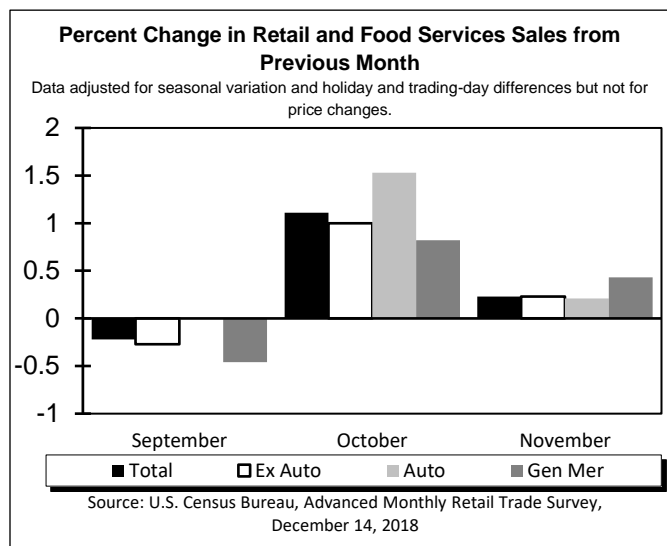
Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for November 2018, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $513.5 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent (±0.5 percent)* from the previous month, and 4.2 percent (±0.5 percent) above November 2017. Total sales for the September 2018 through November 2018 period were up 4.3 percent (±0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The September 2018 to October 2018 percent change was revised from up 0.8 percent (±0.5 percent) to up 1.1 percent (±0.2 percent).

Retail trade sales were up 0.3 percent (±0.5 percent)* from October 2018, and 4.0 percent (±0.5 percent) above last year. Nonstore Retailers were up 10.8 percent (±1.4 percent) from November 2017, while Gasoline Stations were up 8.2 percent (±1.6 percent) from last year.

General Information

The December 2018 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on January 16, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. EST. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>. The full text and tables of this release can be found at <www.census.gov/retail/>.

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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 5,500 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 5,500 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>.

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 error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is ±1.753 x 0.9 percent or ±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 ±1.753 x CV x (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.

RESOURCES

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/>

FRED Mobile App

Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/fred-mobile/> for both Apple and Android devices. FRED, the signature database of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, now incorporates the Census Bureau's 13 economic indicators.

<p style="text-align:center">###</p>

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

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[1] code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted[2]				
		11 Month Total		2018			2017		2018			2017	
		2018	% Chg. 2017	Nov.[3] (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.[3] (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov. (r)	Oct. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	**5,466,415**	**5.3**	**524,147**	**506,859**	**481,862**	**499,833**	**477,592**	**513,531**	**512,356**	**506,749**	**492,754**	**488,900**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	4,342,255	6.0	427,165	405,460	383,755	404,231	379,380	409,827	408,869	404,823	390,512	385,696
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	4,989,760	4.6	481,990	460,122	437,677	461,047	437,275	469,526	467,330	463,131	452,098	449,909
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	3,865,600	5.0	385,008	358,723	339,570	365,445	339,063	365,822	363,843	361,205	349,856	346,705
	Retail	4,810,865	5.2	466,191	446,425	423,123	445,632	421,000	452,971	451,496	446,256	435,398	432,195
	GAFO[4]	(*)	(*)	(*)	106,733	102,069	119,830	103,279	(*)	111,069	110,051	108,457	108,005
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**1,124,160**	**2.9**	**96,982**	**101,399**	**98,107**	**95,602**	**98,212**	**103,704**	**103,487**	**101,926**	**102,242**	**103,204**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1,040,061	3.0	89,341	93,262	90,654	88,164	90,589	95,962	95,752	94,235	94,698	95,760
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	78,465	75,545	74,822	75,883	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,137	7,453	7,438	7,623	(*)	7,735	7,691	7,544	7,444
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**110,095**	**4.1**	**11,227**	**10,114**	**9,925**	**10,915**	**9,851**	**10,262**	**10,144**	**10,190**	**10,088**	**10,062**
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,355	5,572	5,513	5,081	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,759	4,353	5,402	4,770	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**87,352**	**2.9**	**10,717**	**7,737**	**7,609**	**10,203**	**7,499**	**8,492**	**8,373**	**8,235**	**8,162**	**8,151**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**..................................	**361,372**	**3.9**	**32,706**	**34,471**	**31,135**	**31,588**	**32,191**	**33,307**	**33,402**	**32,910**	**32,177**	**32,068**
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,342	27,702	27,845	28,539	(*)	28,870	28,677	27,957	27,870
445	**Food & beverage stores**........................	**675,038**	**3.7**	**63,112**	**61,881**	**60,568**	**61,121**	**59,773**	**62,654**	**62,412**	**62,219**	**60,832**	**60,640**
4451	Grocery stores	602,495	3.6	55,820	55,104	54,068	54,191	53,296	55,709	55,492	55,341	54,083	53,943
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,751	4,598	4,846	4,536	(*)	4,823	4,820	4,700	4,671
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**313,614**	**3.8**	**29,130**	**29,484**	**27,638**	**28,111**	**28,538**	**29,276**	**29,020**	**29,062**	**28,395**	**28,567**
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,751	22,842	23,277	24,047	(*)	24,053	24,146	23,631	23,809
447	**Gasoline stations**	**476,655**	**14.4**	**42,157**	**46,737**	**44,185**	**38,786**	**40,317**	**44,005**	**45,026**	**43,618**	**40,656**	**38,991**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**238,777**	**4.9**	**25,840**	**21,826**	**20,586**	**24,828**	**20,653**	**23,192**	**23,233**	**22,925**	**22,280**	**22,068**
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	823	840	773	725	(*)	848	850	742	744
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,476	3,305	3,714	3,263	(*)	3,511	3,531	3,343	3,316
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,122	8,385	10,717	8,690	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,872	2,719	3,027	2,601	(*)	3,202	3,065	2,936	2,909
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**69,546**	**-4.0**	**7,106**	**5,880**	**5,927**	**7,706**	**6,268**	**6,525**	**6,497**	**6,428**	**7,155**	**7,059**
452	**General merchandise stores**..................	**634,038**	**3.5**	**66,574**	**58,440**	**55,628**	**63,884**	**56,559**	**60,542**	**60,285**	**59,794**	**58,415**	**58,338**
4521	Department stores	128,264	-0.4	15,207	11,536	10,921	15,231	11,557	12,514	12,460	12,312	12,542	12,545
4529	Other general merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	46,904	44,707	48,653	45,002	(*)	47,825	47,482	45,873	45,793
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters..............................	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,820	38,021	41,527	38,435	(*)	40,633	40,362	39,213	39,140
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,084	6,686	7,126	6,567	(*)	7,192	7,120	6,660	6,653
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**118,792**	**4.1**	**11,237**	**11,543**	**10,332**	**10,955**	**10,940**	**11,017**	**10,973**	**10,742**	**10,865**	**10,602**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**601,426**	**10.4**	**69,403**	**56,913**	**51,483**	**61,933**	**50,199**	**59,995**	**58,644**	**58,207**	**54,131**	**52,445**
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	50,116	45,869	55,156	44,166	(*)	51,880	51,538	47,589	46,344
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**655,550**	**6.2**	**57,956**	**60,434**	**58,739**	**54,201**	**56,592**	**60,560**	**60,860**	**60,493**	**57,356**	**56,705**

(*) 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 & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, December 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>.

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[1]					
		Nov. 2018 Advance from --		Oct. 2018 Preliminary from --		Sep. 2018 through Nov. 2018 from --	
		Oct. 2018 (p)	Nov. 2017 (r)	Sep. 2018 (r)	Oct. 2017 (r)	Jun. 2018 through Aug. 2018	Sep. 2017 through Nov. 2017
	Retail & food services, total	**0.2**	**4.2**	**1.1**	**4.8**	**0.7**	**4.3**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.2	4.9	1.0	6.0	0.8	5.4
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.5	3.9	0.9	3.9	0.7	3.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.5	4.6	0.7	4.9	0.7	4.7
	Retail	0.3	4.0	1.2	4.5	1.0	4.0
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**0.2**	**1.4**	**1.5**	**0.3**	**0.6**	**0.5**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	0.2	1.3	1.6	0.0	0.5	0.3
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**1.2**	**1.7**	**-0.5**	**0.8**	**0.1**	**2.0**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**1.4**	**4.0**	**1.7**	**2.7**	**0.4**	**2.9**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**....................................	**-0.3**	**3.5**	**1.5**	**4.2**	**1.7**	**2.9**
445	**Food & beverage stores**...........................	**0.4**	**3.0**	**0.3**	**2.9**	**0.6**	**3.0**
4451	Grocery stores	0.4	3.0	0.3	2.9	0.4	3.0
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**0.9**	**3.1**	**-0.1**	**1.6**	**-0.1**	**2.7**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**-2.3**	**8.2**	**3.2**	**15.5**	**1.2**	**11.4**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**-0.2**	**4.1**	**1.3**	**5.3**	**0.1**	**4.6**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**0.4**	**-8.8**	**1.1**	**-8.0**	**-2.4**	**-8.3**
452	**General merchandise stores**....................	**0.4**	**3.6**	**0.8**	**3.3**	**0.6**	**3.2**
4521	Department stores	0.4	-0.2	1.2	-0.7	-0.4	-1.0
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**0.4**	**1.4**	**2.2**	**3.5**	**1.2**	**1.9**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**2.3**	**10.8**	**0.8**	**11.8**	**3.4**	**11.4**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**-0.5**	**5.6**	**0.6**	**7.3**	**-1.0**	**6.6**

(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, December 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>.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Nov. 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[1] for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error[1] for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change[2]	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services, total	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.1
	Retail, total	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	1.1	1.0	0.4	0.9	-0.1	0.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.2	1.0	0.4	1.0	-0.1	0.4
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**................	2.1	1.1	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.5
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	1.5	0.6	0.7	1.3	0.0	0.7
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**....................................	1.7	0.9	0.5	1.3	0.0	0.4
445	**Food & beverage stores**...........................	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
446	**Health & personal care stores**	1.6	0.3	0.6	1.3	-0.1	0.7
447	**Gasoline stations**	1.7	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.4
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	1.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.8
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	3.2	0.7	0.9	1.3	0.0	0.7
452	**General merchandise stores**....................	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.2
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	3.5	2.6	1.4	2.4	-0.5	1.6
454	**Nonstore retailers**	1.2	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.4
722	**Food services & drinking places**	3.4	0.9	0.8	1.4	0.4	0.3

(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 period January 2018 - present. For measures of sampling variability where there are not enough months collected on the new sample basis to calculate medians, the last available medians from the prior sample are provided.

(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 with exception to the following: Total (excl. gasoline stations), Total (excl. motor vehicles & parts & gasoline stations), Electronics & appliance stores, and Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores which are based on estimates from April 2018 to present until we have 12 months of revisions.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, December 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>.