

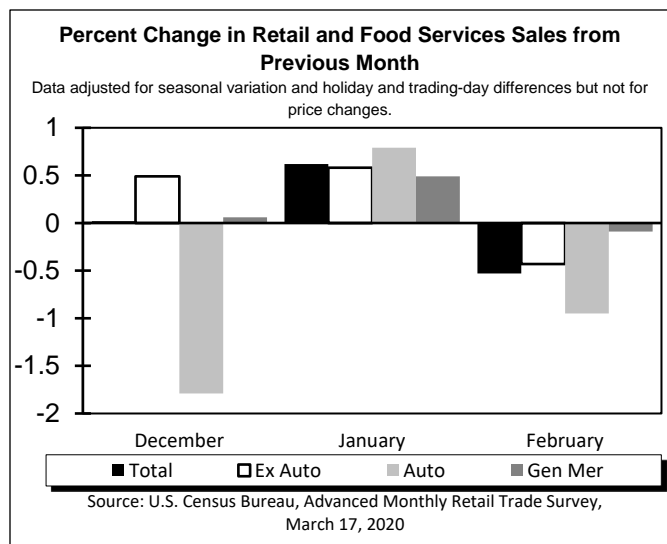
ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, FEBRUARY 2020

Release Number: CB20-36

Intention to Revise: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2018 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the Service Annual Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 27, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

March 17, 2020 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2020:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
February 2020	\$528.1 billion	-0.5%
January 2020 (revised)	\$530.9 billion	0.6%
Next release: April 15, 2020		
<small>* 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 17, 2020.</small>		



Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2020, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$528.1 billion, a decrease of 0.5 percent (± 0.4 percent) from the previous month, but 4.3 percent (± 0.7 percent) above February 2019. Total sales for the December 2019 through February 2020 period were up 4.9 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The December 2019 to January 2020 percent change was revised from up 0.3 percent (± 0.4 percent)* to up 0.6 percent (± 0.3 percent).

Retail trade sales were down 0.5 percent (± 0.4 percent) from January 2020, but 4.2 percent (± 0.7 percent) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 7.5 percent (± 1.4 percent) from February 2019, and food services and drinking places were up 5.2 percent (± 3.3 percent) from last year.

General Information

The March 2020 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on April 15, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. 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

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standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$ 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 $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$ (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.

Weather Information

For information on the impact of weather events on the compilation of this report, please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website at:

[<www.census.gov/retail/marts_weather_faqs.html>](http://www.census.gov/retail/marts_weather_faqs.html)

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/>](http://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/>](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.

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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 ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ²				
		2 Month Total		2020		2019			2020		2019		
		2020	% Chg. 2019	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	962,913	6.5	479,583	483,330	595,222	444,794	459,143	528,113	530,930	527,646	506,107	505,843
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	770,355	6.2	381,610	388,745	490,142	354,645	370,778	422,110	423,915	421,470	405,043	405,575
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	885,191	6.3	442,069	443,122	553,813	409,470	422,920	485,435	487,035	483,594	464,549	466,125
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	692,633	5.9	344,096	348,537	448,733	319,321	334,555	379,432	380,020	377,418	363,485	365,857
	Retail	839,105	6.2	417,127	421,978	529,345	387,672	402,128	462,301	464,818	462,031	443,542	443,937
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	94,440	148,220	91,058	91,793	(*)	109,890	109,446	107,198	107,763
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	192,558	7.9	97,973	94,585	105,080	90,149	88,365	106,003	107,015	106,176	101,064	100,268
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	177,785	8.2	90,718	87,067	97,620	83,110	81,196	98,074	98,940	98,111	93,173	92,584
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	73,711	84,693	68,721	68,138	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,518	7,460	7,039	7,169	(*)	8,075	8,065	7,891	7,684
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	18,118	6.8	8,995	9,123	10,990	8,382	8,581	9,950	9,992	9,683	9,590	9,461
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,092	5,392	4,616	4,638	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,031	5,598	3,766	3,943	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	14,933	1.1	7,196	7,737	11,816	7,047	7,730	8,049	8,161	8,110	8,128	8,223
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	54,059	4.1	26,498	27,561	29,112	24,646	27,277	32,840	33,269	32,212	31,243	32,931
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,629	25,870	21,900	24,334	(*)	29,496	28,649	27,686	29,038
445	Food & beverage stores.....	126,660	5.0	62,029	64,631	70,131	57,260	63,327	65,427	65,415	65,565	62,927	64,466
4451	Grocery stores	114,674	5.1	55,927	58,747	60,912	51,566	57,585	58,501	58,571	58,682	56,172	57,700
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,387	6,629	4,117	4,135	(*)	5,107	5,060	4,913	4,893
446	Health & personal care stores	58,019	2.3	28,357	29,662	32,785	27,440	29,290	29,631	29,662	29,430	29,442	29,378
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,913	26,147	22,929	24,704	(*)	24,425	24,188	24,471	24,291
447	Gasoline stations	77,722	8.6	37,514	40,208	41,409	35,324	36,223	42,678	43,895	44,052	41,558	39,718
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	35,858	3.8	19,095	16,763	35,267	18,134	16,410	22,411	22,679	23,012	22,100	22,270
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	627	979	585	666	(*)	754	746	734	811
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,437	4,420	2,680	2,498	(*)	3,307	3,291	3,410	3,436
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,841	14,377	6,906	6,604	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,319	4,441	2,821	2,281	(*)	3,225	3,239	3,224	3,208
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	11,154	4.8	5,424	5,730	9,187	5,090	5,557	6,535	6,526	6,456	6,411	6,365
452	General merchandise stores.....	106,789	4.9	53,847	52,942	77,742	50,406	51,427	59,935	59,987	59,695	58,478	58,994
4521	Department stores	17,553	-2.8	9,103	8,450	18,337	9,263	8,796	10,934	10,953	10,960	11,610	11,603
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	44,492	59,405	41,143	42,631	(*)	49,034	48,735	46,868	47,391
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	38,261	50,498	35,024	36,408	(*)	41,953	41,699	39,891	40,319
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,231	8,907	6,119	6,223	(*)	7,081	7,036	6,977	7,072
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	21,444	17.0	10,818	10,626	12,714	9,055	9,281	12,216	12,051	11,601	10,643	10,545
454	Nonstore retailers	121,791	7.4	59,381	62,410	93,112	54,739	58,660	66,626	66,166	66,039	61,958	61,318
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	54,287	84,479	47,057	50,032	(*)	59,201	58,625	54,845	54,030
722	Food services & drinking places	123,808	8.5	62,456	61,352	65,877	57,122	57,015	65,812	66,112	65,615	62,565	61,906

(*) 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, March 17, 2020. 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					
		Feb. 2020 Advance from --		Jan. 2020 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2019 through Feb. 2020 from --	
		Jan. 2020 (p)	Feb. 2019 (r)	Dec. 2019 (r)	Jan. 2019 (r)	Sep. 2019 through Nov. 2019	Dec. 2018 through Feb. 2019
	Retail & food services,						
	total	-0.5	4.3	0.6	5.0	0.5	4.9
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-0.4	4.2	0.6	4.5	0.7	4.9
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	-0.3	4.5	0.7	4.5	0.5	4.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	-0.2	4.4	0.7	3.9	0.7	4.6
	Retail	-0.5	4.2	0.6	4.7	0.5	4.7
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.9	4.9	0.8	6.7	-0.2	5.0
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	-0.9	5.3	0.8	6.9	-0.1	5.2
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.4	3.8	3.2	5.6	0.1	3.3
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-1.4	-1.0	0.6	-0.8	-0.1	-0.9
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-1.3	5.1	3.3	1.0	3.6	2.7
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.0	4.0	-0.2	1.5	0.3	2.9
4451	Grocery stores	-0.1	4.1	-0.2	1.5	0.4	3.1
446	Health & personal care stores	-0.1	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.2	1.7
447	Gasoline stations	-2.8	2.7	-0.4	10.5	0.8	7.3
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-1.2	1.4	-1.4	1.8	1.3	1.8
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	0.1	1.9	1.1	2.5	-0.1	2.8
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.1	2.5	0.5	1.7	0.6	1.9
4521	Department stores	-0.2	-5.8	-0.1	-5.6	-1.3	-5.6
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	1.4	14.8	3.9	14.3	3.2	11.9
454	Nonstore retailers	0.7	7.5	0.2	7.9	-0.7	10.9
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.5	5.2	0.8	6.8	0.9	5.9

(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 17, 2020. 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 Feb. 2020

(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
441 4411, 4412 442 443 444 445 4451 446 447 448 451 452 4521 453 454 722	Retail & food services, total	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Retail, total	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.3	0.9	0.5	1.1	0.1	0.4
	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.4	0.9	0.5	1.2	0.1	0.4
	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.3	1.1	0.7	1.6	-0.1	0.4
	Electronics & appliance stores	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.9	-0.2	0.2
	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	1.3	0.7	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.5
	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
	Grocery stores	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3
	Health & personal care stores	1.9	0.4	0.4	0.9	-0.1	0.2
	Gasoline stations	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.5
	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.8	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.0	0.5
	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	1.8	0.7	0.9	2.6	-0.3	0.7
	General merchandise stores.....	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.1
	Miscellaneous store retailers	4.2	1.7	1.6	3.0	0.5	1.4
	Nonstore retailers	1.2	0.4	0.4	0.8	-0.1	0.4
	Food services & drinking places	3.1	0.9	0.7	1.9	0.3	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 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 17, 2020. 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>.