

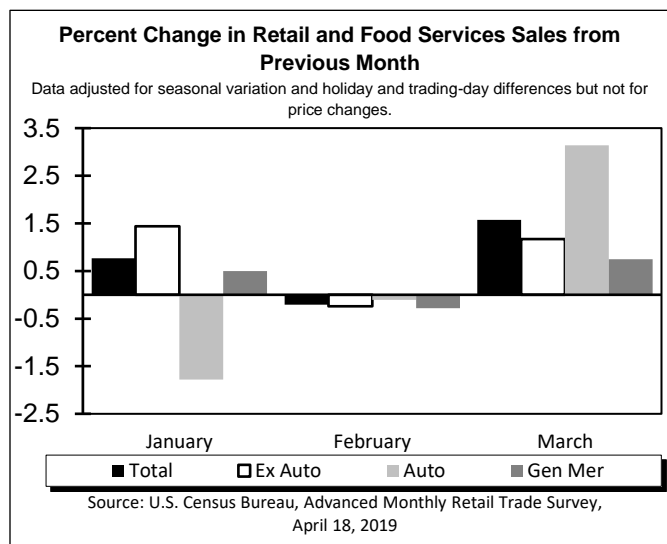
ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, MARCH 2019

Release Number: CB19-48

Intention to Revise: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2017 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on June 25, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

April 18, 2019 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March 2019:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
March 2019	\$514.1 billion	1.6%
February 2019 (revised)	\$506.1 billion	-0.2%*
Next release: May 15, 2019		
* 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, April 18, 2019.		



Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March 2019, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$514.1 billion, an increase of 1.6 percent (± 0.5 percent) from the previous month, and 3.6 percent (± 0.7 percent) above March 2018. Total sales for the January 2019 through March 2019 period were up 2.9 percent (± 0.7 percent) from the same period a year ago. The January 2019 to February 2019 percent change was unrevised from down 0.2 percent (± 0.2 percent)*.

Retail trade sales were up 1.7 percent (± 0.5 percent) from February 2019, and 3.5 percent (± 0.5 percent) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 11.6 percent (± 1.4 percent) from March 2018, while sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book stores were down 9.7 percent (± 2.5 percent) from last year.

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General Information

The April 2019 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on May 15, 2019 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/>.

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

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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 $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$ 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.

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.

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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				
		3 Month Total		2019			2018		2019			2018	
		2019	% Chg. 2018	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,425,206	2.2	519,066	446,692	459,448	511,626	437,520	514,062	506,124	507,204	496,095	495,393
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,130,310	2.6	406,193	354,649	369,468	400,119	346,573	408,567	403,845	404,815	394,473	394,764
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	1,310,925	2.5	476,784	411,161	422,980	470,378	401,543	470,961	464,470	466,952	454,304	453,117
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	1,016,029	2.9	363,911	319,118	333,000	358,871	310,596	365,466	362,191	364,563	352,682	352,488
	Retail	1,249,152	1.9	454,320	391,116	403,716	449,698	384,117	452,981	445,518	446,757	437,507	437,220
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	92,993	92,801	109,698	93,912	(*)	108,719	109,280	109,110	109,521
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	294,896	1.1	112,873	92,043	89,980	111,507	90,947	105,495	102,279	102,389	101,622	100,629
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	272,728	1.0	104,737	85,083	82,908	103,569	84,227	97,611	94,537	94,752	94,154	93,171
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	69,952	69,299	84,914	68,993	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,960	7,072	7,938	6,720	(*)	7,742	7,637	7,468	7,458
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	27,922	-0.9	10,250	8,746	8,926	10,353	8,816	10,179	10,007	9,929	10,071	10,041
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,771	4,767	5,807	4,908	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,975	4,159	4,546	3,908	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	22,116	-3.1	7,579	6,991	7,546	7,899	7,288	8,020	7,981	8,097	8,245	8,263
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	85,793	3.7	31,730	25,668	28,395	31,962	25,351	33,072	32,967	34,494	32,020	32,600
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,624	25,124	27,482	22,283	(*)	28,820	29,874	27,929	28,386
445	Food & beverage stores.....	181,035	1.4	62,515	56,342	62,178	63,179	55,807	62,636	62,010	63,201	61,537	61,358
4451	Grocery stores	163,076	1.7	56,170	50,558	56,348	56,455	50,047	55,835	55,194	56,348	54,704	54,577
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,078	4,093	4,629	3,967	(*)	4,866	4,861	4,777	4,734
446	Health & personal care stores	86,021	3.5	29,573	27,510	28,938	29,104	26,083	29,543	29,486	29,319	28,311	27,896
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,932	24,294	23,958	21,730	(*)	24,474	24,197	23,488	23,166
447	Gasoline stations	114,281	-0.7	42,282	35,531	36,468	41,248	35,977	43,101	41,654	40,252	41,791	42,276
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	57,053	-1.2	22,107	18,339	16,607	22,699	18,908	22,745	22,309	22,709	22,413	22,836
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	621	707	801	646	(*)	782	855	801	801
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,696	2,541	3,540	2,718	(*)	3,421	3,500	3,336	3,398
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,026	6,754	9,091	7,125	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,816	2,219	3,209	2,641	(*)	3,193	3,179	2,941	2,981
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	16,639	-8.2	6,066	5,034	5,539	6,804	5,501	6,273	6,293	6,273	6,943	6,919
452	General merchandise stores.....	163,487	1.0	59,443	51,918	52,126	59,736	51,414	60,183	59,736	59,904	59,044	59,059
4521	Department stores	29,928	-4.9	11,235	9,590	9,103	12,072	10,023	12,031	12,028	12,078	12,490	12,528
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	42,328	43,023	47,664	41,391	(*)	47,708	47,826	46,554	46,531
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	36,137	36,735	40,721	35,365	(*)	40,649	40,681	39,767	39,691
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,191	6,288	6,943	6,026	(*)	7,059	7,145	6,787	6,840
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	28,505	-4.2	10,260	9,019	9,226	10,583	9,458	10,722	10,531	10,649	10,851	11,016
454	Nonstore retailers	171,404	10.0	59,642	53,975	57,787	54,624	48,567	61,012	60,265	59,541	54,659	54,327
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	46,756	49,672	47,350	41,704	(*)	53,619	52,786	48,218	47,991
722	Food services & drinking places	176,054	4.5	64,746	55,576	55,732	61,928	53,403	61,081	60,606	60,447	58,588	58,173

(*) 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, April 18, 2019. 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					
		Mar. 2019 Advance from --		Feb. 2019 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2019 through Mar. 2019 from --	
		Feb. 2019 (p)	Mar. 2018 (r)	Jan. 2019 (r)	Feb. 2018 (r)	Oct. 2018 through Dec. 2018	Jan. 2018 through Mar. 2018
	Retail & food services,						
	total	1.6	3.6	-0.2	2.2	0.1	2.9
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	1.2	3.6	-0.2	2.3	0.2	3.1
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	1.4	3.7	-0.5	2.5	0.4	3.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.9	3.6	-0.7	2.8	0.7	3.6
	Retail	1.7	3.5	-0.3	1.9	0.0	2.7
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	3.1	3.8	-0.1	1.6	-0.5	2.1
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	3.3	3.7	-0.2	1.5	-0.6	1.9
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.7	1.1	0.8	-0.3	0.4	0.0
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.5	-2.7	-1.4	-3.4	-1.4	-2.6
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	0.3	3.3	-4.4	1.1	1.1	4.7
445	Food & beverage stores.....	1.0	1.8	-1.9	1.1	0.2	2.1
4451	Grocery stores	1.2	2.1	-2.0	1.1	0.3	2.3
446	Health & personal care stores	0.2	4.4	0.6	5.7	1.7	4.6
447	Gasoline stations	3.5	3.1	3.5	-1.5	-3.8	-1.0
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.0	1.5	-1.8	-2.3	-2.2	0.2
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	-0.3	-9.7	0.3	-9.0	0.7	-7.9
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.7	1.9	-0.3	1.1	-0.4	1.6
4521	Department stores	0.0	-3.7	-0.4	-4.0	-2.6	-3.8
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	1.8	-1.2	-1.1	-4.4	-3.3	-3.8
454	Nonstore retailers	1.2	11.6	1.2	10.9	3.9	11.2
722	Food services & drinking places	0.8	4.3	0.3	4.2	0.5	4.4

(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, April 18, 2019. 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 Mar. 2019

(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	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.1
	Retail, total	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2
	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.1	0.9	0.4	1.0	-0.1	0.5
	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.1	1.0	0.4	1.0	-0.1	0.5
	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.1	1.3	0.8	2.4	0.3	0.5
	Electronics & appliance stores	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.8	-0.2	0.9
	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	1.4	0.9	0.5	1.1	0.0	0.4
	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Grocery stores	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3
	Health & personal care stores	1.7	0.4	0.5	1.4	0.1	0.3
	Gasoline stations	1.5	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.7
	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.9	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.8
	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	3.4	0.8	0.9	1.4	-0.2	0.7
	General merchandise stores.....	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	-0.1	0.3
	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.5	2.6	1.4	2.1	-0.1	1.2
	Nonstore retailers	1.2	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.5
	Food services & drinking places	3.4	0.9	0.8	2.2	0.3	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 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, April 18, 2019. 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>.