

U.S. Census Bureau News

U.S. Department of Commerce • Washington, D.C. 20233

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY APRIL 13, 2016, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

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CB16-58

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES MARCH 2016

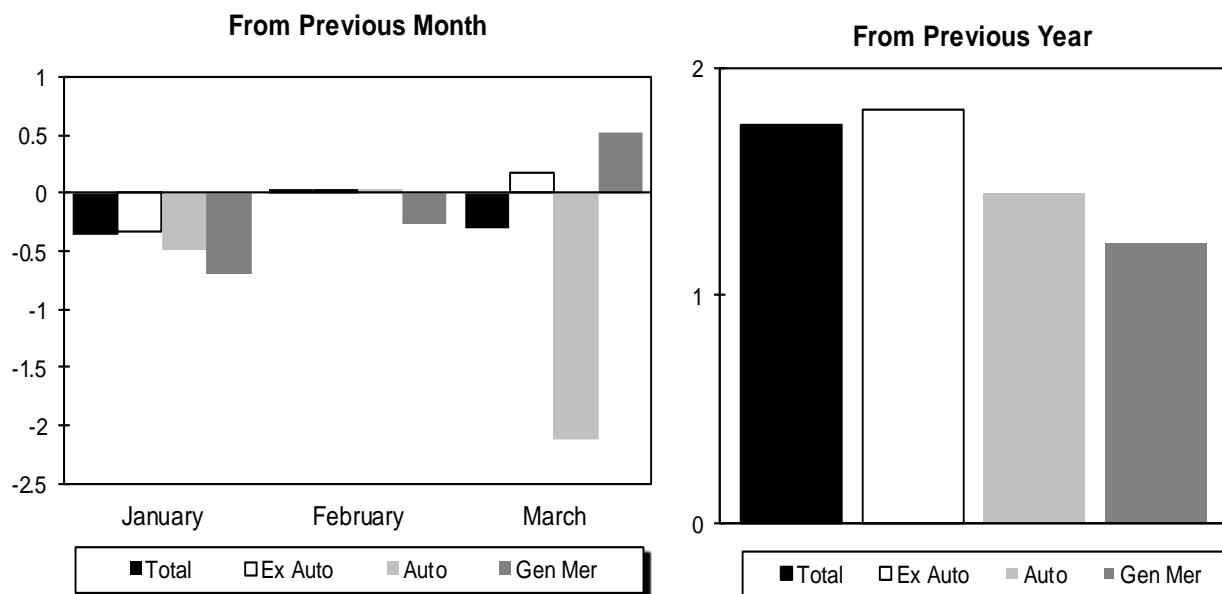
Intention to Revise Retail Estimates: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2014 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the final results from the 2012 Economic Census. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 29, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$446.9 billion, a decrease of 0.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from the previous month, and 1.7 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above March 2015. Total sales for the January 2016 through March 2016 period were up 2.8 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The January 2016 to February 2016 percent change was revised from down 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to virtually unchanged ($\pm 0.2\%$)*.

Retail trade sales were down 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from February 2016, and up 1.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from last year. Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 10.8 percent ($\pm 2.5\%$) from March 2015, while gasoline stations were down 15.6 percent ($\pm 1.6\%$) from last year.

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. For an explanation of the measures of sampling variability included in this report, please see the Reliability of Estimates section on the last page of this publication.

Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales



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

The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for April is scheduled to be released May 13, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For customized retail time series estimates by industry, visit the Census Bureau's web site at www.census.gov/timeseries.

To learn more about this release and the other indicators the U.S. Census Bureau publishes, join us for the Investigating Economic Indicators Webinar Series. For more information, visit <http://www.census.gov/econ/webinar>.

To receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators, download the America's Economy app for Apple and Android smartphones and tablets.

The U.S. Census Bureau updated its Application Programming Interface (API) with monthly and quarterly economic indicators. The API allows developers to combine Census Bureau statistics with other data sets to create tools for research on a variety of topics. For more information, visit www.census.gov/developers.

For additional survey information, visit www.census.gov/retail.

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different than 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				
		3 Month Total		2016			2015		2016			2015	
		2016	% Chg. 2015	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	1,271,545	3.8	459,015	412,328	400,202	442,876	385,731	446,887	448,243	448,114	439,214	432,450
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	999,266	3.3	357,028	322,699	319,539	345,218	305,303	354,612	353,973	353,879	348,257	344,822
	Retail	1,114,003	3.4	403,437	360,628	349,938	389,831	339,180	393,137	394,050	394,868	388,258	382,125
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	94,005	89,611	100,225	89,530	(*)	104,992	104,993	103,943	102,642
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	272,279	5.7	101,987	89,629	80,663	97,658	80,428	92,275	94,270	94,235	90,957	87,628
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	251,036	5.9	94,199	82,725	74,112	90,187	73,890	85,017	86,987	86,782	83,739	80,490
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	68,713	63,460	75,100	61,314	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,904	6,551	7,471	6,538	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	24,859	5.5	8,911	8,035	7,913	8,404	7,403	8,797	8,772	8,792	8,506	8,309
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,594	4,424	4,696	4,221	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,441	3,489	3,708	3,182	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	23,775	-2.2	8,087	7,982	7,706	8,160	7,952	8,456	8,450	8,441	8,641	8,677
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,786	5,421	5,946	5,738	(*)	6,162	6,119	6,332	6,299
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	75,891	11.9	30,577	23,248	22,066	26,588	19,996	30,240	29,823	29,404	27,296	26,686
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,622	19,698	23,021	17,695	(*)	25,745	25,417	23,660	22,951
445	Food & beverage stores.....	168,662	3.2	58,311	53,839	56,512	56,081	51,402	57,314	57,298	57,320	56,644	56,380
4451	Grocery stores	151,802	3.1	52,244	48,329	51,229	50,329	46,192	51,020	51,034	51,127	50,480	50,263
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,712	3,559	3,882	3,519	(*)	4,257	4,207	4,224	4,160
446	Health & personal care stores	81,291	6.2	28,723	26,595	25,973	26,446	24,257	27,407	27,138	26,639	25,776	25,751
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,130	21,937	21,866	20,129	(*)	22,490	22,159	21,500	21,346
447	Gasoline stations	86,418	-12.8	30,400	26,974	29,044	36,075	31,033	31,116	30,827	32,597	36,887	36,552
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	55,472	2.7	21,258	18,681	15,533	20,614	17,787	21,140	21,339	21,268	21,126	20,876
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	676	609	763	693	(*)	782	783	819	827
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,284	2,796	3,968	3,094	(*)	3,891	3,878	3,849	3,782
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,477	5,752	7,874	6,297	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,802	2,067	2,923	2,585	(*)	2,928	2,879	2,846	2,792
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	20,218	8.2	7,259	6,185	6,774	6,710	5,606	7,690	7,674	7,543	7,246	7,123
452	General merchandise stores.....	155,398	2.4	55,311	50,768	49,319	53,890	48,413	56,394	56,097	56,246	55,711	54,927
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	34,305	-2.8	12,698	11,280	10,327	13,197	11,237	13,321	13,399	13,412	14,193	13,724
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,541	10,571	13,429	11,466	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,488	38,992	40,693	37,176	(*)	42,698	42,834	41,518	41,203
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,129	34,097	35,074	32,142	(*)	36,936	37,062	35,790	35,634
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,359	4,895	5,619	5,034	(*)	5,762	5,772	5,728	5,569
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	27,233	2.6	9,698	8,960	8,575	9,329	8,571	10,062	10,059	10,129	9,808	9,825
454	Nonstore retailers	122,507	7.2	42,915	39,732	39,860	39,876	36,332	42,246	42,303	42,254	39,660	39,391
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,559	33,616	32,840	28,819	(*)	36,959	36,779	33,510	33,087
722	Food services & drinking places ...	157,542	6.8	55,578	51,700	50,264	53,045	46,551	53,750	54,193	53,246	50,956	50,325

(*) 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, 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.

Note: 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 <http://www.census.gov/retail>

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. 2016 Advance from --		Feb. 2016 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2016 through Mar. 2016 from --	
		Feb. 2016 (p)	Mar. 2015 (r)	Jan. 2016 (r)	Feb. 2015 (r)	Oct. 2015 through Dec. 2015	Jan. 2015 through Mar. 2015
	Retail & food services,						
	total	-0.3	1.7	0.0	3.7	-0.1	2.8
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.2	1.8	0.0	2.7	0.1	2.3
	Retail	-0.2	1.3	-0.2	3.1	-0.3	2.4
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-2.1	1.4	0.0	7.6	-0.9	4.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-2.3	1.5	0.2	8.1	-1.1	4.9
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.3	3.4	-0.2	5.6	-0.2	4.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.1	-2.1	0.1	-2.6	-0.8	-3.1
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	1.4	10.8	1.4	11.8	4.5	10.0
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.6	0.5	1.6
4451	Grocery stores	0.0	1.1	-0.2	1.5	0.6	1.5
446	Health & personal care stores	1.0	6.3	1.9	5.4	1.2	4.9
447	Gasoline stations	0.9	-15.6	-5.4	-15.7	-7.6	-13.1
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-0.9	0.1	0.3	2.2	0.2	1.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.2	6.1	1.7	7.7	0.5	7.5
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.5	1.2	-0.3	2.1	-0.6	1.0
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.6	-6.1	-0.1	-2.4	-2.4	-4.4
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.0	2.6	-0.7	2.4	0.3	2.2
454	Nonstore retailers	-0.1	6.5	0.1	7.4	1.9	7.9
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.8	5.5	1.8	7.7	1.0	6.2

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

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

Note: 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 <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey (MARTS) 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 (MRTS). Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. The change in sales from the previous month is estimated using only units that have reported data for both the current and previous month. There is no imputation

or adjustment for nonrespondents in MARTS. The total sales estimate is derived by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS sample). Detailed industry estimates are summed to derive total estimates at broad industry levels. The monthly estimates are adjusted using annual survey estimates and for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

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 $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$ 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.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Mar. 2016

(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	Retail & food services, total	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Retail	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2
	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.4	1.0	0.4	1.3	0.1	0.3
	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.4	1.1	0.5	1.4	0.1	0.3
	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.4	1.3	0.8	1.3	0.4	0.3
	Electronics & appliance stores	2.7	0.5	0.6	1.3	-0.1	0.3
	Building material & garden eq. &.... supplies dealers.....	2.0	1.2	0.8	1.4	0.0	0.6
	Food & beverage stores.....	1.3	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.1
	Grocery stores	1.4	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
445	Health & personal care stores	2.2	0.5	0.4	1.2	0.0	0.2
446	Gasoline stations	1.9	0.5	0.4	0.9	-0.1	0.5
447	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.1	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	2.3	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.1	0.4
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	2.8	2.0	1.1	2.4	0.0	1.2
454	Nonstore retailers	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.7	-0.1	0.3
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.1	1.0	1.0	2.1	0.1	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.