

U.S. Census Bureau News

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2012, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

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CB12-39

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES FEBRUARY 2012

Intention to Revise Retail Estimates: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2010 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 30, 2012.

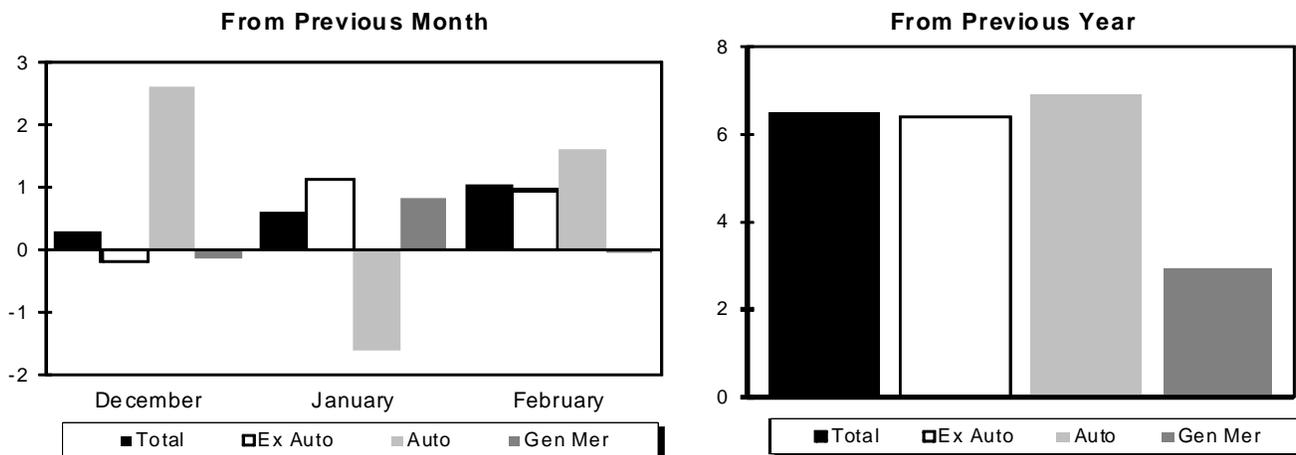
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$407.8 billion, an increase of 1.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month and 6.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above February 2011. Total sales for the December 2011 through February 2012 period were up 6.4 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The December 2011 to January 2012 percent change was revised from 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 1.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from January 2012 and 6.3 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above last year. Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers sales were up 13.8 percent ($\pm 2.6\%$) from February 2011 and gasoline stations were up 10.3 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) 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 5,000 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. Responding firms account for approximately 65% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. 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 March is scheduled to be released April 16, 2012 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>. 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				
		2 Month Total		2012		2011			2012		2011		
		2012	% Chg. 2011	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	742,468	8.2	379,522	362,946	460,387	343,955	342,082	407,805	403,508	401,002	382,974	379,736
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	609,882	8.0	308,982	300,900	389,468	280,777	283,857	335,270	332,116	328,440	315,129	312,268
	Retail	661,125	8.0	338,053	323,072	417,373	306,748	305,284	364,382	360,448	358,540	342,837	340,338
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	85,568	144,094	85,219	81,938	(*)	99,943	98,954	96,609	94,829
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	132,586	9.2	70,540	62,046	70,919	63,178	58,225	72,535	71,392	72,562	67,845	67,468
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	119,938	9.1	64,068	55,870	64,421	57,265	52,619	65,576	64,366	65,736	61,246	60,972
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	46,859	55,379	46,391	43,755	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,176	6,498	5,913	5,606	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	14,655	12.4	7,464	7,191	9,393	6,638	6,402	7,915	8,008	7,821	7,311	7,161
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,026	4,421	3,924	3,630	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,165	4,972	2,714	2,772	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	15,561	0.4	8,088	7,473	12,832	7,887	7,618	8,257	8,178	8,191	8,372	8,293
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,776	9,935	6,191	5,920	(*)	6,319	6,316	6,531	6,435
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,697	2,897	1,696	1,698	(*)	1,859	1,875	1,841	1,858
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	40,714	15.5	20,819	19,895	23,429	17,618	17,625	27,036	26,651	26,293	23,758	24,127
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,772	18,957	14,723	14,828	(*)	21,420	21,087	19,096	19,434
445	Food & beverage stores	99,663	5.1	49,502	50,161	56,624	46,008	48,825	52,295	52,145	51,566	50,444	50,074
4451	Grocery stores	90,276	5.0	44,613	45,663	49,078	41,477	44,538	46,764	46,642	46,126	45,133	44,897
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,073	5,070	3,104	2,973	(*)	3,752	3,701	3,665	3,569
446	Health & personal care stores	45,725	4.1	22,736	22,989	25,645	21,483	22,426	23,176	23,151	23,166	22,733	22,744
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,136	21,046	17,966	19,026	(*)	19,252	19,203	18,992	19,277
447	Gasoline stations	83,391	11.2	42,047	41,344	42,458	36,767	38,216	46,875	45,383	44,552	42,505	41,904
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	31,959	8.5	17,639	14,320	30,839	15,799	13,669	19,741	19,400	19,262	18,396	18,208
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	560	1,163	536	524	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,466	4,719	2,601	2,266	(*)	3,319	3,295	3,164	3,025
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,268	12,020	5,949	5,227	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,720	3,218	2,078	1,687	(*)	2,340	2,363	2,234	2,234
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	13,446	6.4	6,297	7,149	12,056	5,862	6,770	7,605	7,533	7,374	7,374	7,104
452	General merchandise stores	95,860	5.2	49,335	46,525	74,867	46,293	44,805	53,672	53,705	53,259	52,144	51,145
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	25,087	1.1	13,422	11,665	26,413	12,806	12,008	15,489	15,257	15,253	15,458	15,274
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,887	26,878	13,044	12,148	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,860	48,454	33,487	32,797	(*)	38,448	38,006	36,686	35,871
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,695	41,806	29,436	29,143	(*)	33,400	33,153	32,170	31,404
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,165	6,648	4,051	3,654	(*)	5,048	4,853	4,516	4,467
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	18,891	11.0	9,781	9,110	11,641	8,833	8,190	10,567	10,534	10,099	9,967	9,607
454	Nonstore retailers	68,674	9.2	33,805	34,869	46,670	30,382	32,513	34,708	34,368	34,395	31,988	32,503
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,486	37,550	21,645	23,156	(*)	26,383	26,537	24,266	24,713
722	Food services & drinking places ...	81,343	9.9	41,469	39,874	43,014	37,207	36,798	43,423	43,060	42,462	40,137	39,398

(*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

(NA) Not available (S) Suppressed (a) Advance estimate (p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(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-12 ARIMA 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					
		Feb. 2012 Advance from --		Jan. 2012 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2011 through Feb. 2012 from --	
		Jan. 2012 (p)	Feb. 2011 (r)	Dec. 2011 (r)	Jan. 2011 (r)	Sep. 2011 through Nov. 2011	Dec. 2010 through Feb. 2011
	Retail & food services, total	1.1	6.5	0.6	6.3	1.5	6.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.9	6.4	1.1	6.4	1.2	6.2
	Retail	1.1	6.3	0.5	5.9	1.4	6.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.6	6.9	-1.6	5.8	3.0	7.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.9	7.1	-2.1	5.6	3.2	7.8
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-1.2	8.3	2.4	11.8	4.1	9.2
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.0	-1.4	-0.2	-1.4	-3.9	-1.4
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	1.4	13.8	1.4	10.5	4.5	10.4
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.3	3.7	1.1	4.1	0.3	4.0
4451	Grocery stores	0.3	3.6	1.1	3.9	0.2	3.9
446	Health & personal care stores	0.1	1.9	-0.1	1.8	0.3	2.2
447	Gasoline stations	3.3	10.3	1.9	8.3	0.7	8.8
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.8	7.3	0.7	6.5	2.1	6.8
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	1.0	3.1	2.2	6.0	0.0	3.5
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.1	2.9	0.8	5.0	0.5	3.8
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	1.5	0.2	0.0	-0.1	0.1	-0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.3	6.0	4.3	9.6	0.8	6.7
454	Nonstore retailers	1.0	8.5	-0.1	5.7	1.3	8.1
722	Food services & drinking places	0.8	8.2	1.4	9.3	2.3	8.4

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

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

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 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% of the total national sales estimate. 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 $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$ percent or ± 1.5 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 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 $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (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 Feb. 2012

(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	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Retail	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.4	1.0	0.5	1.3	0.1	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.6	1.1	0.6	1.5	0.0	0.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	3.1	1.5	0.8	1.7	0.5	0.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.5	0.6	0.4	0.9	-0.3	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. & ...						
	supplies dealers	3.5	1.7	1.1	1.6	0.0	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
4451	Grocery stores	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	1.7	0.4	0.3	1.1	0.0	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	2.5	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.7
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	2.7	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.1	0.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	4.0	1.7	1.3	2.1	0.3	1.0
452	General merchandise stores	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.1
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	4.1	2.4	1.4	3.2	0.4	1.1
454	No-store retailers	2.2	1.1	0.8	1.7	0.2	0.5
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.0	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.3

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