

U.S. Census Bureau News

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2013, AT 8:30 A.M. EST

Ian Thomas / Paul Bucchioni
Service Sector Statistics Division
(301) 763-2713

CB13-06

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES DECEMBER 2012

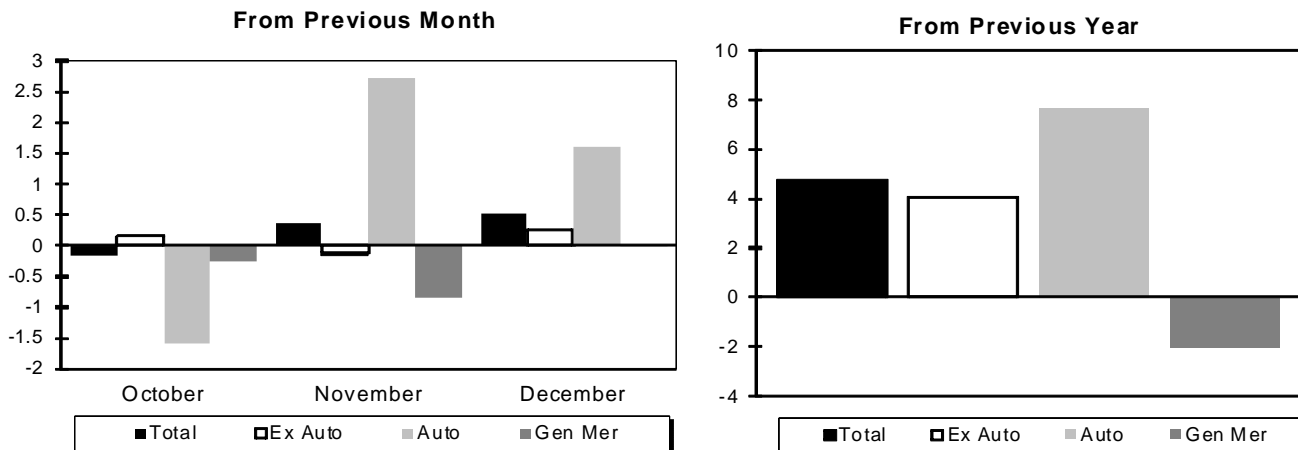
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$415.7 billion, an increase of 0.5 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from the previous month and 4.7 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above December 2011. Total sales for the 12 months of 2012 were up 5.2 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from 2011. Total sales for the October through December 2012 period were up 4.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The October to November 2012 percent change was revised from +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to +0.4 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from November 2012 and 4.4 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 12.6 percent ($\pm 2.3\%$) from December 2011 and miscellaneous store retailers were up 9.9 percent ($\pm 5.6\%$) 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 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 January is scheduled to be released February 13, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. EST.

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

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.

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				
		12 Month Total		2012			2011		2012			2011	
		2012	% Chg. 2011	Dec. ³ (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. ³ (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	4,889,244	5.2	468,693	415,890	404,731	457,468	395,724	415,695	413,582	411,997	396,974	397,370
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	3,997,645	4.6	393,751	346,020	332,223	385,794	330,984	337,613	336,746	337,188	324,436	325,780
	Retail	4,359,641	4.9	423,022	372,926	360,654	414,458	355,969	370,115	368,546	367,475	354,641	355,077
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	108,964	93,808	143,357	107,147	(*)	99,241	99,346	98,305	98,920
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	891,599	7.9	74,942	69,870	72,508	71,674	64,740	78,082	76,836	74,809	72,538	71,590
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	808,500	8.6	68,660	63,187	65,184	65,093	57,946	71,224	69,975	67,900	65,618	64,600
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	53,374	54,741	56,081	49,240	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,683	7,324	6,581	6,794	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	95,618	7.7	9,545	8,622	7,633	9,267	8,110	8,165	8,050	7,968	7,697	7,579
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,314	3,873	4,376	4,185	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,308	3,760	4,891	3,925	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	99,161	-0.8	12,804	9,901	7,277	12,850	9,969	8,329	8,381	8,193	8,223	8,530
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,201	5,408	9,671	7,340	(*)	6,129	6,076	6,176	6,268
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,700	1,869	3,179	2,629	(*)	2,252	2,117	2,047	2,262
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	294,046	5.4	21,850	24,479	25,783	22,065	23,222	24,804	24,796	24,598	24,316	23,644
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,886	22,071	18,476	19,764	(*)	20,928	20,763	20,415	19,823
445	Food & beverage stores	634,343	3.3	57,683	53,531	52,850	56,466	51,730	53,514	53,276	53,475	51,621	51,883
4451	Grocery stores	568,240	3.1	49,909	47,760	47,443	49,114	46,338	47,806	47,712	47,971	46,290	46,571
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,930	3,680	4,994	3,725	(*)	3,775	3,747	3,648	3,670
446	Health & personal care stores	274,940	1.0	25,222	22,380	22,948	25,387	22,468	23,161	22,837	22,788	22,912	22,950
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,535	19,321	21,105	19,048	(*)	18,741	18,887	19,239	19,299
447	Gasoline stations	547,113	4.0	42,239	43,862	48,317	42,058	42,312	45,031	45,785	47,934	44,132	44,870
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	239,179	5.5	31,650	22,072	18,866	30,893	20,787	20,301	20,099	20,049	19,319	19,270
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	745	731	1,171	766	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,809	3,477	4,666	3,505	(*)	3,507	3,526	3,384	3,291
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,068	7,410	11,972	8,587	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,453	2,138	3,214	2,326	(*)	2,424	2,362	2,341	2,340
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	89,817	6.1	12,069	7,923	6,486	11,524	7,472	7,624	7,582	7,595	6,988	7,171
452	General merchandise stores	632,212	0.5	72,086	57,219	50,170	74,634	57,735	51,939	51,944	52,388	52,996	53,283
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	183,029	-1.0	25,652	18,153	13,941	26,541	18,244	15,051	15,003	15,108	15,318	15,431
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,453	14,161	26,952	18,551	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,066	36,229	48,093	39,491	(*)	36,941	37,280	37,678	37,852
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,609	31,271	41,694	34,461	(*)	31,948	32,205	33,038	33,199
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,457	4,958	6,399	5,030	(*)	4,993	5,075	4,640	4,653
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	122,083	7.6	11,766	10,255	10,850	10,974	9,487	10,433	10,420	10,329	9,495	9,674
454	Nonstore retailers	439,530	11.6	51,166	42,812	36,966	46,666	37,937	38,732	38,540	37,349	34,404	34,633
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,257	28,792	37,768	29,606	(*)	30,289	29,290	26,710	26,481
722	Food services & drinking places ...	529,603	7.3	45,671	42,964	44,077	43,010	39,755	45,580	45,036	44,522	42,333	42,293

(*) 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-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					
		Dec. 2012 Advance from --		Nov. 2012 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2012 through Dec. 2012 from --	
		Nov. 2012 (p)	Dec. 2011 (r)	Oct. 2012 (r)	Nov. 2011 (r)	Jul. 2012 through Sep. 2012	Oct. 2011 through Dec. 2011
	Retail & food services, total	0.5	4.7	0.4	4.1	1.4	4.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.3	4.1	-0.1	3.4	1.1	3.7
	Retail	0.4	4.4	0.3	3.8	1.3	3.9
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.6	7.6	2.7	7.3	2.6	6.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.8	8.5	3.1	8.3	2.9	7.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.4	6.1	1.0	6.2	0.6	6.0
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-0.6	1.3	2.3	-1.7	0.9	-2.4
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	0.0	2.0	0.8	4.9	1.5	2.9
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.4	3.7	-0.4	2.7	0.9	3.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.2	3.3	-0.5	2.5	0.7	3.0
446	Health & personal care stores	1.4	1.1	0.2	-0.5	0.2	-0.1
447	Gasoline stations	-1.6	2.0	-4.5	2.0	1.8	4.1
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.0	5.1	0.2	4.3	0.6	4.9
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.6	9.1	-0.2	5.7	1.6	6.9
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.0	-2.0	-0.8	-2.5	-1.0	-1.9
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.3	-1.7	-0.7	-2.8	-1.4	-2.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.1	9.9	0.9	7.7	1.7	8.0
454	Nonstore retailers	0.5	12.6	3.2	11.3	2.9	10.6
722	Food services & drinking places	1.2	7.7	1.2	6.5	2.3	6.5

(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 Dec. 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	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Retail	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.5	1.0	0.5	1.2	0.0	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.5	1.1	0.6	1.3	0.0	0.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	3.2	1.4	0.8	1.9	0.3	0.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.6	0.6	0.8	1.2	-0.6	0.4
444	Building material & garden eq. &....						
	supplies dealers.....	3.1	1.4	1.0	2.4	0.1	0.7
445	Food & beverage stores.....	1.3	0.2	0.3	0.6	-0.1	0.1
4451	Grocery stores	1.4	0.2	0.3	0.6	-0.1	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	1.6	0.3	0.3	0.7	-0.2	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	2.5	0.5	0.4	1.0	-0.3	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	2.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	4.9	1.6	1.3	2.9	0.1	0.6
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.3	-0.2	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.4	2.3	1.4	3.4	0.3	0.6
454	Nonstore retailers	2.3	1.0	0.6	1.4	0.3	0.3
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.2	0.7	0.5	1.2	0.1	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.