

U.S. Census Bureau News

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY MAY 13, 2016, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

Rebecca DeNale
Economic Indicators Division
(301) 763-2713

CB16-78

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES APRIL 2016

Notice of Revision: Monthly retail sales estimates were revised on April 29, 2016 based on the results of the 2014 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the final results from the 2012 Economic Census. The Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services showing revised estimates can be found on our website at <https://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/benchmark/2016/html/annrev16.html>.

The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$453.4 billion, an increase of 1.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month, and 3.0 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above April 2015. Total sales for the February 2016 through April 2016 period were up 2.8 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The February 2016 to March 2016 percent change was revised from down 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to down 0.3 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

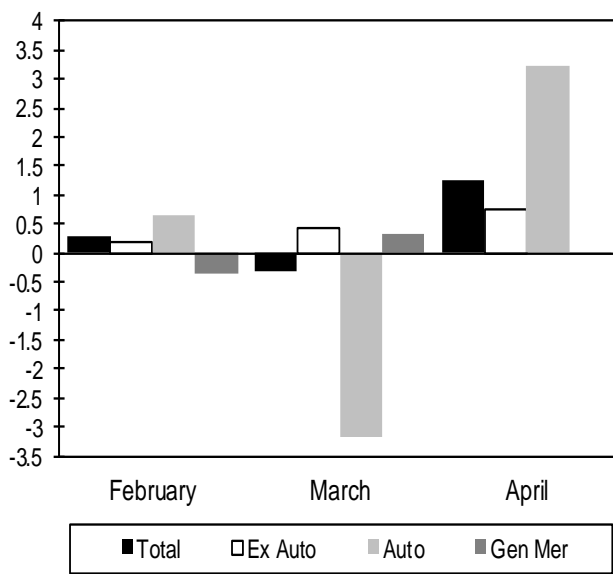
Retail trade sales were up 1.4 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from March 2016, and up 2.7 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from last year. Nonstore retailers were up 10.2 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) from April 2015, while gasoline stations were down 9.4 percent ($\pm 1.6\%$) from last year.

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.

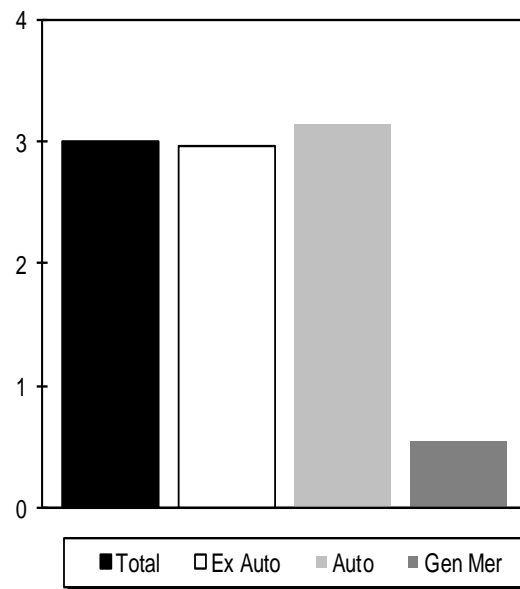
Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

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

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for May is scheduled to be released June 14, 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				
		4 Month Total		2016			2015		2016			2015	
		2016	% Chg. 2015	Apr. ³ (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ³ (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,725,448	3.5	450,888	460,078	413,554	438,217	444,110	453,438	447,812	449,294	440,249	440,463
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,363,253	3.3	355,040	361,194	325,292	344,920	348,050	360,864	358,116	356,656	350,501	350,683
	Retail	1,511,300	3.0	394,605	404,075	361,878	386,098	391,146	399,320	393,859	395,126	388,799	389,634
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	103,802	94,231	97,444	101,399	(*)	105,202	105,065	104,564	104,897
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	362,195	4.5	95,848	98,884	88,262	93,297	96,060	92,574	89,696	92,638	89,748	89,780
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	333,850	4.7	88,641	91,176	81,364	85,892	88,604	85,396	82,512	85,377	82,509	82,576
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	75,159	66,981	70,464	73,238	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,708	6,898	7,405	7,456	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	33,899	5.6	8,560	9,097	8,203	8,193	8,556	9,030	8,963	8,945	8,716	8,642
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,006	4,638	4,357	4,741	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,091	3,565	3,836	3,815	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	30,956	-1.9	7,233	8,057	7,956	7,358	8,098	8,559	8,520	8,472	8,738	8,631
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,038	5,929	5,465	5,960	(*)	6,349	6,281	6,369	6,347
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	108,695	9.7	33,255	30,050	23,290	31,512	26,526	29,468	29,774	29,627	27,246	27,266
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,613	20,706	25,822	23,015	(*)	25,536	25,658	23,582	23,702
445	Food & beverage stores	227,346	2.6	56,634	58,687	54,663	55,803	56,827	58,402	57,854	58,145	57,290	57,352
4451	Grocery stores	204,967	2.5	50,827	52,780	49,193	50,091	51,167	52,237	51,694	51,946	51,218	51,270
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,981	3,718	3,864	3,881	(*)	4,244	4,254	4,182	4,237
446	Health & personal care stores	108,541	7.1	27,337	28,715	26,559	25,511	26,195	27,725	27,478	27,129	25,639	25,531
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,093	22,346	21,597	21,873	(*)	23,056	22,779	21,662	21,360
447	Gasoline stations	120,250	-11.0	32,735	31,325	27,096	36,211	35,984	32,637	31,932	30,967	36,031	36,644
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	76,125	1.9	20,561	21,288	18,712	20,346	20,711	21,402	21,192	21,356	21,131	21,321
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	702	617	761	694	(*)	714	714	732	740
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,728	2,978	3,505	3,590	(*)	3,510	3,549	3,393	3,482
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,320	6,726	8,066	8,176	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,065	2,764	2,698	2,878	(*)	2,862	2,897	2,756	2,802
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	27,532	7.4	6,982	7,359	6,288	6,559	6,850	7,801	7,787	7,773	7,487	7,397
452	General merchandise stores	207,790	1.0	52,648	55,431	50,661	52,424	54,686	55,950	55,969	55,781	55,651	56,144
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	46,112	-3.0	11,997	12,686	11,208	12,349	13,178	13,319	13,275	13,314	13,549	14,139
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,038	11,406	12,523	13,352	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	42,745	39,453	40,075	41,508	(*)	42,694	42,467	42,102	42,005
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	36,785	34,060	34,598	35,853	(*)	36,822	36,624	36,496	36,252
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,960	5,393	5,477	5,655	(*)	5,872	5,843	5,606	5,753
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	38,190	4.6	10,140	10,208	9,094	9,573	9,479	10,534	10,377	10,213	10,058	9,906
454	Nonstore retailers	169,781	8.1	42,672	44,974	41,094	39,311	41,174	45,238	44,317	44,080	41,064	41,020
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	38,894	34,821	33,449	34,046	(*)	38,972	38,561	35,062	34,776
722	Food services & drinking places ...	214,148	7.4	56,283	56,003	51,676	52,119	52,964	54,118	53,953	54,168	51,450	50,829

(*) 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					
		Apr. 2016 Advance from --		Mar. 2016 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2016 through Apr. 2016 from --	
		Mar. 2016 (p)	Apr. 2015 (r)	Feb. 2016 (r)	Mar. 2015 (r)	Nov. 2015 through Jan. 2016	Feb. 2015 through Apr. 2015
	Retail & food services, total	1.3	3.0	-0.3	1.7	0.3	2.8
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.8	3.0	0.4	2.1	0.6	2.6
	Retail	1.4	2.7	-0.3	1.1	0.1	2.3
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	3.2	3.1	-3.2	-0.1	-1.1	3.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	3.5	3.5	-3.4	-0.1	-1.1	3.8
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.7	3.6	0.2	3.7	0.6	4.7
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.5	-2.0	0.6	-1.3	0.1	-1.7
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-1.0	8.2	0.5	9.2	1.6	9.6
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.9	1.9	-0.5	0.9	0.3	1.5
4451	Grocery stores	1.1	2.0	-0.5	0.8	0.2	1.4
446	Health & personal care stores	0.9	8.1	1.3	7.6	3.0	7.4
447	Gasoline stations	2.2	-9.4	3.1	-12.9	-4.6	-12.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.0	1.3	-0.8	-0.6	0.3	0.7
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.2	4.2	0.2	5.3	1.1	5.6
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.0	0.5	0.3	-0.3	-0.5	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.3	-1.7	-0.3	-6.1	-1.5	-3.6
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	1.5	4.7	1.6	4.8	2.1	4.0
454	Nonstore retailers	2.1	10.2	0.5	8.0	3.2	8.8
722	Food services & drinking places	0.3	5.2	-0.4	6.1	1.5	6.4

(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 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 Apr. 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
	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	0.2
	Retail	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.4	1.0	0.4	1.4	0.1	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.4	1.1	0.5	1.4	0.1	0.5
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.4	1.3	0.8	1.3	0.4	0.3
443	Electronics & appliance stores	2.8	0.5	0.6	1.5	0.0	0.3
444	Building material & garden eq. &						
	supplies dealers	2.0	1.2	0.8	1.3	-0.1	0.7
445	Food & beverage stores	1.4	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	1.4	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.2	0.5	0.4	1.2	0.1	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	1.9	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	2.1	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.2
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	2.3	0.9	0.9	1.2	0.0	0.3
452	General merchandise stores	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	2.9	2.0	1.2	2.5	0.4	1.2
454	Nonstore retailers	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.4
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.2	1.0	0.9	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.

Note: Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/retail>