

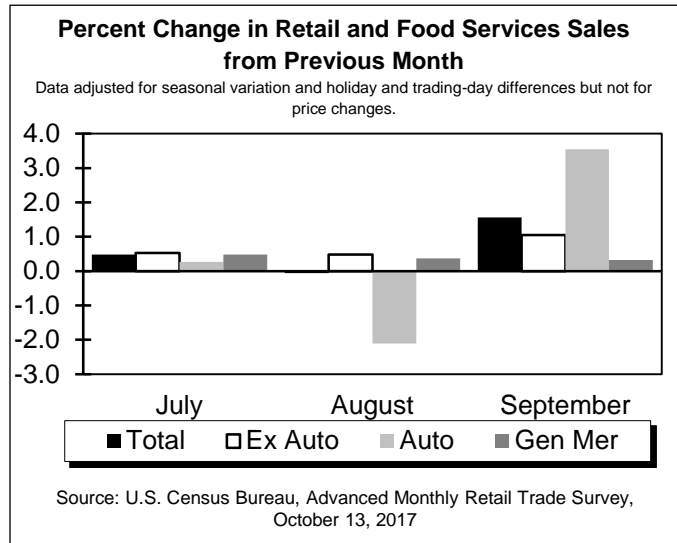
**ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, SEPTEMBER 2017**

Release Number: CB17-167

**Notice:** For information on the impact of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma on the compilation of this report, please see the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) on our website.](#)

**October 13, 2017** — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for September 2017:

 <b>ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES</b>		
September 2017	\$483.9 billion	1.6%
August 2017 (revised)	\$476.5 billion	-0.1%*
Next release: November 15, 2017		
<small>* 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, October 13, 2017.</small>		



**Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services**

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for September 2017, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$483.9 billion, an increase of 1.6 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from the previous month, and 4.4 percent ( $\pm 0.7$  percent) above September 2016. Total sales for the July 2017 through September 2017 period were up 3.9 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from the same period a year ago. The July 2017 to August 2017 percent change was revised from down 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* to down 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.1$  percent)\*.

Retail trade sales were up 1.7 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from August 2017, and up 4.7 percent ( $\pm 0.7$  percent) from last year. Gasoline Stations were up 11.4 percent ( $\pm 1.4$  percent) from September 2016, while Building Materials and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers were up 10.7 percent ( $\pm 2.1$  percent) from last year.

**General Information**

The October 2017 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on November 15, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. EST. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: [www.census.gov/economic-indicators/](http://www.census.gov/economic-indicators/). The full text and tables of this release can be found at [www.census.gov/retail/](http://www.census.gov/retail/).

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## 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 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.

### 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 4,700 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](http://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 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  $\pm 1.6$  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

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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.

## 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/](http://www.census.gov/developers/)

\* 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 <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted <sup>2</sup>					
		9 Month Total		2017			2016		2017			2016	
		2017	% Chg. 2016	Sep. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Aug. (p)	Jul. (r)	Sep.	Aug.	Sep. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Aug. (p)	Jul. (r)	Sep. (r)	Aug. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	4,212,679	3.8	468,192	491,572	476,896	449,948	473,169	483,895	476,479	476,752	463,305	460,198
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	3,321,261	3.8	369,517	386,490	374,527	355,177	369,961	383,834	379,849	378,038	367,062	364,986
	Retail .....	3,704,383	4.0	411,945	434,468	419,668	395,496	417,702	426,849	419,884	420,258	407,742	404,897
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	108,665	102,546	97,783	106,629	(*)	106,142	106,276	104,532	104,769
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	891,418	3.9	98,675	105,082	102,369	94,771	103,208	100,061	96,630	98,714	96,243	95,212
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	823,842	4.3	91,191	97,137	94,785	87,280	95,198	92,486	89,280	91,227	88,789	87,740
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	80,497	77,889	73,377	79,744	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,945	7,584	7,491	8,010	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	83,571	3.8	9,617	10,102	9,434	9,483	9,513	9,569	9,612	9,587	9,408	9,112
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,110	4,953	5,107	4,958	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,992	4,481	4,376	4,555	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	66,913	-2.4	7,300	7,743	7,434	7,708	8,122	7,735	7,822	7,938	8,087	8,219
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,826	5,576	5,909	6,302	(*)	5,673	5,760	6,142	6,172
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	285,053	7.4	31,290	33,012	32,643	29,046	30,078	32,311	31,652	31,458	29,186	28,986
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,185	28,493	25,967	26,967	(*)	27,352	27,162	25,458	25,369
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	530,765	2.2	59,306	60,524	60,664	57,354	58,607	60,382	59,914	59,622	58,650	58,352
4451	Grocery stores .....	475,447	2.0	53,078	53,996	54,027	51,268	52,414	53,941	53,409	53,176	52,368	52,153
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,578	4,726	4,371	4,421	(*)	4,519	4,510	4,456	4,395
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	245,023	-0.1	26,977	28,130	26,678	27,141	27,922	27,640	27,742	27,617	27,526	27,509
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,983	21,986	22,222	22,994	(*)	22,801	22,689	22,606	22,744
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	338,300	8.5	40,202	39,923	38,441	36,316	37,157	39,414	37,242	35,792	35,396	34,661
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	180,990	0.6	19,935	22,641	20,645	19,649	22,248	21,745	21,658	21,798	21,511	21,533
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	708	677	698	680	(*)	752	765	724	730
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,178	3,063	3,134	3,343	(*)	3,217	3,322	3,338	3,408
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,845	8,457	7,808	8,545	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,873	2,916	2,733	3,834	(*)	3,009	2,963	3,013	3,024
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	59,582	-4.9	6,645	7,686	6,574	6,931	8,009	6,944	6,956	7,031	7,350	7,209
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	491,505	1.7	53,824	57,685	56,092	51,432	55,753	57,897	57,710	57,498	55,648	56,147
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	102,957	-3.0	11,262	12,548	11,628	11,299	12,551	12,598	12,648	12,673	12,667	12,758
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,828	11,900	11,401	12,941	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	45,137	44,464	40,133	43,202	(*)	45,062	44,825	42,981	43,389
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	38,977	38,400	34,555	37,533	(*)	38,783	38,554	37,116	37,496
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,160	6,064	5,578	5,669	(*)	6,279	6,271	5,865	5,893
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	95,147	3.3	10,641	11,410	10,870	10,755	10,938	10,712	10,781	10,830	10,699	10,367
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	436,116	10.1	47,533	50,530	47,824	44,910	46,147	52,439	52,165	52,373	48,038	47,590
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	44,709	42,584	39,148	40,556	(*)	45,762	46,137	41,825	41,426
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	508,296	2.9	56,247	57,104	57,228	54,452	55,467	57,046	56,595	56,494	55,563	55,301

(\*) 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.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, October 13, 2017. 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](http://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 <sup>1</sup>					
		Sep. 2017 Advance from --		Aug. 2017 Preliminary from --		Jul. 2017 through Sep. 2017 from --	
		Aug. 2017 (p)	Sep. 2016 (r)	Jul. 2017 (r)	Aug. 2017 (r)	Apr. 2017 through Jun. 2017	Jul. 2016 through Sep. 2016
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	1.6	4.4	-0.1	3.5	0.9	3.9
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1.0	4.6	0.5	4.1	1.0	4.1
	Retail .....	1.7	4.7	-0.1	3.7	1.0	4.1
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	3.6	4.0	-2.1	1.5	0.7	3.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	3.6	4.2	-2.1	1.8	0.7	3.5
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	-0.4	1.7	0.3	5.5	0.2	3.8
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	-1.1	-4.4	-1.5	-4.8	-4.2	-4.0
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	2.1	10.7	0.6	9.2	3.1	9.5
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	0.8	3.0	0.5	2.7	0.7	2.7
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.0	3.0	0.4	2.4	0.7	2.6
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	-0.4	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.5
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	5.8	11.4	4.1	7.4	2.1	6.9
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	0.4	1.1	-0.6	0.6	0.5	1.2
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	-0.2	-5.5	-1.1	-3.5	-2.4	-5.1
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.3	4.0	0.4	2.8	1.0	3.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.4	-0.5	-0.2	-0.9	0.2	-0.8
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	-0.6	0.1	-0.5	4.0	0.2	2.5
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	0.5	9.2	-0.4	9.6	2.0	9.8
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	0.8	2.7	0.2	2.3	0.7	2.6

(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, October 13, 2017. 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](http://www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html)>.

**Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Sep. 2017**

(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 <sup>(1)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error <sup>(1)</sup> for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change <sup>(2)</sup>	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.4	0.9	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.5	1.0	0.4	1.1	0.1	0.6
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	2.7	1.0	0.8	1.4	0.2	0.7
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.7	0.6	0.5	1.5	-0.1	0.6
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;.... supplies dealers.....</b>	2.5	0.8	0.7	1.2	0.3	0.6
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.6	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	2.5	0.4	0.6	2.4	0.1	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.8	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	2.3	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.5
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	2.6	1.3	0.8	1.3	-0.2	0.4
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	2.8	2.6	1.2	2.7	-0.1	0.8
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.7	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.5
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.3	1.1	0.7	1.4	0.2	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.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, October 13, 2017. 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](http://www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html)>.