
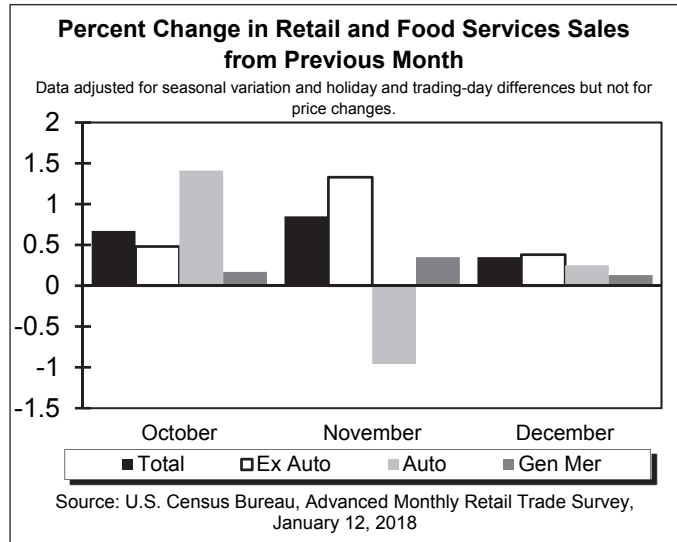


**ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, DECEMBER 2017**

Release Number: CB18-05

**January 12, 2018** — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December 2017:

 <b>ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES</b>		
<b>December 2017</b>	<b>\$495.4 billion</b>	<b>0.4%*</b>
<b>November 2017 (revised)</b>	<b>\$493.6 billion</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>Next release: February 14, 2018</b>		
<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, January 12, 2018.</small>		



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

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December 2017, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$495.4 billion, an increase of 0.4 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* from the previous month, and 5.4 percent ( $\pm 0.7$  percent) above December 2016. Total sales for the 12 months of 2017 were up 4.2 percent ( $\pm 0.4$  percent) from 2016. Total sales for the October 2017 through December 2017 period were up 5.5 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from the same period a year ago. The October 2017 to November 2017 percent change was revised from up 0.8 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) to up 0.9 percent ( $\pm 0.2$  percent).

Retail trade sales were up 0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* from November 2017, and were up 5.6 percent ( $\pm 0.7$  percent) from last year. Nonstore Retailers were up 12.7 percent ( $\pm 1.4$  percent) from December 2016, while Building Materials and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers were up 9.9 percent ( $\pm 2.1$  percent) from last year.

**General Information**

The January 2018 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on February 14, 2018 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/)

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\* 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>					
		12 Month Total		2017			2016		2017			2016	
		2017	% Chg. 2016	Dec. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	5,756,432	4.2	563,953	500,177	476,901	542,055	469,324	495,381	493,643	489,468	469,798	465,668
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	4,570,355	4.3	463,578	405,106	379,194	441,641	379,648	393,317	391,831	386,674	370,028	369,057
	Retail .....	5,078,043	4.4	504,447	445,834	420,188	484,760	416,131	437,832	436,500	432,584	414,547	409,616
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	120,264	103,069	148,733	114,530	(*)	108,677	108,044	104,280	104,283
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	1,186,077	4.0	100,375	95,071	97,707	100,414	89,676	102,064	101,812	102,794	99,770	96,611
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1,096,481	4.5	93,366	87,646	90,095	92,974	82,422	94,404	94,243	95,339	91,872	89,201
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	74,665	75,718	80,130	70,261	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,425	7,612	7,440	7,254	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	115,839	4.8	11,789	10,717	9,688	10,966	9,967	10,033	9,969	9,916	9,131	9,272
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,330	4,943	5,131	5,096	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,387	4,745	5,835	4,871	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	98,062	0.5	12,676	10,433	7,567	11,988	9,677	8,407	8,423	8,228	7,894	7,884
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,245	5,423	8,456	7,112	(*)	5,993	5,920	5,848	5,912
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	378,404	8.0	29,079	31,653	32,356	27,311	28,896	32,981	32,597	32,436	30,004	29,797
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	27,976	28,725	23,964	25,862	(*)	28,230	28,134	26,248	26,097
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	718,873	2.5	67,201	61,205	59,804	64,583	58,887	61,283	60,994	60,765	58,664	58,952
4451	Grocery stores .....	641,044	2.2	57,975	54,386	53,421	55,955	52,431	54,693	54,332	54,125	52,589	52,589
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,765	4,468	5,963	4,605	(*)	4,622	4,616	4,235	4,510
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	331,462	0.7	31,169	27,510	27,836	30,692	26,725	28,207	28,100	27,976	27,233	27,270
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,528	23,157	24,528	21,881	(*)	23,082	23,042	22,298	22,373
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	455,709	8.8	38,513	38,824	40,344	35,465	34,212	40,497	40,484	39,322	37,136	35,975
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	261,213	1.1	34,904	24,696	20,540	34,520	23,529	22,066	22,138	22,000	21,539	21,370
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	799	750	1,037	757	(*)	765	766	722	726
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,674	3,225	4,677	3,674	(*)	3,301	3,304	3,259	3,322
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,345	8,384	12,947	9,429	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,035	2,593	4,254	3,021	(*)	2,987	2,950	3,023	3,012
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	85,517	-3.4	11,505	7,830	6,403	11,677	7,754	7,093	7,210	7,194	7,103	7,081
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	691,709	2.4	79,014	64,245	56,383	76,128	61,190	58,614	58,535	58,332	56,134	56,204
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	151,931	-1.8	21,505	15,738	11,670	21,612	15,115	12,614	12,749	12,705	12,549	12,520
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,083	11,946	22,720	15,631	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	48,507	44,713	54,516	46,075	(*)	45,786	45,627	43,585	43,684
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	41,724	38,459	46,758	39,817	(*)	39,399	39,284	37,708	37,741
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,783	6,254	7,758	6,258	(*)	6,387	6,343	5,877	5,943
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	130,212	3.4	12,226	11,264	11,364	12,105	10,474	11,025	11,357	10,944	10,623	10,576
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	624,966	10.4	75,996	62,386	50,196	68,911	55,144	55,562	54,881	52,677	49,316	48,624
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	55,346	43,925	61,433	48,837	(*)	48,085	46,286	42,751	42,504
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	678,389	2.8	59,506	54,343	56,713	57,295	53,193	57,549	57,143	56,884	55,251	56,052

(\*) 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, January 12, 2018. 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>					
		Dec. 2017 Advance from --		Nov. 2017 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2017 through Dec. 2017 from --	
		Nov. 2017 (p)	Dec. 2016 (r)	Oct. 2017 (r)	Nov. 2016 (r)	Jul. 2017 through Sep. 2017	Oct. 2016 through Dec. 2016
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	0.4	5.4	0.9	6.0	2.7	5.5
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.4	6.3	1.3	6.2	2.6	5.7
	Retail .....	0.3	5.6	0.9	6.6	2.9	5.9
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	0.2	2.3	-1.0	5.4	3.3	4.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.2	2.8	-1.1	5.7	3.5	5.1
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	0.6	9.9	0.5	7.5	3.4	8.1
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	-0.2	6.5	2.4	6.8	4.2	5.4
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	1.2	9.9	0.5	9.4	2.5	9.7
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	0.5	4.5	0.4	3.5	1.8	3.7
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.7	4.0	0.4	3.3	1.7	3.4
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	0.4	3.6	0.4	3.0	1.5	3.4
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	0.0	9.1	3.0	12.5	7.4	9.9
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	-0.3	2.4	0.6	3.6	1.4	2.8
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	-1.6	-0.1	0.2	1.8	1.7	0.1
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.1	4.4	0.3	4.1	1.2	4.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-1.1	0.5	0.3	1.8	0.1	1.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	-2.9	3.8	3.8	7.4	2.6	4.2
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	1.2	12.7	4.2	12.9	3.9	11.0
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	0.7	4.2	0.5	1.9	1.1	2.9

(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, January 12, 2018. 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 Dec. 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	0.2	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.5	0.9	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.5	1.0	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.8
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	2.6	1.0	0.7	1.4	0.2	0.8
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.6	0.6	0.5	1.4	0.2	0.6
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;....</b>						
	supplies dealers.....	2.5	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.7
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>	2.2	0.4	0.3	1.7	0.1	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.8	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	2.4	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.4
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	2.7	1.3	1.0	1.4	-0.1	0.4
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	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>	2.9	2.4	1.1	2.7	0.4	1.0
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.7	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.5
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.3	1.0	0.6	1.4	0.0	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, January 12, 2018. 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)>.