

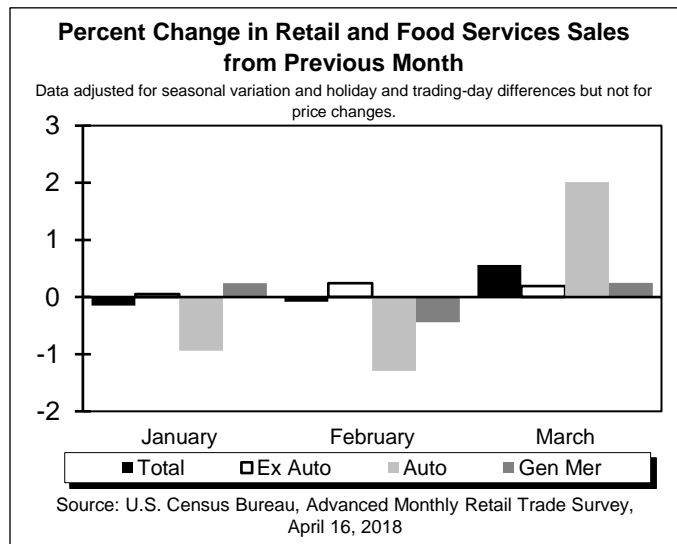
## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, MARCH 2018

Release Number: CB18-59

**Intention to Revise:** Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised to reflect the introduction of a new sample, new seasonal factors, and the results of the 2016 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Estimates will be restated and the publication tables will be reformatted to incorporate the NAICS 2012 definitions. Revised adjusted and not adjusted estimates are scheduled to be released on our website on May 25, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. EDT. Please visit our Sample Revision FAQs <[www.census.gov/retail/marts\\_sample\\_revision\\_faqs.html](http://www.census.gov/retail/marts_sample_revision_faqs.html)> and our summary of NAICS restatement and publication table changes <[www.census.gov/retail/samp\\_rev/restatnpubtbls.pdf](http://www.census.gov/retail/samp_rev/restatnpubtbls.pdf)> for additional information.

**April 16, 2018** — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March 2018:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
March 2018	\$494.6 billion	0.6%
February 2018 (revised)	\$491.8 billion	-0.1%*
Next release: May 15, 2018		
<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, April 16, 2018.</small>		



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

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March 2018, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$494.6 billion, an increase of 0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from the previous month, and 4.5 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) above March 2017. Total sales for the January 2018 through March 2018 period were up 4.1 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from the same period a year ago. The January 2018 to February 2018 percent change was unrevised from down 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.2$  percent) \*.

Retail trade sales were up 0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from February 2018, and 4.7 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) above last year. Gasoline Stations were up 9.7 percent ( $\pm 1.6$  percent) from March 2017, while Nonstore Retailers were up 9.7 percent ( $\pm 1.4$  percent) from last year.

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## General Information

The April 2018 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on May 15, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. 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/)>.

## 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

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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 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.

## RESOURCES

### 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/)>

### FRED Mobile App



Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App <<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/fred-mobile/>> for both Apple and Android devices. FRED, the signature database of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, now incorporates the Census Bureau's 13 economic indicators.

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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>					
		3 Month Total		2018			2017		2018			2017	
		2018	% Chg. 2017	Mar. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	1,392,009	4.8	509,362	437,340	445,307	484,550	420,352	494,555	491,795	492,169	473,317	472,572
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,102,555	5.2	399,169	346,917	356,469	378,604	331,342	393,260	392,497	391,574	376,419	375,048
	Retail .....	1,223,559	5.1	447,808	383,768	391,983	425,295	368,259	436,540	434,004	434,584	417,044	416,377
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	93,663	91,383	103,122	91,190	(*)	107,975	107,994	105,574	105,051
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	289,454	3.5	110,193	90,423	88,838	105,946	89,010	101,295	99,298	100,595	96,898	97,524
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	267,827	3.8	102,178	83,716	81,933	97,894	82,318	93,741	91,895	93,106	89,401	90,162
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	68,866	68,936	79,710	67,655	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,707	6,905	8,052	6,692	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	27,790	4.9	10,194	8,713	8,883	9,797	8,336	9,926	9,856	9,815	9,549	9,409
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,778	4,684	5,292	4,585	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,935	4,199	4,505	3,751	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	22,883	2.8	7,946	7,257	7,680	7,824	7,078	8,217	8,175	8,259	8,133	7,929
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,224	5,372	5,637	5,134	(*)	5,936	5,976	5,878	5,788
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	83,709	5.4	32,645	25,548	25,516	31,454	24,129	32,630	32,824	32,179	30,983	31,190
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,493	22,756	26,868	21,245	(*)	28,364	27,819	26,681	26,892
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	178,430	4.6	62,975	55,836	59,619	59,485	53,865	61,345	61,241	61,126	59,530	59,073
4451	Grocery stores .....	160,555	4.3	56,428	50,158	53,969	53,481	48,490	54,678	54,579	54,459	53,162	52,764
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,923	3,906	4,184	3,703	(*)	4,665	4,672	4,442	4,403
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	81,301	0.9	28,605	25,427	27,269	28,479	25,565	27,664	27,282	27,572	27,436	27,372
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,917	22,901	23,232	21,126	(*)	22,347	22,652	22,599	22,546
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	114,920	10.4	41,115	35,940	37,865	37,253	32,597	41,363	41,501	41,473	37,705	37,816
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	57,205	4.7	22,357	18,792	16,056	21,066	17,856	21,977	22,154	22,105	21,597	21,037
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	666	628	765	617	(*)	792	792	789	734
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,697	2,350	3,364	2,684	(*)	3,281	3,278	3,269	3,281
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,852	6,152	8,119	6,343	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,589	2,037	3,145	2,626	(*)	2,880	2,902	3,068	2,902
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	18,307	-2.6	6,686	5,640	5,981	6,750	5,676	6,943	7,068	6,843	7,181	7,158
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	160,897	3.7	58,962	51,258	50,677	55,442	50,223	58,474	58,327	58,582	56,678	57,121
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	31,906	0.8	12,178	10,133	9,595	11,943	10,169	12,518	12,553	12,667	12,637	12,597
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,387	9,842	12,213	10,405	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	41,125	41,082	43,499	40,054	(*)	45,774	45,915	44,041	44,524
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	35,387	35,478	37,413	34,697	(*)	39,363	39,376	37,906	38,552
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,738	5,604	6,086	5,357	(*)	6,411	6,539	6,135	5,972
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	30,751	6.0	10,944	9,738	10,069	10,504	9,354	11,231	11,266	11,512	10,781	10,806
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	157,912	10.0	55,186	49,196	53,530	51,295	44,570	55,475	55,012	54,523	50,573	49,942
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	42,024	44,678	44,061	37,891	(*)	48,471	47,479	44,282	43,754
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	168,450	2.8	61,554	53,572	53,324	59,255	52,093	58,015	57,791	57,585	56,273	56,195

(\*) 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, April 16, 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>					
		Mar. 2018 Advance from --		Feb. 2018 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2018 through Mar. 2018 from --	
		Feb. 2018 (p)	Mar. 2017 (r)	Jan. 2018 (r)	Feb. 2017 (r)	Oct. 2017 through Dec. 2017	Jan. 2017 through Mar. 2017
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	0.6	4.5	-0.1	4.1	0.2	4.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.2	4.5	0.2	4.7	0.7	4.5
	Retail .....	0.6	4.7	-0.1	4.2	0.1	4.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	2.0	4.5	-1.3	1.8	-1.6	2.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.0	4.9	-1.3	1.9	-1.6	3.0
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	0.7	3.9	0.4	4.8	-0.5	4.5
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	0.5	1.0	-1.0	3.1	-0.3	2.4
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	-0.6	5.3	2.0	5.2	0.0	5.0
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	0.2	3.0	0.2	3.7	0.4	3.4
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.2	2.9	0.2	3.4	0.3	3.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	1.4	0.8	-1.1	-0.3	-1.3	0.6
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	-0.3	9.7	0.1	9.7	3.1	9.7
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	-0.8	1.8	0.2	5.3	0.3	3.0
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	-1.8	-3.3	3.3	-1.3	-1.9	-4.0
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.3	3.2	-0.4	2.1	0.0	2.6
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.3	-0.9	-0.9	-0.3	-0.8	-0.6
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	-0.3	4.2	-2.1	4.3	1.5	5.5
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	0.8	9.7	0.9	10.2	1.6	9.7
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	0.4	3.1	0.4	2.8	1.0	2.7

(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, April 16, 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 Mar. 2018**

(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	0.3	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.4	0.8	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.5	0.9	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.6
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	2.5	1.0	0.7	1.4	0.1	0.6
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.6	0.6	0.5	1.4	0.0	0.7
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;....</b>						
	supplies dealers.....	2.5	1.1	0.8	1.4	0.2	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	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	2.2	0.4	0.4	1.3	0.1	0.4
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.9	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	2.4	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.4
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	2.7	1.1	0.9	1.3	-0.3	0.5
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>	3.0	2.5	1.1	2.6	0.3	1.5
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.7	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.5
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.2	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, April 16, 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)>.