

**ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, APRIL 2018**

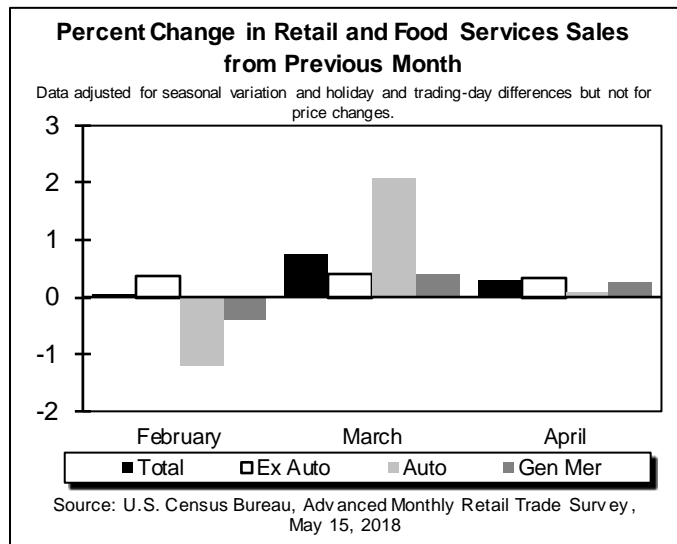
Release Number: CB18-72

**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/restatnptbpls.pdf](http://www.census.gov/retail/samp_rev/restatnptbpls.pdf)> for additional information.

**May 15, 2018** — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April 2018:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
April 2018	\$497.6 billion	0.3%*
March 2018 (revised)	\$496.1 billion	0.8%
Next release: June 14, 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, May 15, 2018.</small>		



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

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April 2018, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$497.6 billion, an increase of 0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.4$  percent)\* from the previous month, and 4.7 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) above April 2017. Total sales for the February 2018 through April 2018 period were up 4.6 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) from the same period a year ago. The February 2018 to March 2018 percent change was revised from up 0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) to up 0.8 percent ( $\pm 0.2$  percent).

Retail trade sales were up 0.4 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* from March 2018, and 4.8 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent) above last year. Gasoline Stations were up 11.7 percent ( $\pm 1.6$  percent) from April 2017, while Nonstore Retailers were up 9.6 percent ( $\pm 1.4$  percent) from last year.

**Data Inquiries**

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## General Information

The May 2018 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on June 14, 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>					
		4 Month Total		2018			2017		2018			2017	
		2018	% Chg. 2017	Apr. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	1,880,272	4.7	485,432	511,939	437,594	467,675	484,550	497,559	496,083	492,379	475,312	472,842
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,489,533	5.0	384,794	401,096	347,174	370,500	378,604	395,992	394,618	392,992	377,904	376,262
	Retail .....	1,651,739	4.9	426,101	449,616	384,039	410,138	425,295	439,220	437,564	434,544	419,124	416,676
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	109,214	93,755	100,776	103,122	(*)	108,574	108,206	106,166	105,484
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	390,739	3.7	100,638	110,843	90,420	97,175	105,946	101,567	101,465	99,387	97,408	96,580
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	361,873	4.0	93,305	102,915	83,720	89,790	97,894	94,152	93,986	92,000	89,880	89,076
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	84,703	68,843	72,753	79,710	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,928	6,700	7,385	8,052	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	37,097	5.3	9,256	10,273	8,685	8,749	9,797	10,072	9,993	9,858	9,489	9,549
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,673	4,785	4,599	5,292	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,600	3,900	4,150	4,505	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	30,286	3.5	7,168	8,094	7,344	7,013	7,824	8,333	8,340	8,286	8,193	8,112
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,846	5,240	5,265	5,637	(*)	6,046	5,982	5,997	5,878
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	118,949	5.0	35,676	32,282	25,475	33,776	31,454	32,464	32,323	32,665	31,099	31,012
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	27,690	22,417	27,695	26,868	(*)	28,055	28,233	26,914	26,734
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	237,296	3.4	58,743	63,097	55,837	58,782	59,485	61,661	61,439	61,324	59,632	59,510
4451	Grocery stores .....	213,217	3.2	52,650	56,431	50,167	52,677	53,481	54,958	54,681	54,648	53,209	53,162
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,584	3,908	4,188	4,184	(*)	4,731	4,669	4,508	4,428
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	108,180	0.7	26,852	28,596	25,463	26,795	28,479	27,512	27,629	27,321	27,652	27,436
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,117	20,941	22,249	23,232	(*)	22,553	22,397	22,773	22,599
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	157,438	11.1	42,089	41,467	36,017	37,607	37,253	42,131	41,801	41,686	37,720	37,744
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	78,343	3.6	20,879	22,554	18,854	20,970	21,066	22,482	22,162	22,212	21,587	21,598
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	852	667	804	765	(*)	820	803	749	785
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,482	2,687	3,533	3,364	(*)	3,248	3,273	3,333	3,272
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,744	6,874	8,187	8,119	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,209	2,631	2,996	3,145	(*)	2,928	2,923	2,978	3,059
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	24,720	-2.1	6,207	6,901	5,631	6,449	6,750	7,078	7,085	7,092	7,158	7,120
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	216,088	2.6	55,031	59,156	51,224	55,451	55,442	58,748	58,595	58,353	57,336	56,673
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	43,126	-1.0	11,285	12,148	10,098	11,883	11,943	12,527	12,502	12,535	12,730	12,650
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,444	10,352	12,160	12,213	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	47,008	41,126	43,568	43,499	(*)	46,093	45,818	44,606	44,023
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	40,416	35,387	37,472	37,413	(*)	39,662	39,406	38,354	37,906
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,592	5,739	6,096	6,086	(*)	6,431	6,412	6,252	6,117
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	41,558	5.7	10,761	10,937	9,791	10,302	10,504	11,267	11,162	11,284	10,828	10,813
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	211,045	10.7	52,801	55,416	49,298	47,069	51,295	55,905	55,570	55,076	51,022	50,529
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	47,848	42,111	41,275	44,061	(*)	48,824	48,515	44,815	44,238
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	228,533	3.3	59,331	62,323	53,555	57,537	59,255	58,339	58,519	57,835	56,188	56,166

(\*) 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, May 15, 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>					
		Apr. 2018 Advance from --		Mar. 2018 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2018 through Apr. 2018 from --	
		Mar. 2018 (p)	Apr. 2017 (r)	Feb. 2018 (r)	Mar. 2017 (r)	Nov. 2017 through Jan. 2018	Feb. 2017 through Apr. 2017
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	0.3	4.7	0.8	4.9	0.5	4.6
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.3	4.8	0.4	4.9	0.8	4.8
	Retail .....	0.4	4.8	0.7	5.0	0.4	4.7
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	0.1	4.3	2.1	5.1	-0.5	3.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.2	4.8	2.2	5.5	-0.3	4.1
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	0.8	6.1	1.4	4.6	1.0	5.2
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	-0.1	1.7	0.7	2.8	0.8	3.0
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	0.4	4.4	-1.0	4.2	0.1	4.4
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	0.4	3.4	0.2	3.2	0.6	3.5
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.5	3.3	0.1	2.9	0.5	3.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	-0.4	-0.5	1.1	0.7	-0.9	0.0
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	0.8	11.7	0.3	10.7	2.3	10.9
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	1.4	4.1	-0.2	2.6	1.1	4.1
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	-0.1	-1.1	-0.1	-0.5	1.6	-0.8
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.3	2.5	0.4	3.4	0.0	2.7
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.2	-1.6	-0.3	-1.2	-1.2	-1.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	0.9	4.1	-1.1	3.2	-1.1	3.9
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	0.6	9.6	0.9	10.0	1.4	9.9
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	-0.3	3.8	1.2	4.2	1.4	3.6

(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, May 15, 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 Apr. 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,</b>						
	<b>total .....</b>	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.4	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.1	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.5	0.8	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.6
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	2.5	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.6
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.6	0.6	0.5	1.3	0.1	0.7
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;....</b>						
	<b>supplies dealers.....</b>	2.5	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.6
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.6	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	2.2	0.4	0.4	1.3	0.0	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.9	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	<b>stores .....</b>	2.4	0.7	0.4	0.8	0.1	0.4
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	<b>music stores.....</b>	2.7	1.0	0.9	1.3	-0.2	0.6
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	0.1	0.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.0	2.4	1.1	2.4	0.4	1.1
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.6	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.5
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.1	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, May 15, 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)>.