

U.S. Census Bureau News

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015, AT 8:30 A.M. EST

Paul Bucchioni / Karla Allen
Economic Indicators Division
(301) 763-2713

CB15-04

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES DECEMBER 2014

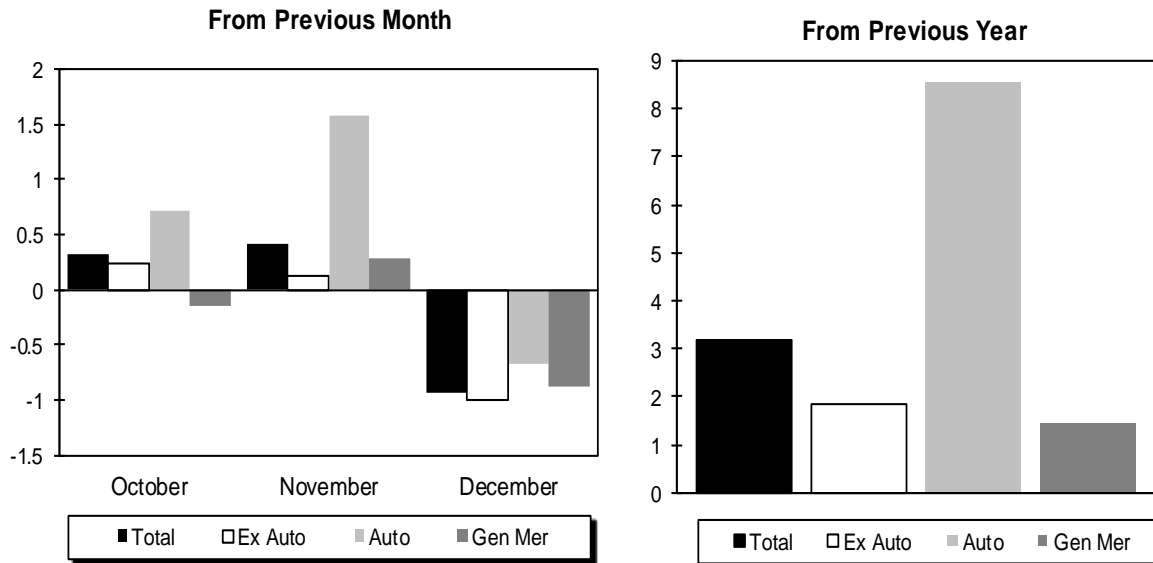
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$442.9 billion, a decrease of 0.9 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month, but up 3.2 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) above December 2013. Total sales for the 12 months of 2014 were up 4.0 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from 2013. Total sales for the October through December 2014 period were up 4.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The October to November 2014 percent change was revised from +0.7 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) to +0.4 percent ($\pm 0.1\%$).

Retail trade sales were down 1.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from November 2014, but 2.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above last year. Auto and other motor vehicle dealers were up 9.8 percent ($\pm 3.0\%$) from December 2013 and food services and drinking places were up 8.2 percent ($\pm 3.3\%$) 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 4,900 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. Responding firms account for approximately 60% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. 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)



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for January is scheduled to be released February 12, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. EST.

For customized retail time series estimates by industry, visit the Census Bureau's web site at www.census.gov/timeseries.

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					
		12 Month Total		2014			2013		2014			2013	
		2014	% Chg. 2013	Dec. ³ (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. ³ (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	5,271,229	4.0	505,251	442,348	442,124	483,162	429,408	442,931	447,121	445,276	429,329	427,081
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	4,213,570	3.0	415,412	360,626	354,841	402,594	351,825	351,856	355,424	355,008	345,431	342,464
	Retail	4,700,478	3.8	455,441	395,135	392,522	437,087	384,546	393,319	397,890	396,214	383,483	380,688
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	116,682	102,133	144,163	114,048	(*)	106,010	105,372	102,228	102,894
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1,057,659	8.1	89,839	81,722	87,283	80,568	77,583	91,075	91,697	90,268	83,898	84,617
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	975,559	8.8	83,452	75,006	80,089	73,978	70,798	84,380	84,657	83,513	76,820	77,629
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	63,606	66,397	63,842	59,737	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,716	7,194	6,590	6,785	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	101,081	3.0	10,344	9,074	8,484	9,571	9,125	8,642	8,577	8,561	8,166	8,410
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,698	4,454	4,234	4,599	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,376	4,030	5,337	4,526	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	107,360	2.9	13,659	11,105	8,552	12,768	10,668	9,046	9,194	9,182	8,473	8,782
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,384	6,556	9,265	7,867	(*)	7,081	7,065	6,363	6,594
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	328,017	5.0	24,848	26,077	28,588	23,158	24,693	27,517	28,050	27,607	26,167	25,899
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,920	24,369	19,213	21,019	(*)	23,294	23,011	21,734	21,691
445	Food & beverage stores	668,352	3.0	60,788	56,655	56,610	58,665	55,238	56,652	56,462	56,316	55,342	54,358
4451	Grocery stores	594,261	2.5	52,191	50,329	50,417	50,510	49,132	50,377	50,178	50,067	49,326	48,454
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,188	4,159	5,371	4,149	(*)	4,159	4,163	4,032	3,989
446	Health & personal care stores	298,597	6.1	28,942	24,219	25,690	26,747	23,296	25,567	25,440	25,335	24,096	23,942
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,945	21,453	21,835	19,356	(*)	20,929	20,930	20,032	19,893
447	Gasoline stations	533,568	-2.7	36,584	39,422	44,620	42,503	41,694	39,422	42,163	43,489	45,949	44,121
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	254,061	2.2	33,722	23,739	20,457	32,311	22,796	21,649	21,724	21,254	20,861	20,637
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	831	784	1,078	796	(*)	771	755	708	738
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,013	3,629	4,661	3,741	(*)	3,695	3,615	3,420	3,395
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,019	8,418	12,257	9,477	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,631	2,355	3,375	2,539	(*)	2,597	2,571	2,563	2,465
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	87,988	-0.1	12,879	8,197	6,713	12,019	8,058	7,603	7,618	7,585	7,258	7,345
452	General merchandise stores	662,960	1.6	74,345	61,554	54,428	73,647	60,277	55,286	55,779	55,625	54,501	54,596
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	167,806	-2.1	23,821	16,836	13,129	23,888	16,965	13,947	13,976	13,871	14,035	14,151
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,218	13,444	24,414	17,331	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	44,718	41,299	49,759	43,312	(*)	41,803	41,754	40,466	40,445
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,196	36,025	43,234	37,996	(*)	36,598	36,537	35,496	35,477
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,522	5,274	6,525	5,316	(*)	5,205	5,217	4,970	4,968
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	119,863	1.6	11,212	9,669	10,968	11,016	9,764	9,934	10,123	10,202	9,850	9,966
454	Nonstore retailers	480,972	7.1	58,279	43,702	40,129	54,114	41,354	40,926	41,063	40,790	38,922	38,015
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	36,697	33,187	44,500	33,381	(*)	34,105	33,899	30,839	30,264
722	Food services & drinking places ...	570,751	5.8	49,810	47,213	49,602	46,075	44,862	49,612	49,231	49,062	45,846	46,393

(*) 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					
		Dec. 2014 Advance from --		Nov. 2014 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2014 through Dec. 2014 from --	
		Nov. 2014 (p)	Dec. 2013 (r)	Oct. 2014 (r)	Nov. 2013 (r)	Jul. 2014 through Sep. 2014	Oct. 2013 through Dec. 2013
	Retail & food services, total	-0.9	3.2	0.4	4.7	0.4	4.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-1.0	1.9	0.1	3.8	0.1	3.0
	Retail	-1.1	2.6	0.4	4.5	0.1	3.7
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.7	8.6	1.6	8.4	1.6	8.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.3	9.8	1.4	9.1	1.7	9.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.8	5.8	0.2	2.0	1.9	3.2
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-1.6	6.8	0.1	4.7	0.9	4.2
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-1.9	5.2	1.6	8.3	0.6	6.6
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.3	2.4	0.3	3.9	0.9	3.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.4	2.1	0.2	3.6	1.0	2.9
446	Health & personal care stores	0.5	6.1	0.4	6.3	1.0	6.0
447	Gasoline stations	-6.5	-14.2	-3.0	-4.4	-7.3	-7.8
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-0.3	3.8	2.2	5.3	1.5	3.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-0.2	4.8	0.4	3.7	3.3	3.9
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.9	1.4	0.3	2.2	-0.3	1.7
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.2	-0.6	0.8	-1.2	-0.4	-1.7
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-1.9	0.9	-0.8	1.6	-0.2	1.6
454	Nonstore retailers	-0.3	5.1	0.7	8.0	2.0	7.3
722	Food services & drinking places	0.8	8.2	0.3	6.1	2.9	7.4

(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 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% of the total national sales estimate. 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 Dec. 2014

(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	0.5	0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Retail	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.6	1.1	0.6	1.6	0.3	0.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.6	1.3	0.6	1.7	0.3	0.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.6	1.5	0.9	1.8	0.0	0.5
443	Electronics & appliance stores	2.3	0.4	0.6	1.6	0.6	0.8
444	Building material & garden eq. &....						
	supplies dealers	2.2	1.4	0.9	1.5	0.1	0.6
445	Food & beverage stores	1.3	0.2	0.3	1.3	0.1	0.1
4451	Grocery stores	1.4	0.2	0.2	1.4	0.1	0.1
446	Health & personal care stores	2.2	0.3	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	1.9	0.4	0.4	0.9	-0.2	0.2
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	2.3	0.5	0.6	1.6	-0.1	0.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores	2.0	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.3	0.6
452	General merchandise stores	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.4
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	2.9	1.8	1.2	2.1	0.2	0.9
454	Nonstore retailers	1.3	0.5	0.4	1.2	0.1	0.3
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.2	0.9	0.6	1.9	0.2	0.5

(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.