

U.S. Census Bureau News

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2015, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

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CB15-78

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES APRIL 2015

Notice of Revision: Monthly retail sales estimates were revised on April 30, 2015 based on the results of the 2013 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the preliminary results from the 2012 Economic Census. The Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services showing revised estimates can be found on our website at <http://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/benchmark/2015/html/annrev15.html>.

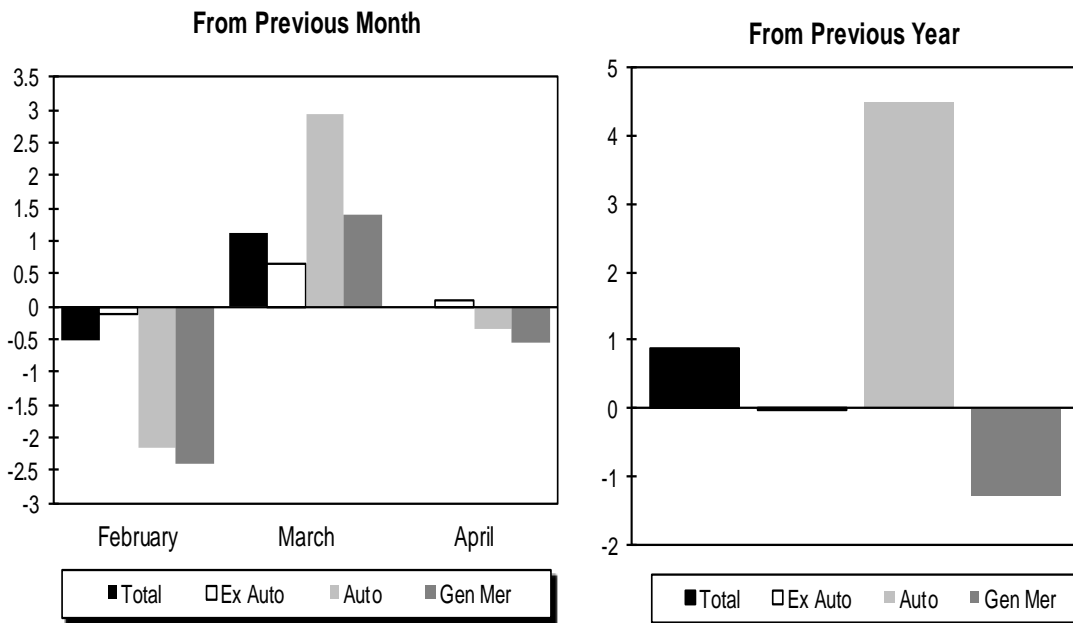
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$436.8 billion, virtually unchanged ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from the previous month, but 0.9 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$)* above April 2014. Total sales for the February 2015 through April 2015 period were up 1.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The February 2015 to March 2015 percent change was revised from +0.9 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) to +1.1 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were down 0.1 ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from March 2015, and 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* below last year. Food services and drinking places were up 8.5 percent ($\pm 3.3\%$) from April 2014 and nonstore retailers were up 6.3 percent ($\pm 1.9\%$) 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 May is scheduled to be released June 11, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

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

To learn more about this release and the other indicators the U.S. Census Bureau publishes, join us for the Investigating Economic Indicators Webinar Series. For more information, visit <http://www.census.gov/econ/webinar>.

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					
		4 Month Total		2015			2014		2015			2014	
		2015	% Chg. 2014	Apr. ³ (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ³ (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,658,586	1.9	434,433	441,927	385,731	431,335	432,827	436,772	436,776	431,921	432,969	429,358
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,307,944	0.5	341,195	344,413	305,303	342,380	341,407	347,004	346,692	344,404	347,061	344,526
	Retail	1,459,257	1.0	382,614	388,888	339,180	383,622	383,428	385,517	385,875	381,432	385,728	382,356
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	100,326	89,530	96,818	99,124	(*)	103,463	102,311	103,350	102,055
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	350,642	7.2	93,238	97,514	80,428	88,955	91,420	89,768	90,084	87,517	85,908	84,832
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	322,843	8.0	85,958	90,017	73,890	81,538	83,951	82,652	82,889	80,403	78,629	77,517
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	74,899	61,314	67,924	69,958	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,497	6,538	7,417	7,469	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	31,408	4.6	7,811	8,435	7,403	7,705	8,028	8,363	8,443	8,290	8,241	8,076
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,721	4,221	4,137	4,563	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,714	3,182	3,568	3,465	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	31,518	-1.0	7,216	8,144	7,952	7,512	8,447	8,541	8,573	8,655	8,855	8,825
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,936	5,738	5,652	6,202	(*)	6,275	6,292	6,564	6,515
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	99,541	5.9	31,764	26,559	19,996	30,564	24,422	27,595	27,513	26,902	26,498	25,808
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,033	17,695	24,646	20,782	(*)	23,893	23,191	22,467	22,109
445	Food & beverage stores	217,284	2.9	54,503	55,425	51,402	53,697	53,925	56,003	56,078	56,217	54,856	54,518
4451	Grocery stores	195,147	2.6	48,630	49,673	46,192	48,141	48,522	49,775	49,923	50,100	49,023	48,717
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,878	3,519	3,713	3,697	(*)	4,211	4,155	4,001	3,971
446	Health & personal care stores	102,266	5.5	25,782	26,362	24,257	24,658	24,863	26,069	25,870	25,805	24,757	24,617
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,783	20,129	20,682	20,544	(*)	21,398	21,368	20,682	20,421
447	Gasoline stations	135,437	-22.5	36,381	36,021	31,033	46,630	45,742	36,021	36,275	36,127	46,168	45,651
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	74,355	2.3	20,368	20,611	17,787	20,217	19,968	21,066	21,034	20,841	20,824	20,458
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	763	693	813	726	(*)	813	825	778	792
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,948	3,094	3,984	3,909	(*)	3,814	3,810	3,812	3,795
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,885	6,297	7,575	7,441	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,934	2,585	2,867	2,905	(*)	2,840	2,810	2,864	2,837
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	25,078	5.5	6,410	6,697	5,606	6,154	6,251	7,276	7,217	7,114	6,838	6,751
452	General merchandise stores	203,854	0.4	51,997	53,969	48,413	52,801	53,990	55,180	55,480	54,709	55,907	55,207
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	47,742	-1.9	12,492	13,158	11,237	13,100	13,277	13,720	14,032	13,657	14,454	14,076
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,429	11,466	13,361	13,539	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	40,811	37,176	39,701	40,713	(*)	41,448	41,052	41,453	41,131
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	35,194	32,142	34,447	35,585	(*)	35,803	35,477	36,070	35,872
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,617	5,034	5,254	5,128	(*)	5,645	5,575	5,383	5,259
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	35,798	4.5	9,255	9,337	8,571	9,010	8,939	9,772	9,769	9,756	9,374	9,519
454	Nonstore retailers	152,076	4.5	37,889	39,814	36,332	35,719	37,433	39,863	39,539	39,499	37,502	38,094
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	32,803	28,819	28,985	29,061	(*)	33,336	33,125	30,446	30,591
722	Food services & drinking places ...	199,329	9.0	51,819	53,039	46,551	47,713	49,399	51,255	50,901	50,489	47,241	47,002

(*) 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					
		Apr. 2015 Advance from --		Mar. 2015 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2015 through Apr. 2015 from --	
		Mar. 2015 (p)	Apr. 2014 (r)	Feb. 2015 (r)	Mar. 2014 (r)	Nov. 2014 through Jan. 2015	Feb. 2014 through Apr. 2014
	Retail & food services, total	0.0	0.9	1.1	1.7	-0.6	1.5
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.1	0.0	0.7	0.6	-0.7	0.4
	Retail	-0.1	-0.1	1.2	0.9	-0.9	0.6
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.4	4.5	2.9	6.2	-0.3	5.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.3	5.1	3.1	6.9	-0.2	6.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.9	1.5	1.8	4.5	-0.3	3.1
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-0.4	-3.5	-0.9	-2.9	-3.1	-1.8
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	0.3	4.1	2.3	6.6	0.2	5.4
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.1	2.1	-0.2	2.9	-0.2	2.8
4451	Grocery stores	-0.3	1.5	-0.4	2.5	-0.3	2.4
446	Health & personal care stores	0.8	5.3	0.3	5.1	0.4	5.4
447	Gasoline stations	-0.7	-22.0	0.4	-20.5	-7.2	-21.7
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.2	1.2	0.9	2.8	0.0	2.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.8	6.4	1.4	6.9	1.6	6.0
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.5	-1.3	1.4	0.5	-1.6	-0.4
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-2.2	-5.1	2.7	-0.3	-1.5	-2.8
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.0	4.2	0.1	2.6	-0.8	4.0
454	Nonstore retailers	0.8	6.3	0.1	3.8	2.0	5.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	0.7	8.5	0.8	8.3	1.5	8.6

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

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 4,900 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 60% 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 Apr. 2015

(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	0.1
	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	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.7	1.1	0.6	1.4	0.2	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.6	1.3	0.6	1.6	0.2	0.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.5	1.3	0.8	1.8	0.2	0.5
443	Electronics & appliance stores	2.3	0.5	0.5	1.6	0.1	0.3
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	2.0	1.2	0.9	1.4	0.4	0.5
445	Food & beverage stores	1.3	0.2	0.2	1.3	0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	1.4	0.2	0.2	1.4	0.1	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.2	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.2
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	0.4	0.4	0.8	-0.2	0.4
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.3	0.5	0.6	1.6	0.1	0.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	2.2	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.1	0.6
452	General merchandise stores	0.2	0.0	0.0	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	2.6	1.8	1.1	2.1	-0.2	1.0
454	Nonstore retailers	1.3	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.1	0.3
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.4	0.9	0.7	1.9	0.3	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.