

# U.S. Census Bureau News

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2015, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

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CB15-58

## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES MARCH 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. This report no longer contains the most up to date estimates. The Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services showing revised estimates can be found on our website at [www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/benchmarking/2015/html/annrev15.html](http://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/benchmarking/2015/html/annrev15.html)

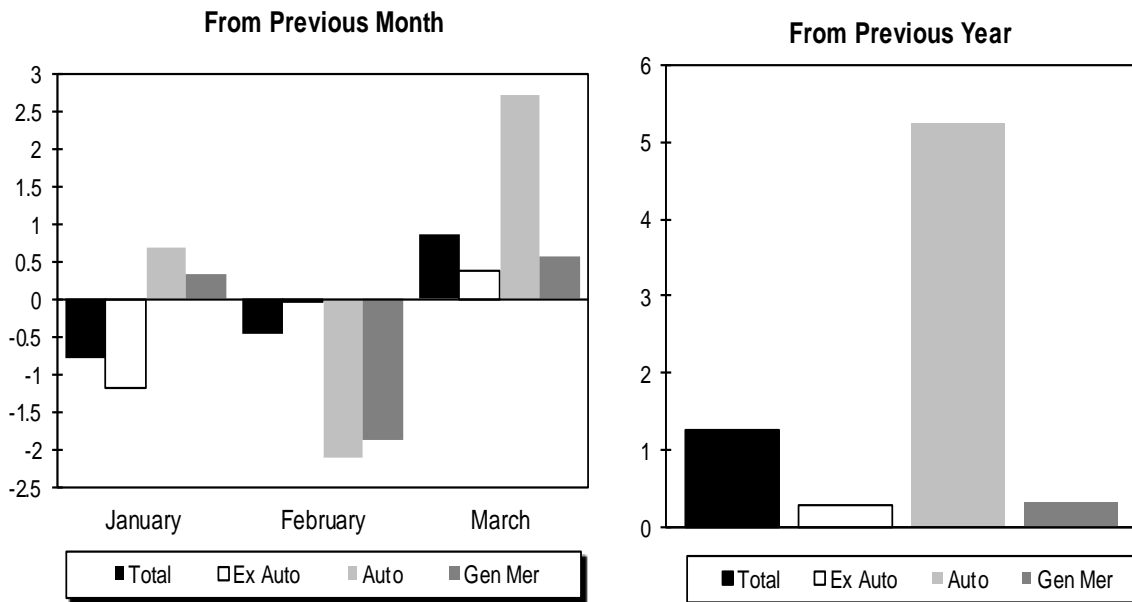
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$441.4 billion, an increase of 0.9 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the previous month, and 1.3 percent ( $\pm 0.9\%$ ) above March 2014. Total sales for the January 2015 through March 2015 period were up 2.2 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The January 2015 to February 2015 percent change was revised from -0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) to -0.5 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ).

Retail trade sales were up 0.9 ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from February 2015, and 0.5 percent ( $\pm 0.9\%$ )\* above last year. Food services and drinking places were up 7.7 percent ( $\pm 3.5\%$ ) from March 2014 and building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 6.3 percent ( $\pm 2.5\%$ ) 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 April is scheduled to be released May 13, 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](http://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](http://www.census.gov/developers).

For additional survey information, visit [www.census.gov/retail](http://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 <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted <sup>2</sup>					
		3 Month Total		2015			2014		2015			2014	
		2015	% Chg. 2014	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> .....	1,237,456	2.1	445,583	390,684	401,189	438,560	384,985	441,363	437,590	439,629	435,870	429,475
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	975,583	0.8	346,716	308,642	320,225	344,848	307,189	349,709	348,377	348,482	348,779	345,379
	Retail .....	1,091,314	1.3	393,234	344,439	353,641	389,563	342,461	390,979	387,541	389,684	389,072	383,453
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	90,986	91,081	100,275	90,003	(*)	103,955	105,079	103,406	102,277
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	261,873	7.2	98,867	82,042	80,964	93,712	77,796	91,654	89,213	91,147	87,091	84,096
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	242,329	8.0	91,714	75,838	74,777	86,606	71,410	84,763	82,433	84,303	80,117	77,117
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	61,657	62,772	70,645	57,555	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,204	6,187	7,106	6,386	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	24,192	5.2	8,605	7,615	7,972	8,264	7,387	8,674	8,556	8,656	8,356	8,263
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,242	4,396	4,589	4,077	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,373	3,576	3,675	3,310	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	24,826	0.5	8,370	8,187	8,269	8,602	8,145	8,796	8,836	8,946	8,968	8,758
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,220	6,178	6,607	6,231	(*)	6,732	6,842	6,911	6,693
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	69,529	6.8	27,305	20,505	21,719	25,155	19,499	28,332	27,750	28,260	26,650	26,247
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,631	18,797	20,662	16,809	(*)	23,077	23,585	22,075	21,887
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	163,832	3.1	55,659	51,812	56,361	54,416	50,124	56,482	56,748	56,714	55,129	54,882
4451	Grocery stores .....	146,895	2.8	49,688	46,394	50,813	48,763	44,996	50,089	50,374	50,310	49,057	48,856
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,570	3,637	3,758	3,428	(*)	4,210	4,200	4,050	4,038
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	75,649	5.7	26,092	23,982	25,575	24,634	22,786	25,580	25,513	25,524	24,390	24,189
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,837	21,456	20,290	18,965	(*)	21,036	21,181	20,109	20,090
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	97,784	-23.4	35,219	30,732	31,833	45,592	40,011	35,611	35,818	35,020	45,683	46,416
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	55,078	3.0	20,960	18,155	15,963	20,289	17,779	21,473	21,212	21,208	20,909	20,610
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	655	600	685	624	(*)	786	760	747	759
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,840	2,578	3,605	2,855	(*)	3,498	3,522	3,514	3,486
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,655	6,155	7,867	6,300	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,373	1,897	2,637	2,402	(*)	2,571	2,584	2,580	2,597
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	19,394	5.2	6,853	5,873	6,668	6,520	5,650	7,441	7,425	7,240	7,079	7,116
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	151,284	1.3	53,552	48,407	49,325	53,796	48,292	55,107	54,790	55,838	54,937	54,418
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	34,955	-1.1	12,946	11,187	10,822	13,215	11,512	13,856	13,663	13,863	14,010	13,972
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,449	11,076	13,516	11,776	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	37,220	38,503	40,581	36,780	(*)	41,127	41,975	40,927	40,446
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	32,412	33,952	35,692	32,170	(*)	35,814	36,665	35,871	35,352
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,808	4,551	4,889	4,610	(*)	5,313	5,310	5,056	5,094
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	27,783	5.0	9,963	8,889	8,931	9,377	8,565	10,394	10,223	10,330	9,999	9,780
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	120,090	4.5	41,789	38,240	40,061	39,206	36,427	41,435	41,457	40,801	39,881	38,678
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,328	32,176	30,443	26,926	(*)	34,740	34,303	32,012	30,773
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	146,142	9.0	52,349	46,245	47,548	48,997	42,524	50,384	50,049	49,945	46,798	46,022

(\*) 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 <sup>1</sup>					
		Mar. 2015 Advance from --		Feb. 2015 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2015 through Mar. 2015 from --	
		Feb. 2015 (p)	Mar. 2014 (r)	Jan. 2015 (r)	Feb. 2014 (r)	Oct. 2014 through Dec. 2014	Jan. 2014 through Mar. 2014
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	0.9	1.3	-0.5	1.9	-1.3	2.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.9	-1.6	0.9
	Retail .....	0.9	0.5	-0.5	1.1	-1.6	1.5
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	2.7	5.2	-2.1	6.1	-0.1	7.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.8	5.8	-2.2	6.9	-0.1	8.5
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	1.4	3.8	-1.2	3.5	0.3	4.9
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> ....	-0.5	-1.9	-1.2	0.9	-2.6	0.8
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	2.1	6.3	-1.8	5.7	0.9	6.7
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	-0.5	2.5	0.1	3.4	0.1	2.9
4451	Grocery stores .....	-0.6	2.1	0.1	3.1	0.0	2.6
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	0.3	4.9	0.0	5.5	0.4	5.7
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	-0.6	-22.0	2.3	-22.8	-14.5	-23.1
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	1.2	2.7	0.0	2.9	-0.7	2.7
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	0.2	5.1	2.6	4.3	-2.1	5.3
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.6	0.3	-1.9	0.7	-0.8	1.6
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	1.4	-1.1	-1.4	-2.2	-0.9	-0.4
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	1.7	4.0	-1.0	4.5	1.1	4.7
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	-0.1	3.9	1.6	7.2	0.7	5.9
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ..	0.7	7.7	0.2	8.8	1.3	8.9

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

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

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

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## 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 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 Mar. 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 <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> .....	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	<b>Retail</b> .....	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.1
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	1.7	1.1	0.6	1.5	0.2	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.6	1.2	0.6	1.7	0.2	0.4
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	2.6	1.4	0.8	1.9	0.2	0.6
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	2.3	0.5	0.5	1.6	0.5	0.3
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	2.0	1.2	0.9	1.4	0.3	0.6
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	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	0.1
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	2.2	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	1.8	0.4	0.4	0.8	-0.3	0.3
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	2.3	0.5	0.6	1.6	0.0	0.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	2.1	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.0	0.6
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.2	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	0.2
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	2.6	1.8	1.1	2.0	0.3	1.0
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	1.3	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.0	0.3
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ..	2.4	0.9	0.7	2.0	0.3	0.6

(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.