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## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES DECEMBER 2011

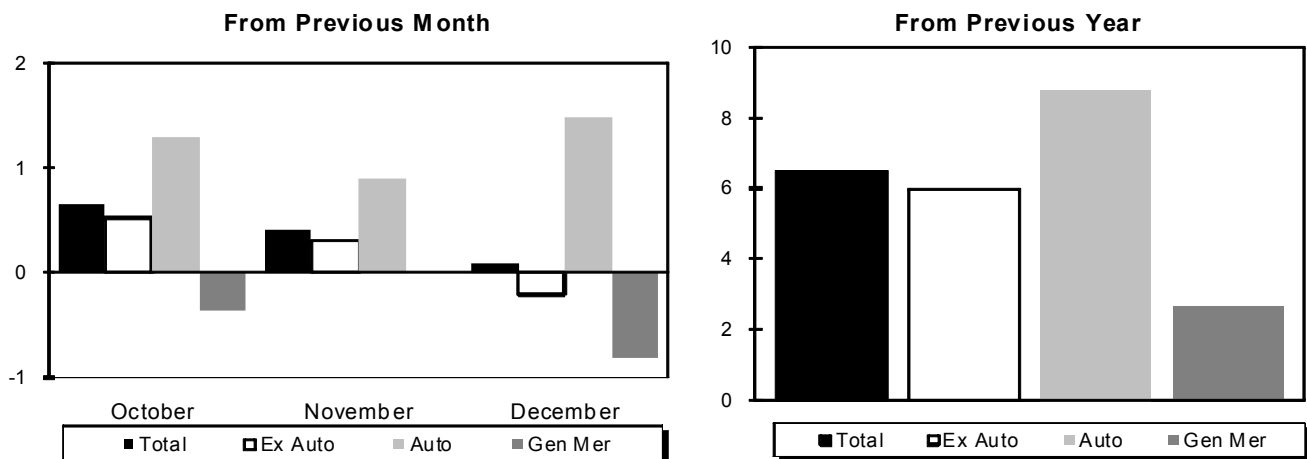
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$400.6 billion, an increase of 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* from the previous month and 6.5 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) above December 2010. Total sales for the 12 months of 2011 were up 7.7 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ) from 2010. Total sales for the October through December 2011 period were up 7.0 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The October to November 2011 percent change was revised from +0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* to +0.4 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ).

Retail trade sales were virtually unchanged ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* from November 2011 and 6.3 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) above last year. Nonstore retailers sales were up 10.6 percent ( $\pm 2.5\%$ ) from December 2010 and gasoline stations sales were up 8.9 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) 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 5,000 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 65% 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 14, 2012 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](http://www.census.gov/timeseries)>. 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>				
		12 Month Total		2011			2010		2011			2010	
		2011	% Chg. 2010	Dec. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	4,691,339	7.7	461,167	398,748	387,300	434,288	372,533	400,614	400,268	398,645	376,208	373,952
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	3,873,476	7.3	390,987	334,676	321,176	369,616	313,615	328,741	329,445	328,451	310,161	308,550
	Retail .....	4,197,152	7.9	417,675	358,774	344,988	394,780	335,293	357,975	357,923	356,544	336,857	334,586
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b>	(*)	(*)	(*)	107,647	93,983	138,743	104,184	(*)	98,898	98,850	95,173	96,052
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	817,863	9.9	70,180	64,072	66,124	64,672	58,918	71,873	70,823	70,194	66,047	65,402
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	736,874	10.5	63,689	57,359	59,154	58,278	52,523	65,055	63,945	63,334	59,407	58,816
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	48,564	49,844	49,626	43,652	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,713	6,970	6,394	6,395	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	89,943	1.9	9,265	8,228	7,207	8,762	7,872	7,702	7,626	7,578	7,296	7,296
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,233	3,823	4,120	4,084	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,995	3,384	4,642	3,788	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	100,918	0.4	13,061	9,993	7,641	13,126	9,609	8,300	8,640	8,595	8,304	8,319
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,567	5,807	10,190	7,477	(*)	6,501	6,584	6,421	6,429
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,426	1,834	2,936	2,132	(*)	2,139	2,011	1,883	1,890
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	300,182	5.7	23,386	24,701	25,679	22,339	23,603	25,879	25,476	25,725	24,459	24,255
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,314	20,980	18,306	19,442	(*)	20,457	20,650	19,769	19,559
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	615,452	5.5	57,010	51,861	51,317	53,986	49,199	51,826	51,905	51,949	49,404	49,571
4451	Grocery stores .....	551,454	5.7	49,386	46,328	45,988	46,889	43,923	46,372	46,467	46,547	44,277	44,367
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,812	3,654	4,772	3,608	(*)	3,759	3,717	3,486	3,565
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	274,897	4.5	25,746	22,664	22,821	25,129	22,075	23,257	23,127	23,145	22,557	22,457
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,996	19,161	20,910	18,659	(*)	19,266	19,316	18,906	18,905
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	533,559	17.7	43,080	42,823	44,992	39,434	37,515	44,782	45,508	45,082	41,120	39,698
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	226,520	5.9	30,848	20,767	18,087	28,586	20,024	19,182	19,051	18,968	18,098	18,404
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	760	735	1,057	715	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,456	3,114	4,442	3,396	(*)	3,191	3,171	3,135	3,147
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,620	7,232	11,409	8,460	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,335	2,139	2,981	2,232	(*)	2,328	2,290	2,241	2,239
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	88,811	5.1	12,257	7,720	6,390	11,890	7,534	7,433	7,402	7,509	7,228	7,258
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	630,889	3.5	74,132	57,908	51,528	72,404	56,136	52,727	53,162	53,163	51,356	51,785
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	184,171	-1.1	26,424	18,087	14,358	26,784	18,532	15,219	15,243	15,239	15,370	15,812
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,439	14,629	27,161	18,822	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,821	37,170	45,620	37,604	(*)	37,919	37,924	35,986	35,973
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,613	32,564	39,488	32,747	(*)	33,154	33,229	31,590	31,488
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,208	4,606	6,132	4,857	(*)	4,765	4,695	4,396	4,485
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	121,111	8.1	11,999	10,121	10,507	11,240	9,437	10,277	10,323	10,337	9,579	9,577
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	397,007	12.5	46,711	37,916	32,695	43,212	33,371	34,737	34,880	34,299	31,409	30,564
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,373	24,858	34,016	26,200	(*)	26,534	26,222	23,921	23,604
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	494,187	6.1	43,492	39,974	42,312	39,508	37,240	42,639	42,345	42,101	39,351	39,366

(\*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

(NA) Not available (S) Suppressed (a) Advance estimate (p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(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-12 ARIMA 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>					
		Dec. 2011 Advance from --		Nov. 2011 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2011 through Dec. 2011 from --	
		Nov. 2011 (p)	Dec. 2010 (r)	Oct. 2011 (r)	Nov. 2010 (r)	Jul. 2011 through Sep. 2011	Oct. 2010 through Dec. 2010
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	0.1	6.5	0.4	7.0	1.9	7.0
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ....	-0.2	6.0	0.3	6.8	1.2	6.7
	Retail .....	0.0	6.3	0.4	7.0	1.8	6.9
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.5	8.8	0.9	8.3	5.1	8.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.7	9.5	1.0	8.7	5.7	9.0
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	1.0	5.6	0.6	4.5	1.8	4.8
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	-3.9	0.0	0.5	3.9	1.3	2.1
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	1.6	5.8	-1.0	5.0	1.9	5.4
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	-0.2	4.9	-0.1	4.7	0.5	5.1
4451	Grocery stores .....	-0.2	4.7	-0.2	4.7	0.3	5.1
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	0.6	3.1	-0.1	3.0	0.5	3.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	-1.6	8.9	0.9	14.6	0.3	13.0
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	0.7	6.0	0.4	3.5	0.3	4.8
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	0.4	2.8	-1.4	2.0	-0.4	3.5
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	-0.8	2.7	0.0	2.7	0.1	3.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.2	-1.0	0.0	-3.6	-0.9	-1.7
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	-0.4	7.3	-0.1	7.8	0.2	7.1
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	-0.4	10.6	1.7	14.1	5.0	12.7
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ....</b>	0.7	8.4	0.6	7.6	2.6	7.8

(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

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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  $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$  percent or  $\pm 1.5$  percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 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  $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$  (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. 2011**

(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>						
	total .....	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	2.4	1.0	0.5	1.3	0.2	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.5	1.1	0.6	1.5	0.1	0.6
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	3.1	1.5	0.8	1.7	0.1	0.4
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	1.5	0.6	0.4	0.9	-0.2	0.4
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;....</b>						
	<b>supplies dealers.....</b>	3.5	1.7	1.1	1.6	0.0	0.3
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	1.8	0.4	0.4	1.1	0.0	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	2.4	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.5
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	<b>stores .....</b>	2.6	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.1	0.4
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	<b>music stores.....</b>	3.9	1.7	1.3	2.2	0.3	0.7
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	4.0	2.4	1.3	3.0	0.4	0.9
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	2.2	1.1	0.8	1.5	0.2	0.4
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.0	0.8	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.4

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading-day differences. 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.