

# Wholesale trade, January 2018

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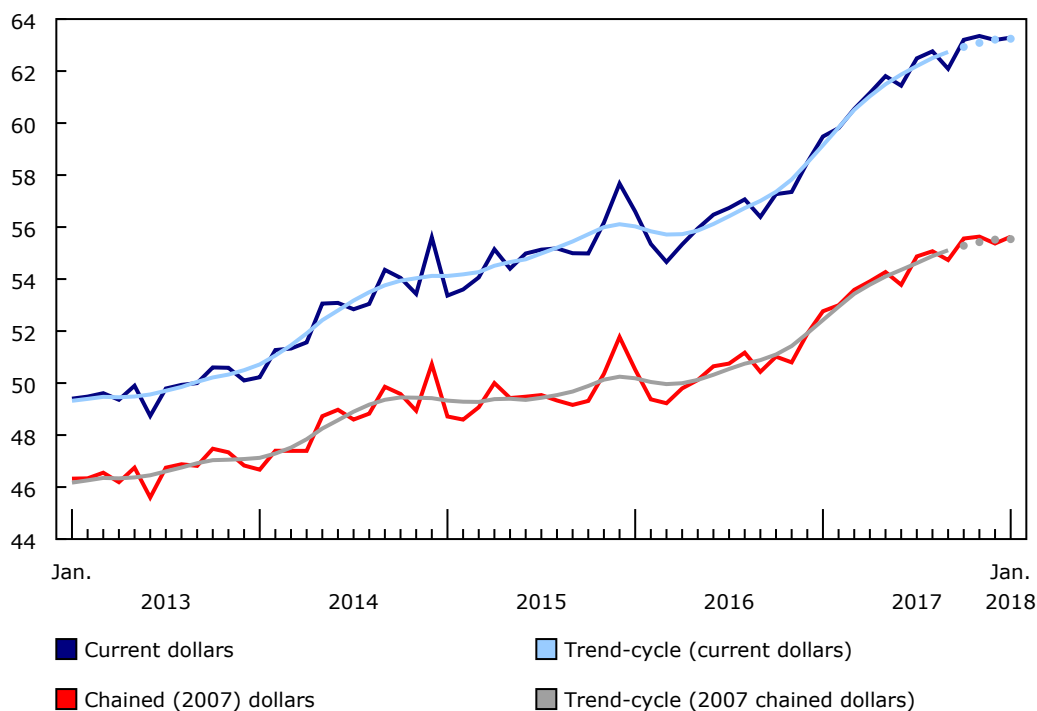
Wholesale sales edged up 0.1% to \$63.3 billion in January. Sales were up in four of seven subsectors, accounting for 66% of total wholesale sales.

Increases in the food, beverage and tobacco and the machinery, equipment and supplies subsectors were almost completely offset by declines in the building material and supplies and the motor vehicle and parts subsectors.

In volume terms, wholesale sales increased 0.5%.

## Chart 1 Wholesale sales increase in January

billions of dollars



Source(s): CANSIM tables 081-0011 and 081-0015.

### Increase attributable to higher sales in four of seven subsectors

The food, beverage and tobacco subsector rose 3.1% to \$12.3 billion in January, following a 1.8% decline in December. This was the largest monthly dollar increase since May 2016. Sales were up in two of three industries, led by the food industry (+3.6%).

Sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector were up 1.6% to \$13.1 billion, mainly on the strength of higher sales in the other machinery, equipment and supplies industry (+8.9%). This subsector recorded the largest year-over-year increase of all subsectors, up 13.4% from January 2017.



Following two months of declines, sales in the personal and household goods subsector rose 0.8% in January to \$8.7 billion. Sales were up in three of six industries, led by the home entertainment and household appliance (+12.7%) and the pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies (+1.3%) industries.

Sales in the building material and supplies subsector fell 4.0% to \$8.9 billion, the first decline since August 2017. Two of three industries were down, led by the metal service centres industry (-15.3%). The motor vehicle and parts subsector also declined in January (-1.6% to \$11.6 billion), the second consecutive monthly decline and the lowest level since June 2017.

### **Sales up in five provinces, led by British Columbia and Ontario**

Sales in British Columbia rose for the third time in four months, up 1.4% to \$6.7 billion in January. Four of seven subsectors had higher sales, led by the motor vehicle and parts (+7.2%), miscellaneous (+6.1%) and machinery, equipment and supplies (+4.5%) subsectors. The motor vehicle and parts subsector rose to \$849 million in January, the first gain in three months and the largest monthly dollar increase since August 2016.

Sales in Ontario rose 0.2% to \$32.6 billion in January, on the strength of higher sales in the food, beverage and tobacco (+5.1%) and the personal and household goods (+4.3%) subsectors. The food, beverage and tobacco subsector increased for a second time in three months to \$5.4 billion, while the personal and household goods subsector rose for the first time in three months to \$4.9 billion.

After declining 1.9% in November and 1.1% in December, sales in Manitoba rose 1.6% to \$1.7 billion in January on the strength of higher sales in six of seven subsectors. The miscellaneous (+3.3%), food, beverage and tobacco (+1.7%) and farm products (+5.2%) subsectors led the gain in January.

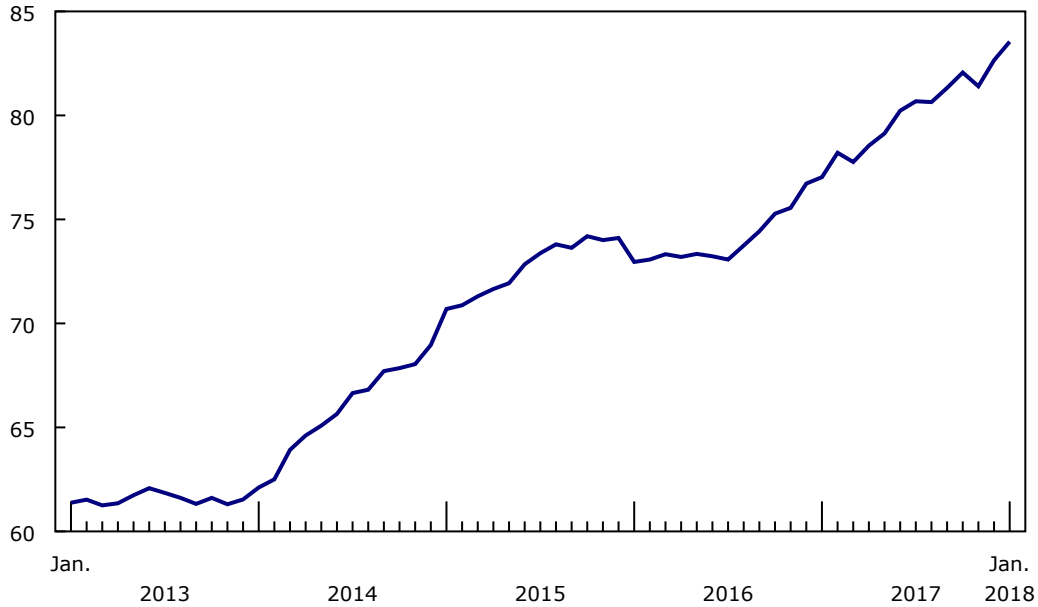
Saskatchewan recorded a third consecutive decrease in sales, down 3.3% to \$2.2 billion in January. Five of seven subsectors declined, with the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (-11.0%) accounting for the majority of the drop. The decline for this subsector follows a 13.1% increase in the previous month.

### **Wholesale inventories increase for the second consecutive month**

Wholesale inventories rose for the second consecutive month, up 1.1% to a record \$83.5 billion in January. Five of seven subsectors posted increases, representing 73% of total wholesale inventories.

**Chart 2  
Inventories up in January**

billions of dollars



Source(s): CANSIM table [081-0012](#).

In dollar terms, the personal and household goods subsector (+2.7%) posted the largest gain, following a 2.4% decline in December. The personal goods (+15.6%) and the pharmaceutical and pharmacy supplies (+2.0%) industries contributed the most to the upturn.

Inventories grew 1.4% in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector, a fourth increase in five months. The majority of the rise was driven by the other machinery (+9.1%) and farm, lawn and garden (+2.5%) industries.

Higher inventories in the motor vehicle and parts subsector (+2.4%) were led by increased stock in the motor vehicle industry (+2.8%).

The inventory-to-sales ratio rose from 1.31 in December to 1.32 in January. This ratio is a measure of the time in months required to exhaust inventories if sales were to remain at their current level.

**Note to readers**

All data in this release are seasonally adjusted and expressed in current dollars, unless otherwise noted. For information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

Total wholesale sales expressed in volume are calculated by deflating current dollar values using relevant price indexes. The wholesale sales series in chained (2007) dollars is a chained Fisher volume index with 2007 as the reference year. For more information, see [Sales in volume for Wholesale Trade](#).

The Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey covers all industries within the wholesale trade sector as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), with the exception of oilseed and grain merchant wholesalers (NAICS 41112), petroleum and petroleum products merchant wholesalers (NAICS 412) and business-to-business electronic markets, and agents and brokers (NAICS 419).

For information on trend-cycle data, see the [StatCan Blog](#) and [Trend-cycle estimates – Frequently asked questions](#).

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**Real-time CANSIM tables**

Real-time CANSIM tables 081-8011, 081-8012 and 081-8015 will be updated on April 9. For more information, consult the document [Real-time CANSIM tables](#).

**Next release**

Wholesale trade data for February will be released on April 23.

**Table 1**  
**Wholesale merchants' sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted**

	January 2017	December 2017 <sup>r</sup>	January 2018 <sup>p</sup>	December 2017 to January 2018	January 2017 to January 2018
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)</b>	<b>59,483</b>	<b>63,195</b>	<b>63,286</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>Total, wholesale sales (2007 chained dollars)</b>	<b>52,763</b>	<b>55,368</b>	<b>55,628</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>5.4</b>
<b>Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts</b>	<b>47,854</b>	<b>51,435</b>	<b>51,714</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>
Farm product	728	768	756	-1.6	3.8
Food, beverage and tobacco	11,440	11,982	12,348	3.1	7.9
Food	10,355	10,764	11,146	3.6	7.6
Beverage	588	626	632	0.9	7.6
Cigarette and tobacco product	498	592	570	-3.7	14.5
Personal and household goods	8,266	8,595	8,663	0.8	4.8
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,169	1,232	1,183	-4.0	1.1
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	817	755	851	12.7	4.1
Home furnishings	567	606	565	-6.9	-0.4
Personal goods	681	804	819	1.8	20.3
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	4,297	4,373	4,428	1.3	3.0
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	735	824	818	-0.7	11.3
Motor vehicle and parts	11,628	11,760	11,572	-1.6	-0.5
Motor vehicle	9,382	9,517	9,287	-2.4	-1.0
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,194	2,184	2,226	1.9	1.5
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	52	58	59	1.7	14.0
Building material and supplies	8,147	9,269	8,902	-4.0	9.3
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	2,577	2,817	2,870	1.9	11.4
Metal service centres	1,480	1,784	1,512	-15.3	2.1
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	4,089	4,668	4,521	-3.1	10.6
Machinery, equipment and supplies	11,529	12,871	13,075	1.6	13.4
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	1,495	1,697	1,640	-3.4	9.7
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	3,649	4,432	4,486	1.2	22.9
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	3,399	3,832	3,778	-1.4	11.1
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	2,986	2,910	3,170	8.9	6.2
Miscellaneous	7,744	7,950	7,969	0.2	2.9
Recyclable material	805	945	995	5.3	23.5
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	973	1,019	1,063	4.3	9.2
Agricultural supplies	2,179	2,212	2,237	1.1	2.7
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,473	1,546	1,557	0.7	5.7
Other miscellaneous	2,313	2,228	2,118	-5.0	-8.5

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> preliminary

**Note(s):** Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

**Source(s):** CANSIM tables [081-0011](#) and [081-0015](#).

**Table 2**  
**Wholesale merchants' sales by province and territory – Seasonally adjusted**

	January 2017	December 2017 <sup>r</sup>	January 2018 <sup>p</sup>	December 2017 to January 2018	January 2017 to January 2018
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Canada</b>	<b>59,483</b>	<b>63,195</b>	<b>63,286</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>6.4</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	378	423	396	-6.4	4.8
Prince Edward Island	74	75	77	2.8	3.6
Nova Scotia	859	816	813	-0.3	-5.4
New Brunswick	512	555	569	2.6	11.2
Quebec	10,733	11,414	11,437	0.2	6.6
Ontario	30,646	32,527	32,576	0.2	6.3
Manitoba	1,662	1,636	1,662	1.6	0.0
Saskatchewan	2,138	2,260	2,185	-3.3	2.2
Alberta	6,216	6,857	6,847	-0.1	10.1
British Columbia	6,174	6,565	6,657	1.4	7.8
Yukon	22	13	13	-3.0	-43.4
Northwest Territories	61	44	43	-1.3	-29.4
Nunavut	7	12	12	2.7	64.9

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> preliminary

**Note(s):** Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

**Source(s):** CANSIM table [081-0011](#).

**Table 3**  
**Wholesale merchants' inventories by industry – Seasonally adjusted**

	January 2017	December 2017 <sup>r</sup>	January 2018 <sup>p</sup>	December 2017 to January 2018	January 2017 to January 2018
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Total, wholesale inventories</b>	<b>77,030</b>	<b>82,652</b>	<b>83,542</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>8.5</b>
Farm product	206	202	215	6.8	4.7
Food, beverage and tobacco	7,812	8,854	8,815	-0.4	12.8
Food	7,121	8,113	8,109	-0.0	13.9
Beverage	432	414	430	4.0	-0.5
Cigarette and tobacco product	259	327	276	-15.5	6.6
Personal and household goods	13,753	13,781	14,158	2.7	2.9
Textile, clothing and footwear	3,118	3,159 <sup>E</sup>	3,142	-0.5	0.8
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	968	1,068	1,108	3.7	14.4
Home furnishings	1,164	1,314	1,302	-1.0	11.9
Personal goods	1,775 <sup>E</sup>	1,703	1,969 <sup>E</sup>	15.6	10.9
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	5,817	5,579	5,689	2.0	-2.2
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	912	957	948	-0.9	4.0
Motor vehicle and parts	11,971	12,305	12,606	2.4	5.3
Motor vehicle	6,823	7,253	7,455	2.8	9.3
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	5,070	4,972	5,069	2.0	-0.0
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	78	80	81	1.0	3.7
Building material and supplies	12,289	13,996	13,845	-1.1	12.7
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	3,874	4,143	4,148	0.1	7.1
Metal service centres	3,045	3,860	3,709	-3.9	21.8
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	5,370	5,994	5,988	-0.1	11.5
Machinery, equipment and supplies	21,969	23,543	23,883	1.4	8.7
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	5,719	6,183	6,340	2.5	10.9
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	9,435	10,619	10,275	-3.2	8.9
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	2,318	2,261	2,380	5.2	2.6
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	4,497	4,480	4,888	9.1	8.7
Miscellaneous	9,031	9,972	10,021	0.5	11.0
Recyclable material	784 <sup>E</sup>	841	850 <sup>E</sup>	1.1	8.5
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	758	757	787	3.9	3.8
Agricultural supplies	3,430	3,954	4,094	3.5	19.4
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,398	1,583	1,478	-6.6	5.7
Other miscellaneous	2,661	2,837	2,812	-0.9	5.7

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> preliminary

<sup>E</sup> use with caution

**Note(s):** Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

**Source(s):** CANSIM table [081-0012](#).

**Available in CANSIM: tables [081-0011](#), [081-0012](#) and [081-0015](#).**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2401](#).**

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact John Burton (613-862-4878; [john.burton@canada.ca](mailto:john.burton@canada.ca)), Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade Division.