

# Retail trade, March 2018

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Friday, May 18, 2018

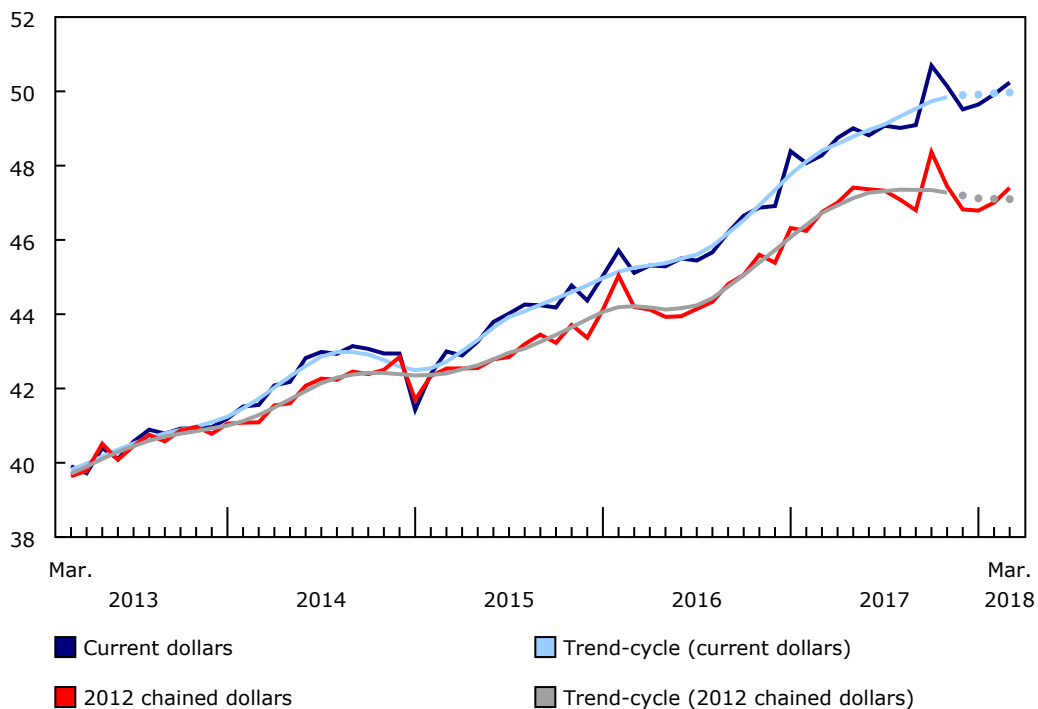
Retail sales increased for the third consecutive month in March, rising 0.6% to \$50.2 billion. Higher sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers more than offset lower sales at food and beverage stores and gasoline stations.

Sales were up in 6 of 11 subsectors, representing 53% of retail trade. Excluding sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers, retail sales were down 0.2% in March.

After removing the effects of price changes, retail sales in volume terms increased 0.8%.

**Chart 1**  
**Retail sales increase in March**

billions of dollars



Source(s): CANSIM tables 080-0020 and 080-0027.

## Retail sales increase on the strength of higher sales at new car dealers

Following a 2.0% increase in sales in February, motor vehicle and parts dealers (+3.0%) were again the largest contributor in dollar terms to the increase in March. New car dealers (+3.3%) accounted for the majority of the gain, although all store types in this subsector reported increases.

Clothing and clothing accessories stores (+2.5%) posted higher sales in March, following a decrease in February. For the first time since November 2017, sales increased at all store types in this subsector.

Receipts at general merchandise stores (+1.0%) rose for the fifth time in six months.



Sales at food and beverage stores (-1.2%) declined for the third consecutive month, largely due to lower sales at supermarkets and other grocery stores.

Gasoline stations (-1.9%) posted a decline for the second month in a row. Sales at gasoline stations in volume terms decreased 2.5% amidst higher gasoline prices.

### **Sales up in seven provinces**

Higher sales were reported in seven provinces, accounting for 93% of retail trade. Quebec (+1.3%) and Ontario (+0.6%) were the main contributors to the increase in dollar terms. The census metropolitan areas (CMAs) of Toronto (+1.0%) and Montréal (+2.1%) both posted gains.

After three consecutive monthly declines, sales in Manitoba rose 3.2% in March, largely on the strength of higher sales at new car dealers.

Sales in British Columbia increased 0.6%. In the Vancouver CMA (+2.4%), retail sales grew for the first time since October 2017.

### **E-commerce sales by Canadian retailers**

The figures in this section are based on unadjusted (that is, not seasonally adjusted) estimates.

On an unadjusted basis, retail e-commerce sales totalled \$1.3 billion, representing 2.6% of total retail trade. On a year-over-year basis, retail e-commerce increased 11.1%, while total unadjusted retail sales rose 3.4%.

Summary tables of unadjusted data by [industry](#) and by [province and territory](#) are now available.

For information on related indicators, refer to [Latest statistics](#).

## Note to readers

Since the November 2017 release of September data, Laspeyres volume estimates by industry for the Monthly Retail Trade Survey are available under CANSIM table 080-0027. [CANSIM table 080-0024](#) has been discontinued. Volume estimates and indices in CANSIM table 080-0027 have been revised back to 2012, reflecting a change in the classification of the retail commodity survey to the North American Product Classification System.

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](#).

Statistics Canada's retail e-commerce figures include the electronic sales of two distinct types of retailers. The first type do not have a storefront. These businesses are commonly referred to as 'pure-play' Internet retailers and are classified to North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 45411—Electronic Shopping and Mail Order Houses. The second type have a storefront and are commonly referred to as 'brick and mortar' retailers. If the online operations of a brick and mortar retailer are separately managed, they too are classified to NAICS 45411.

Common electronic commerce transactions, such as travel and accommodation bookings, ticket purchases and financial transactions are not included in Canadian retail sales figures. For more information on individual Internet use and e-commerce, consult the most recent release of the [Canadian Internet Use Survey](#) and/or the [Survey of Digital Technology and Internet Use](#).

For more information on retail e-commerce in Canada, see [Retail E-Commerce in Canada](#).

Total retail sales expressed in volume terms are calculated by deflating current dollar values using consumer price indexes. The retail sales series in chained (2012) dollars is a chained Fisher volume index with 2012 as the reference year. For more information, see [Calculation of Volume of Retail Trade Sales](#).

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

### Real-time CANSIM tables

Real-time CANSIM tables 080-8020 and 080-8027 will be updated on May 28. For more information, consult the document [Real-time CANSIM tables](#).

### Next release

Data on retail trade for April will be released on June 22.

**Table 1**  
**Retail sales by province, territory and census metropolitan area – Seasonally adjusted**

	March 2017	February 2018 <sup>r</sup>	March 2018 <sup>p</sup>	February to March 2018	March 2017 to March 2018
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Canada</b>	<b>48,279</b>	<b>49,917</b>	<b>50,238</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>4.1</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	759	761	763	0.3	0.5
Prince Edward Island	198	203	202	-0.5	2.1
Nova Scotia	1,303	1,369	1,333	-2.6	2.3
New Brunswick	1,050	1,059	1,085	2.5	3.4
Quebec	10,232	10,767	10,902	1.3	6.5
Montréal	4,598	4,911	5,013	2.1	9.0
Ontario	17,742	18,447	18,562	0.6	4.6
Toronto	7,459	7,562	7,640	1.0	2.4
Manitoba	1,696	1,638	1,690	3.2	-0.3
Saskatchewan	1,712	1,633	1,603	-1.8	-6.4
Alberta	6,589	6,733	6,751	0.3	2.5
British Columbia	6,834	7,137	7,182	0.6	5.1
Vancouver	3,265	3,353	3,433	2.4	5.1
Yukon	65	67	64	-3.4	-0.9
Northwest Territories	63	65	63	-3.1	-0.1
Nunavut	35	38	37	-0.8	6.5

<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 table [080-0020](#).

**Table 2**  
**Retail sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted**

	March 2017	February 2018 <sup>r</sup>	March 2018 <sup>p</sup>	February to March 2018	March 2017 to March 2018
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Total retail trade (current dollars)</b>	<b>48,279</b>	<b>49,917</b>	<b>50,238</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Total retail trade (2012 chained dollars)</b>	<b>46,750</b>	<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,402</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers</b>	<b>35,030</b>	<b>36,425</b>	<b>36,342</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations</b>	<b>30,034</b>	<b>30,905</b>	<b>30,926</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	13,249	13,492	13,897	3.0	4.9
New car dealers	10,796	10,900	11,264	3.3	4.3
Used car dealers	869	925	939	1.5	8.1
Other motor vehicle dealers	823	853	878	3.0	6.7
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	761	815	815	0.0	7.2
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,556	1,530	1,590	3.9	2.2
Furniture stores	956	937	978	4.3	2.3
Home furnishings stores	600	593	612	3.1	2.0
Electronics and appliance stores	1,264	1,405	1,371	-2.4	8.5
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	2,895	3,167	3,154	-0.4	8.9
Food and beverage stores	10,036	10,139	10,018	-1.2	-0.2
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	6,950	6,886	6,787	-1.4	-2.3
Convenience stores	642	665	662	-0.5	3.1
Specialty food stores	585	648	654	1.0	11.7
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,859	1,940	1,915	-1.3	3.0
Health and personal care stores	3,852	3,883	3,874	-0.2	0.6
Gasoline stations	4,997	5,519	5,416	-1.9	8.4
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,658	2,761	2,831	2.5	6.5
Clothing stores	2,051	2,142	2,180	1.8	6.3
Shoe stores	327	324	344	6.1	5.3
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	280	295	307	4.0	9.5
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	1,058	1,061	1,063	0.3	0.5
General merchandise stores	5,566	5,702	5,758	1.0	3.4
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,149	1,259	1,267	0.7	10.3

<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 [080-0020](#) and [080-0027](#).

**Table 3**  
**Retail e-commerce sales, unadjusted**

	March 2017	February 2018	March 2018	March 2018
	thousands of dollars			year-over-year % change
<b>Retail trade sales (44-453)</b>	<b>46,588,809</b>	<b>39,596,355</b>	<b>48,088,644</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses sales (45411)	823,797	812,829	935,511	13.6
Retail e-commerce <sup>1</sup>	1,141,635	1,117,596	1,268,231	11.1
Retail e-commerce share of total retail trade (%)	2.41	2.77	2.59	

1. Retail e-commerce includes e-sales from both store retailers included in NAICS 44-453 and non-store retailers included in electronic shopping and mail order houses (NAICS 45411).

**Note(s):** For more information on retail e-commerce, see [Retail E-Commerce in Canada](#).

**Source(s):** CANSIM table [080-0033](#).

**Available in CANSIM: tables [080-0020](#), [080-0027](#) and [080-0033](#).**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [2406](#) and [2408](#).**

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 Annie Xie (613-951-0385; [annie.xie@canada.ca](mailto:annie.xie@canada.ca)), Retail and Service Industries Division.