

Annual wholesale trade, 2017

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Wholesalers across Canada buy and sell a wide variety of commodities, ranging from petroleum products, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, wood products and clothing to a large selection of food products.

The Annual Wholesale Trade Survey measures the sales and costs of goods sold for these and other products, classifying them according to the North American Product Classification System.

In 2017, Canadian wholesalers sold over \$1.0 trillion worth of commodities. Compared with 2016, sales increased 10.9%, driven primarily by sales of petroleum and petroleum products.

Sales were up in over two-thirds of the commodity subclasses in 2017 compared with 2016.

The cost of goods sold by wholesalers, which represents the cost of acquiring goods for resale, increased 11.5% to \$881.1 billion in 2017. The biggest contributor to the increase in cost of goods sold was the petroleum and petroleum products subclass, up \$57.3 billion or 27.7% from 2016 to \$264.3 billion in 2017.

In 2017, two-thirds of the commodity subclasses saw their cost of goods sold increase while the rest reported declines.

The top five commodity subclasses accounted for 49.3% of all sales in 2017, up from 46.2% in 2016. This increase was driven primarily by growth in petroleum and petroleum products, which saw their share of total sales increase from 22.8% in 2016 to 26.4% in 2017.

Growth in petroleum and petroleum products sales in 2017 was driven by a combination of higher prices and increased production as the petroleum industry recovered from the forest fires in Fort McMurray.

Excluding petroleum and petroleum products, total sales increased 5.8% in 2017 compared with 2016, while cost of goods sold also increased by 5.8%.

In 2017, the second largest commodity subclass in dollar terms was automobiles, light trucks and vans, comprising an 8.9% share of total sales, a slight decrease from 9.0% in 2016. Sales in this subclass rose 9.3% to \$91.7 billion, while the cost of goods sold rose 9.9% to \$84.9 billion.

In dollar terms, the second biggest contributor to sales growth was the lumber, plywood, and millwork subclass, where sales rose \$7.8 billion in 2017 to \$26.3 billion, while the cost of goods sold increased by \$6.4 billion to \$22.9 billion.



Table 1
Wholesale trade by commodity, according to the North American Product Classification System

	Sales		Cost of good sold	
	2016	2017	2016	2017
millions of dollars				
Wholesale services (except commissions)	919,686	1,020,621	783,471	873,947
Farm products	41,544	42,202	37,514	38,166
Petroleum and petroleum products	212,324	272,010	207,069	264,344
Food, beverages, and tobacco products	130,745	133,330	106,437	108,374
Personal and household goods	106,794	111,447	81,653	85,048
Motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts and accessories	127,848	136,312	112,444	121,181
Building materials and supplies	88,221	94,813	69,413	74,427
Machinery, equipment and supplies	152,432	165,309	122,198	130,648
Intermediate products	37,552	42,322	29,633	33,973
Other goods	22,227	22,876	17,109	17,787
Wholesale trade commissions	10,066	10,744	6,387	7,126

Source(s): Tables [20-10-0014-01](#) and [20-10-0015-01](#).

Note to readers

With this release, data are now available for reference years 2014 to 2017.

Data for 2014 to 2016 are based on the [2012 North American Product Classification System \(NAPCS\)](#) and are available through [table 20-10-0014-01](#).

Data for 2017 are based on the [2017 NAPCS](#) and are available through [table 20-10-0015-01](#).

Available tables: [20-10-0014-01](#) and [20-10-0015-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2445](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).