

# Wholesale trade, January 2019

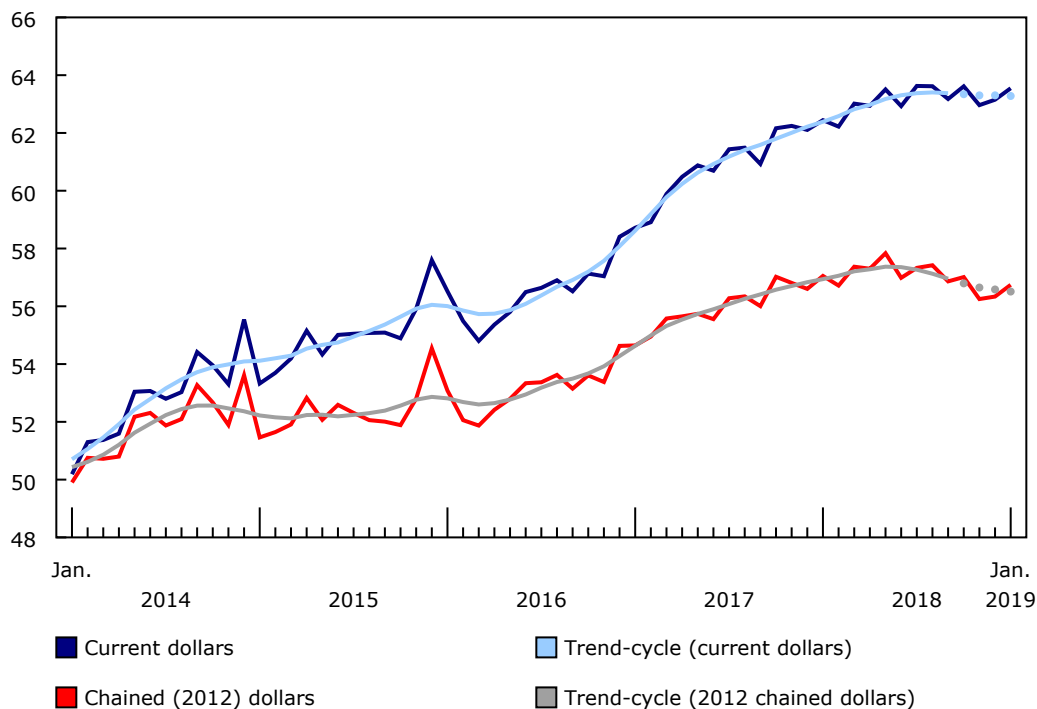
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, March 21, 2019

Wholesale sales rose 0.6% to \$63.5 billion in January, a second consecutive monthly gain. Sales were up in five of seven subsectors, representing 70% of total wholesale sales. The machinery, equipment and supplies and the personal and household goods subsectors led the gains.

In volume terms, wholesale sales increased 0.7%.

**Chart 1**  
**Wholesale sales increase in January**

billions of dollars



Source(s): Tables [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0003-01](#).

## Increase in January attributable to higher sales in five of seven subsectors

Following two consecutive monthly declines, sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector rose 1.9% to \$13.3 billion. Higher sales in the computer and communications equipment and supplies industry (+8.5%) in January offset much of the industry's decline in December (-8.7%), while in volume terms, sales were up 7.9% in January following an 8.9% decline in December.

The personal and household goods subsector rose for the first time in three months, up 2.5% to \$8.9 billion. Sales were up in four of six industries, led by the pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies industry (+2.8%), which accounted for 53% of sales within the subsector.

Sales in the building material and supplies subsector rose for the second consecutive month, up 2.0% to \$9.4 billion in January. Sales were up in all three industries, led by the lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies industry (+3.3%).



The motor vehicle and parts subsector recorded the largest decline in dollar terms in January, down 2.1% to \$10.6 billion. The decline was attributable to lower sales in the motor vehicle industry (-4.3%), offsetting the gains in the other two industries.

Sales in the miscellaneous subsector fell for the second time in six months, down 1.2% to \$8.5 billion in January. Sales declined in two of five industries, with the agricultural supplies industry contributing the most in dollar terms, down 5.5% to \$2.5 billion. In volume terms, the miscellaneous subsector declined 0.5% with the agricultural supplies industry falling 5.0%.

### **Higher sales in seven provinces**

Wholesale sales rose in seven provinces in January, representing 93% of total wholesale sales. In dollar terms, Quebec and Ontario accounted for most of the gain.

Sales in Quebec rose 2.7% to \$11.9 billion, led by higher sales in all subsectors. The personal and household goods subsector (+6.4%) contributed the most to the gain, following three consecutive monthly declines. The building material and supplies subsector (+3.2%) also contributed to higher sales in Quebec with its second consecutive monthly gain.

Following two consecutive monthly declines, sales in Ontario increased 0.8% to \$32.4 billion. Sales were up in four of seven subsectors, led by the miscellaneous (+5.3%) and the machinery, equipment and supplies (+2.4%) subsectors.

In Alberta, sales increased 1.8% to \$6.9 billion, its second gain in six months. Higher sales in the motor vehicle and parts subsector (+7.1%) contributed the most to the increase.

In New Brunswick, sales rose 7.7% to \$579 million, more than offsetting the 2.5% decline in December. The food, beverage and tobacco subsector (+14.5%), which contributed the most to the decline in December (-8.6%), led the gains in January.

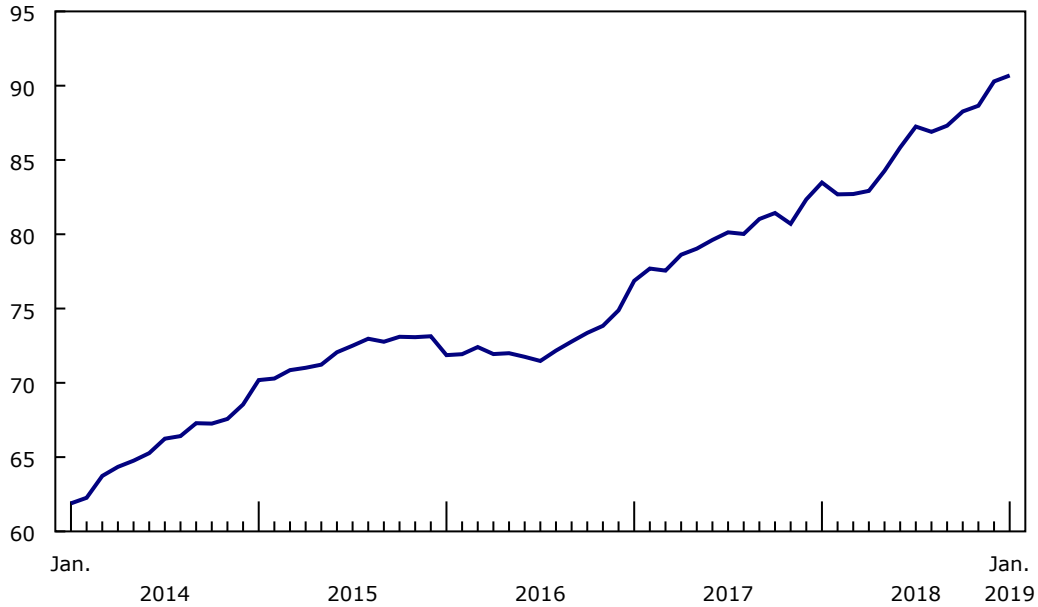
Sales in Saskatchewan were down 10.7% to \$2.3 billion, following two consecutive monthly gains. Overall, six of seven subsectors declined, with the miscellaneous subsector (-20.1%) accounting for the majority of the decrease after reaching its highest level on record in December.

### **Inventories rise in January**

Wholesale inventories increased for the fifth consecutive month, up 0.4% to \$90.7 billion in January. Gains were reported in four of seven subsectors, representing about 49% of total wholesale inventories.

**Chart 2**  
**Inventories rise in January**

billions of dollars



Source(s): Table [20-10-0076-01](#).

In dollar terms, wholesale inventories in the motor vehicle and parts subsector (+2.8%) posted the largest monthly gain, its fourth consecutive monthly increase. Two of the three industries within the subsector increased in January.

Inventories in the personal and household goods subsector (+2.1%) grew for the second consecutive month. Overall, four of six industries increased, with the pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies industry contributing the most to the gain.

Following three consecutive monthly increases, inventories in the food, beverage and tobacco subsector (-2.1%) posted the largest decrease in dollar terms. All industries were down, with the food industry contributing the most to the decline.

The inventory-to-sales ratio was unchanged at 1.43 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.

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

	January 2018	December 2018 <sup>r</sup>	January 2019 <sup>p</sup>	December 2018 to January 2019	January 2018 to January 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)</b>	<b>62,443</b>	<b>63,151</b>	<b>63,547</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>Total, wholesale sales (2012 chained dollars)</b>	<b>57,051</b>	<b>56,337</b>	<b>56,742</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>-0.5</b>
<b>Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts</b>	<b>50,969</b>	<b>52,375</b>	<b>52,996</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Farm product	756	825	859	4.2	13.7
Food, beverage and tobacco	12,113	11,957	11,989	0.3	-1.0
Food	10,908	10,673	10,707	0.3	-1.8
Beverage	631	631	698	10.7	10.6
Cigarette and tobacco product	573	653	584	-10.6	1.8
Personal and household goods	8,759	8,699	8,918	2.5	1.8
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,110	1,064	1,114	4.6	0.3
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	857	770	807	4.7	-5.9
Home furnishings	633	560	552	-1.4	-12.8
Personal goods	790	860	875	1.8	10.8
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	4,544	4,601	4,729	2.8	4.1
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	825	843	842	-0.2	2.0
Motor vehicle and parts	11,474	10,776	10,551	-2.1	-8.0
Motor vehicle	9,258	8,658	8,289	-4.3	-10.5
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,159	2,058	2,197	6.7	1.7
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	57	60	65	8.1	13.8
Building material and supplies	8,705	9,165	9,351	2.0	7.4
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	2,753	2,814	2,816	0.1	2.3
Metal service centres	1,530	1,830	1,866	2.0	22.0
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	4,422	4,521	4,669	3.3	5.6
Machinery, equipment and supplies	12,672	13,084	13,336	1.9	5.2
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	1,625	1,759	1,768	0.5	8.8
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	4,094	4,386	4,272	-2.6	4.3
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	3,771	3,597	3,902	8.5	3.5
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	3,182	3,342	3,394	1.6	6.7
Miscellaneous	7,963	8,645	8,542	-1.2	7.3
Recyclable material	1,008	1,084	983	-9.3	-2.5
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,072	1,056	1,091	3.3	1.8
Agricultural supplies	2,169	2,625	2,482	-5.5	14.4
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,451	1,437	1,533	6.7	5.7
Other miscellaneous	2,263	2,442	2,454	0.5	8.4

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> preliminary

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

**Source(s):** Tables [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0003-01](#).

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

	January 2018	December 2018 <sup>r</sup>	January 2019 <sup>p</sup>	December 2018 to January 2019	January 2018 to January 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Canada</b>	<b>62,443</b>	<b>63,151</b>	<b>63,547</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.8</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	358	394	375	-4.9	4.7
Prince Edward Island	70	77	80	3.7	13.5
Nova Scotia	824	865	870	0.5	5.5
New Brunswick	543	538	579	7.7	6.6
Quebec	11,428	11,587	11,898	2.7	4.1
Ontario	32,172	32,127	32,398	0.8	0.7
Manitoba	1,648	1,728	1,647	-4.7	-0.1
Saskatchewan	2,088	2,533	2,263	-10.7	8.4
Alberta	6,697	6,732	6,855	1.8	2.4
British Columbia	6,541	6,491	6,503	0.2	-0.6
Yukon	9	14	12	-18.9	24.0
Northwest Territories	51	52	58	10.4	12.9
Nunavut	13	12	10	-14.9	-20.3

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> preliminary

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

**Source(s):** Table [20-10-0074-01](#).

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

	January 2018	December 2018 <sup>r</sup>	January 2019 <sup>p</sup>	December 2018 to January 2019	January 2018 to January 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Total, wholesale inventories</b>	<b>83,480</b>	<b>90,287</b>	<b>90,687</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>8.6</b>
Farm product	208	176	198	12.5	-5.2
Food, beverage and tobacco	8,516	9,119	8,926	-2.1	4.8
Food	7,733	8,124	7,999	-1.5	3.4
Beverage	501	626	567	-9.5	13.1
Cigarette and tobacco product	282	369	360	-2.5	27.8
Personal and household goods	13,778	14,994	15,310	2.1	11.1
Textile, clothing and footwear	2,569	2,867	2,824	-1.5	9.9
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	1,097	1,089	1,120	2.9	2.1
Home furnishings	1,378	1,528	1,561	2.1	13.2
Personal goods	1,901 <sup>E</sup>	2,194	2,256	2.8	18.6
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	5,791	6,255	6,508	4.0	12.4
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,040	1,061	1,041	-1.9	0.1
Motor vehicle and parts	12,503	12,742	13,101	2.8	4.8
Motor vehicle	7,373	7,330	7,519	2.6	2.0
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	5,048	5,330	5,503	3.2	9.0
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	82	82	80	-3.2	-2.9
Building material and supplies	13,968	15,354	15,447	0.6	10.6
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	4,025	4,243	4,320	1.8	7.3
Metal service centres	3,876	4,629	4,673	1.0	20.6
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	6,067	6,482	6,453	-0.4	6.4
Machinery, equipment and supplies	24,206	26,450	26,278	-0.6	8.6
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	6,759	7,002	6,952	-0.7	2.9
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	10,347	11,818	11,962	1.2	15.6
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	2,366	2,574	2,500	-2.9	5.6
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	4,734	5,055	4,865	-3.8	2.8
Miscellaneous	10,301	11,452	11,427	-0.2	10.9
Recyclable material	865 <sup>E</sup>	851	889 <sup>E</sup>	4.4	2.7
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	793	894	879	-1.8	10.8
Agricultural supplies	4,359	4,939	4,918	-0.4	12.8
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,371	1,549	1,539	-0.7	12.2
Other miscellaneous	2,913	3,219	3,204	-0.5	10.0

<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):** Table 20-10-0076-01.

On March 15, 2019, Statistics Canada released new data on sales and costs of wholesale commodities sold. Data are now available for specific wholesale commodities, as well as totals at the national level.

With these new data, data users will be able to better understand the types of products sold by Canadian wholesalers from 2014 to 2017. The data release will allow data users to compare the relative importance of various wholesale commodities in terms of sales and costs of goods sold, as well as see the change over time in the relative importance of wholesale commodities.

Analysis of the new data is now available in *The Daily*, while the new data is accessible in two new data tables: 20-10-0014-01 and 20-10-0015-01.

### 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](#).

Effective with the release of the September 2018 wholesale trade estimates on November 21, 2018, wholesale sales estimates disseminated by Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade Division have been converted from a 2007 reference year to a 2012 reference year for its volume and price estimates. Constant price estimates and their associated price index are now using 2012 as their base year. Adopting a new reference year did not affect constant dollars sales estimates growth rates over the period from 2004 to 2011, as it represents a rescaling of the 2007-based data. However, levels and growth rates of the estimates for the period of 2012 to date have been affected by revisions to estimates at current prices and to price indices.

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](#).

### Real-time data tables

Real-time data tables 20-10-0019-01, 20-10-0020-01 and 20-10-0005-01 will be updated on April 1.

### Next release

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

**Available tables:** [20-10-0003-01](#), [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0076-01](#).

**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)), Mining, Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade Division.