

Wholesale trade, April 2019

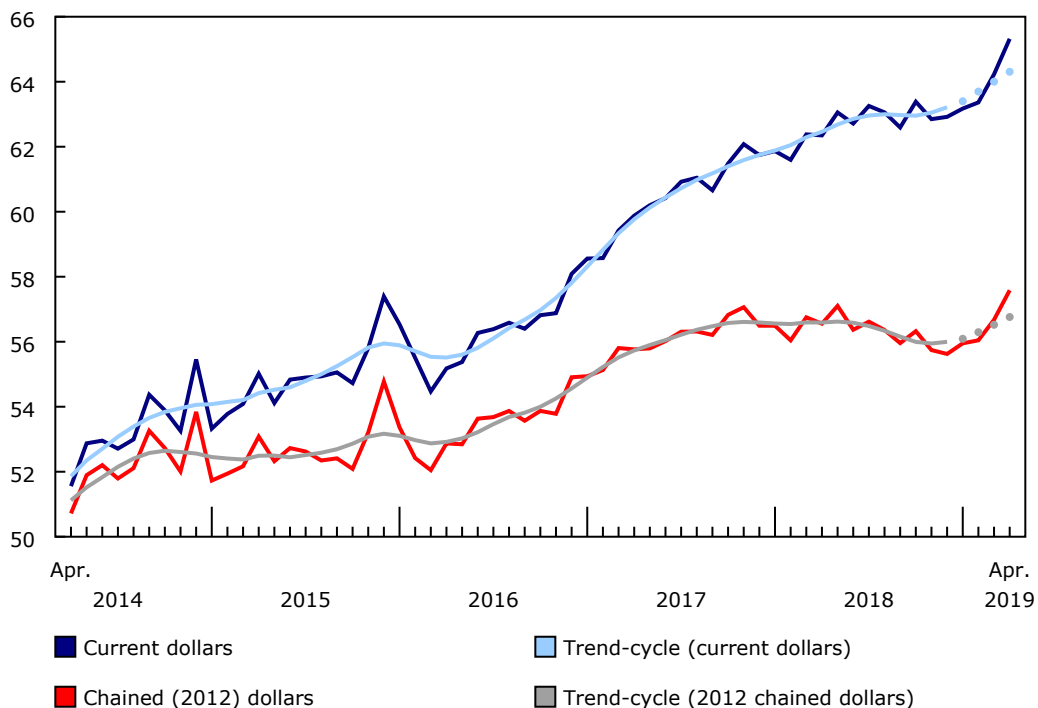
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, June 25, 2019

Wholesale sales increased 1.7% to \$65.3 billion in April, the fifth consecutive monthly increase. Higher sales were recorded in five of seven subsectors accounting for 86% of total wholesale sales. The motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector was the leading contributor to April's gains, followed by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector.

After removing the effects of price changes, wholesale sales increased 1.6% from March to April.

Chart 1
Wholesale sales increase in April

billions of dollars



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

The motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts subsector leads the gains in April

Following a 1.9% decline in March, wholesale sales in the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector increased 3.2% to \$11.8 billion in April—the highest level since November 2017. After trending downward in 2018, sales in the subsector have risen substantially so far this year, with sales in April being 10.9% higher than in January. Most of the increase in April was attributable to the motor vehicle industry (+3.3%), which accounted for 80% of sales in the subsector. In volume terms, sales in the subsector increased 3.5%.

The machinery, equipment and supplies subsector posted a second consecutive increase, as sales were up 2.2% to \$13.9 billion. The construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies industry (+5.4%) contributed the most, followed by the other machinery, equipment and supplies industry (+3.9%). After increasing in March, sales in the computer and communications equipment and supplies industry declined 3.4% in April. In volume terms, sales in the subsector increased 1.9%.



Sales in the personal and household goods subsector rose 3.1% to \$9.3 billion as four of six industries recorded gains, with the pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies industry (+4.0%) increasing the most.

Sales up in four provinces, led by Alberta

In April, sales increased in four provinces, which together represented about 90% of total wholesale sales. Alberta led the gains.

Wholesale sales in Alberta rose for the second consecutive month, up 5.9% to \$7.3 billion, the highest level since May 2018. Sales were up in four of seven subsectors, led by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+13.4%), a second consecutive monthly increase.

Central Canada contributed to the strength in sales in April as both Quebec and Ontario posted gains. In Quebec, sales increased 3.3% to \$12.2 billion. Sales were up in five of seven subsectors, led by the personal and household goods (+5.2%) and the motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts and accessories (+6.8%) subsectors. Wholesale sales in Ontario increased 1.1% to \$33.3 billion in April. Sales increases were widespread, led by the building material and supplies (+7.6%) and the personal and household goods (+3.6%) subsectors.

Sales in British Columbia increased for the third time this year, up 1.6% to \$6.5 billion in April, driven by the motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector.

In Manitoba, sales decreased for the third time in four months, down 5.9% to \$1.6 billion. Widespread declines were led by the miscellaneous subsector.

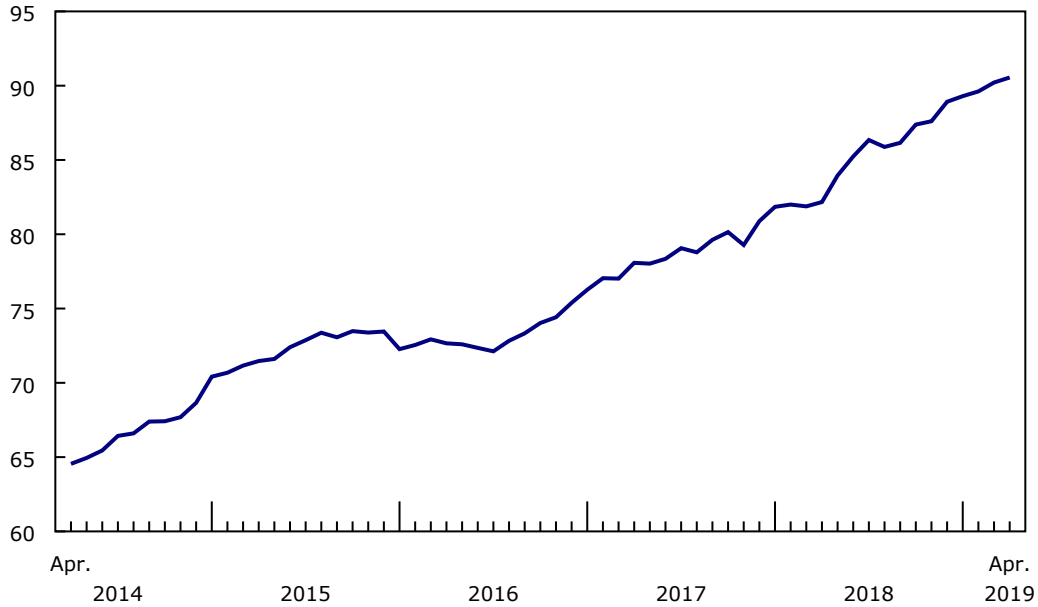
In April, sales were down in all of the Atlantic provinces. Sales declined in New Brunswick (-3.4%) due to lower sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector. Sales also decreased in Nova Scotia (-2.1%), Newfoundland and Labrador (-4.1%) and Prince Edward Island (-3.0%).

Inventories continue to rise

Wholesale inventories increased for the eighth consecutive month, up 0.4% to \$90.6 billion in April. Gains were recorded in five of seven subsectors, which together represented 78% of total wholesale inventories.

Chart 2 Inventories rise in April

billions of dollars



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

Inventories in the personal and household goods subsector increased for the fifth consecutive month, up 1.1%, led by the textile, clothing and footwear industry (+7.3%).

In the building material and supplies subsector, inventories rose for the second consecutive month, up 0.9% in April.

Wholesale inventories in the miscellaneous subsector were down for the third time in 2019, decreasing 0.7% from the previous month. Three of five industries reported declines, led by the other miscellaneous industry (-4.3%).

The inventory-to-sales ratio decreased from 1.40 in March to 1.39 in April, the second consecutive decline. 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

	April 2018	March 2019 ^r	April 2019 ^p	March to April 2019	April 2018 to April 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)	62,349	64,230	65,320	1.7	4.8
Total, wholesale sales (2012 chained dollars)	56,555	56,677	57,583	1.6	1.8
Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts	51,155	52,811	53,539	1.4	4.7
Farm product	674	807	780	-3.4	15.7
Food, beverage and tobacco	11,842	11,907	12,105	1.7	2.2
Food	10,607	10,690	10,851	1.5	2.3
Beverage	641	645	648	0.4	1.0
Cigarette and tobacco product	594	571	606	6.1	2.1
Personal and household goods	8,868	9,028	9,311	3.1	5.0
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,147	1,155	1,243	7.6	8.4
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	837	740	719	-2.9	-14.1
Home furnishings	584	554	573	3.6	-1.9
Personal goods	811	908	879	-3.2	8.4
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	4,652	4,777	4,967	4.0	6.8
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	837	895	930	4.0	11.2
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	11,194	11,419	11,781	3.2	5.2
Motor vehicle	9,040	9,072	9,371	3.3	3.7
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,098	2,283	2,349	2.9	12.0
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	56	65	61	-6.5	8.9
Building material and supplies	9,205	8,959	9,023	0.7	-2.0
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	2,778	2,935	2,938	0.1	5.8
Metal service centres	1,806	1,704	1,743	2.3	-3.5
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	4,622	4,320	4,341	0.5	-6.1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	12,956	13,580	13,884	2.2	7.2
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	1,859	1,712	1,804	5.4	-2.9
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	4,157	4,451	4,689	5.4	12.8
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	3,837	4,330	4,183	-3.4	9.0
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	3,103	3,087	3,208	3.9	3.4
Miscellaneous	7,610	8,531	8,435	-1.1	10.8
Recyclable material	993	974	913	-6.2	-8.1
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,091	999	1,043	4.4	-4.4
Agricultural supplies	1,883	2,472	2,535	2.6	34.6
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,446	1,554	1,521	-2.2	5.2
Other miscellaneous	2,196	2,532	2,423	-4.3	10.3

^r revised

^p 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

	April 2018	March 2019 ^r	April 2019 ^p	March to April 2019	April 2018 to April 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	62,349	64,230	65,320	1.7	4.8
Newfoundland and Labrador	356	372	357	-4.1	0.1
Prince Edward Island	77	80	77	-3.0	0.5
Nova Scotia	866	887	868	-2.1	0.3
New Brunswick	522	589	569	-3.4	9.1
Quebec	11,292	11,820	12,209	3.3	8.1
Ontario	32,190	32,923	33,298	1.1	3.4
Manitoba	1,561	1,705	1,605	-5.9	2.8
Saskatchewan	2,092	2,425	2,399	-1.1	14.7
Alberta	6,759	6,901	7,307	5.9	8.1
British Columbia	6,547	6,447	6,548	1.6	0.0
Yukon	13	16	14	-17.8	1.0
Northwest Territories	58	50	56	10.5	-3.9
Nunavut	16	15	13	-11.5	-14.6

^r revised

^p 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

	April 2018	March 2019 ^r	April 2019 ^p	March to April 2019	April 2018 to April 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale inventories	82,167	90,213	90,551	0.4	10.2
Farm product	187	153	155	1.8	-17.0
Food, beverage and tobacco	8,033	8,963	8,926	-0.4	11.1
Food	7,292	8,069	8,002	-0.8	9.7
Beverage	469	585	611	4.4	30.3
Cigarette and tobacco product	273	309	313	1.4	14.7
Personal and household goods	13,870	15,494	15,670	1.1	13.0
Textile, clothing and footwear	2,623	3,285	3,523	7.3	34.3
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	994	1,054	1,010	-4.2	1.6
Home furnishings	1,272	1,443	1,299	-10.0	2.1
Personal goods	1,907	1,988	2,007	1.0	5.3
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	5,959	6,668	6,767	1.5	13.6
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,116	1,056	1,064	0.8	-4.6
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	11,915	12,753	12,758	0.0	7.1
Motor vehicle	6,932	7,377	7,241	-1.8	4.5
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	4,904	5,291	5,407	2.2	10.2
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	79	85	110 ^E	29.7	39.1
Building material and supplies	14,013	15,318	15,458	0.9	10.3
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	3,999	4,229	4,226	-0.1	5.7
Metal service centres	3,925	4,662	4,891	4.9	24.6
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	6,090	6,427	6,342	-1.3	4.1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	23,551	26,327	26,461	0.5	12.4
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	6,626	6,890	6,933	0.6	4.6
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	10,355	12,177	12,346	1.4	19.2
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	2,179	2,563	2,535	-1.1	16.4
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	4,391	4,697	4,647	-1.1	5.8
Miscellaneous	10,597	11,205	11,123	-0.7	5.0
Recyclable material	965	860	909	5.6	-5.9
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	784	848	910	7.3	16.0
Agricultural supplies	4,390	4,813	4,784	-0.6	9.0
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,383	1,494	1,467	-1.8	6.0
Other miscellaneous	3,074	3,190	3,054	-4.3	-0.7

^r revised

^p preliminary

^E use with caution

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

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

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](#).

Total wholesale sales expressed in volume are calculated by deflating current dollar values using relevant price indexes. The wholesale sales series in chained (2012) dollars is a chained Fisher volume index with 2012 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](#).

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 July 8.

Next release

Wholesale trade data for May will be released on July 22.

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