

Quarterly Retail Commodity Survey, fourth quarter 2019

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Retail Sales in Canada reached \$160.3 billion in the fourth quarter, up 1.5% from the same quarter of 2018. Higher sales were recorded in 9 of the 19 commodity groupings. While the impacts of COVID-19 on the retail trade sector will be more noticeable in subsequent months, respondent comments for February indicate that business activities have been impacted.

The largest increase in dollar terms came from food, which posted a year-over-year growth of 4.0%. The largest contributors to the gain were fresh fruit and vegetables (+6.4%) and fresh meat (+5.1%). Sales of soft drinks and alcoholic beverages were up 2.4% compared with the previous year, on the strength of a 1.8% increase in sales of alcoholic beverages.

Sales of motor vehicles increased 2.0% in the fourth quarter. The majority of the increase came from higher sales of new motor vehicles (+2.3%). New passenger automobiles continued their downward trend with sales declining 11.5%, offset by higher sales for new minivans, sport utility vehicles, and light trucks. Receipts for used motor vehicles gained 1.6% compared with the same quarter of 2018.

Following three consecutive quarters of declines, automotive and household fuels increased 3.4% in the fourth quarter. Higher sales of automotive fuels (+3.4%) accounted for the majority of the increase.

Sales of cannabis products continue to rise, totalling \$412.2 million in the fourth quarter of 2019. Sales of dried cannabis flowering tops were \$372.4 million, while sales of cannabis oil were \$38.2 million.

The largest decline posted by a commodity grouping came from home health products (-2.2%). Declines were largely attributable to lower receipts of pharmaceuticals (-2.5%).

Receipts of home furniture, furnishings, housewares, appliances and electronics fell 0.6%. Lower revenue from home electronics (-6.9%) accounted for the majority of the decrease. Higher sales in housewares (+2.8%) and home furnishings (+3.1%) served to dampen the declines.

Note to readers

The Quarterly Retail Commodity Survey collects national-level retail sales by commodity from the same businesses as the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Quarterly data have not been adjusted for seasonality. All percentage changes are year over year.

New Monthly Retail Commodity Survey data now available

Check out the data from the new Monthly Retail Commodity Survey (MRCS) (table [20-10-0017-01](#)). Sales revenue by commodity at the national level for the Canadian retail sector and estimates from January to July 2019 are now available.

*Analysis of the new data is available in *The Daily*, along with the new MRCS table.*

New Quarterly Retail Commodity Survey data visualization tool

Check out the latest Quarterly Retail Commodity Survey (QRCS) estimates in a new interactive way! The QRCS's [new visualization tool](#) allows users to more easily view, customize and interpret the quarterly sales data.



Table 1
Sales by type of commodity, all retail stores – Seasonally unadjusted

	Fourth quarter 2018 ^r	Third quarter 2019 ^P	Fourth quarter 2019 ^P	Fourth quarter 2018 to fourth quarter 2019
	millions of dollars			% change
Total commodities, retail trade commissions and miscellaneous services	157,958	160,790	160,306	1.5
Food	27,334	27,427	28,433	4.0
Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages	9,281	9,749	9,502	2.4
Cannabis products	..	356	412	..
Clothing	9,926	7,916	9,922	-0.0
Footwear	2,192	1,974	2,193	0.0
Jewellery and watches, luggage and briefcases	1,674	1,189	1,672	-0.2
Home furniture, furnishings, housewares, appliances and electronics	15,763	13,369	15,662	-0.6
Sporting and leisure products (except publications, audio and video recordings, and game software)	..	2,648	3,296	..
Publications	1,122	887	1,023	-8.9
Audio and video recordings, and game software	..	243	533	..
Motor vehicles	28,383	33,582	28,962	2.0
Recreational vehicles	1,402	2,617	1,530	9.1
Motor vehicle parts, accessories and supplies	6,369	5,319	6,326	-0.7
Automotive and household fuels	13,591	14,863	14,049	3.4
Home health products	10,125	9,893	9,907	-2.2
Infant care, personal and beauty products	4,008	3,647	3,998	-0.3
Hardware, tools, renovation and lawn and garden products	9,707	12,266	10,171	4.8
Miscellaneous products	7,553	8,109	7,582	0.4
Total retail trade commissions and miscellaneous services	5,450	4,736	5,134	-5.8

^r revised

^P preliminary

.. not available for a specific reference period

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

Source(s): Table [20-10-0016-01](#).

Available tables: table [20-10-0016-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2008](#).

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).