

Retail trade, November 2020

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Retail sales rose at their fastest pace since September, up 1.3% to \$55.2 billion in November. This was the seventh consecutive monthly gain. The increase was led by higher sales at food and beverage stores, along with an uptick in e-commerce sales.

Core retail sales—which exclude gasoline stations and motor vehicle and parts dealers—rose 2.6% on higher sales at food and beverage (+5.9%) and general merchandise (+1.6%) stores, as well as building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers (+2.2%).

Sales were up in 7 of 11 subsectors, representing 53.4% of retail trade. In volume terms, retail sales rose 1.2% in November.

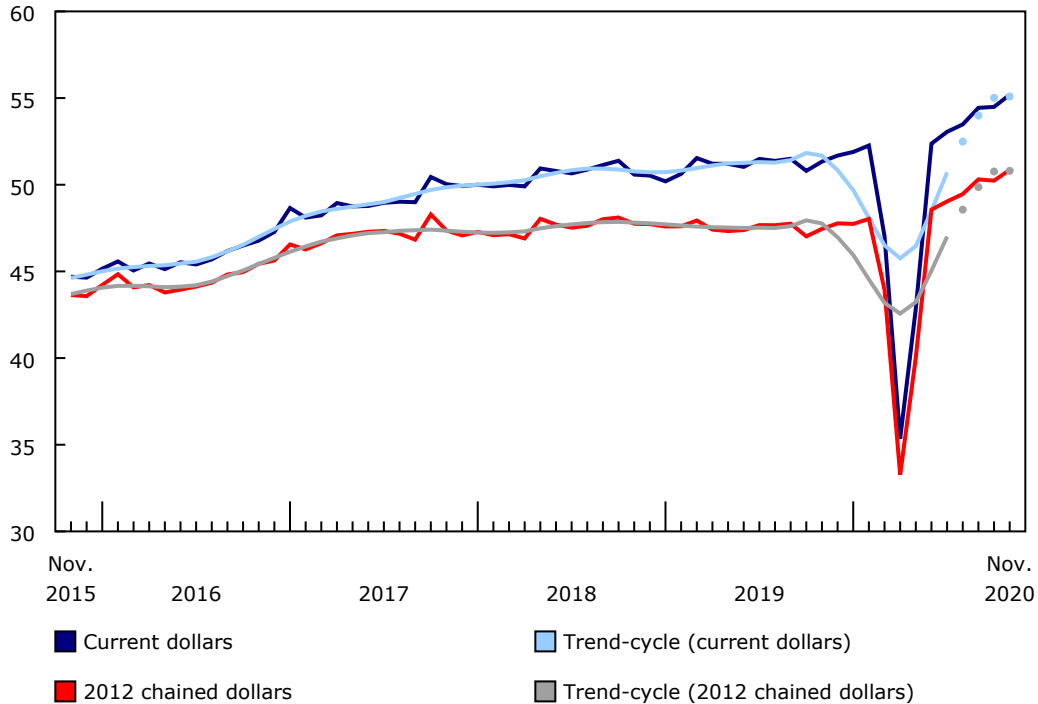
Because of a resurgence in COVID-19 cases in Canada, government officials began to reintroduce physical distancing measures, which directly affected the retail sector. Based on respondent feedback, approximately 3% of retailers were closed during November. The average length of the shutdown was one business day. Despite these challenging times, most respondents reported their sales figures, and Statistics Canada thanks them for their continued collaboration.

Given the rapidly evolving economic situation, Statistics Canada is providing an advance estimate of retail sales, which suggests that sales declined 2.6% in December. Owing to its preliminary nature, this figure will be revised.

This unofficial estimate was calculated based on responses received from 59% of companies surveyed. The average final response rate for the survey over the previous 12 months has been 87.1%.

Chart 1
Retail sales increase in November

billions of dollars



Note(s): The higher variability associated with the trend-cycle estimates is indicated with a dotted line on the chart for the current reference month and the three previous months. For more information, see the note to readers.

Source(s): Tables [20-10-0008-01](#) and [20-10-0078-01](#).

Lower sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers

In November, sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers (-0.9%) declined for the first time since April. Sales were down at three out of four store types, led by new car dealers (-1.0%).

New motor vehicle sales were down 6.7% year over year in dollar terms in November. Sales of trucks, an aggregate group that includes light trucks, heavy trucks and buses, decreased 4.0% year over year, while passenger car sales (-20.5%) were down by one-fifth. Nevertheless, new motor vehicle sales were up 7.6% compared with pre-pandemic levels (February 2020).

Sales at gasoline stations (-1.6%) declined for the second consecutive month. In volume terms, sales were down 2.2%.

Increase in core retail sales led by food and beverage stores

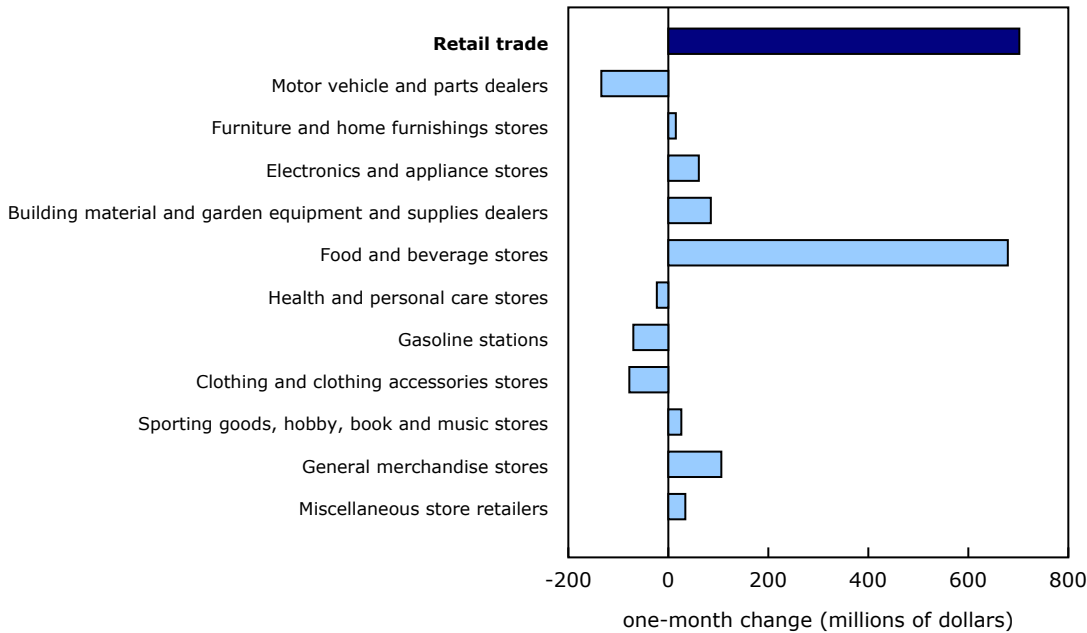
Core retail sales (+2.6%) rose for the fourth consecutive month in November. The growth was led by food and beverage stores (+5.9%), specifically supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores (+6.5%).

General merchandise stores (+1.6%) reported higher sales in November, following a 0.5% decline in October.

Sales at building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers (+2.2%) rose for the fourth consecutive month.

Clothing and clothing accessories store (-3.0%) sales fell for the second month in a row, with all three store types reporting declines, led by clothing stores (-2.8%).

Chart 2
Sales up in 7 of 11 subsectors



Source(s): Table 20-10-0008-01.

Sales up in nine provinces

Sales rose in nine provinces in November, led by higher sales in Quebec and Ontario.

In Quebec, sales increased 2.0%, with the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Montréal up 1.5%. Sales in Ontario (+0.9%) rose for the seventh consecutive month. In the CMA of Toronto, sales rose 0.3%. The increase in sales in both provinces were driven by food and beverage stores.

The increase in New Brunswick (+6.0%) was due to higher sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers.

Manitoba (-3.1%) was the sole province reporting a decline, on lower sales at clothing and clothing accessories stores.

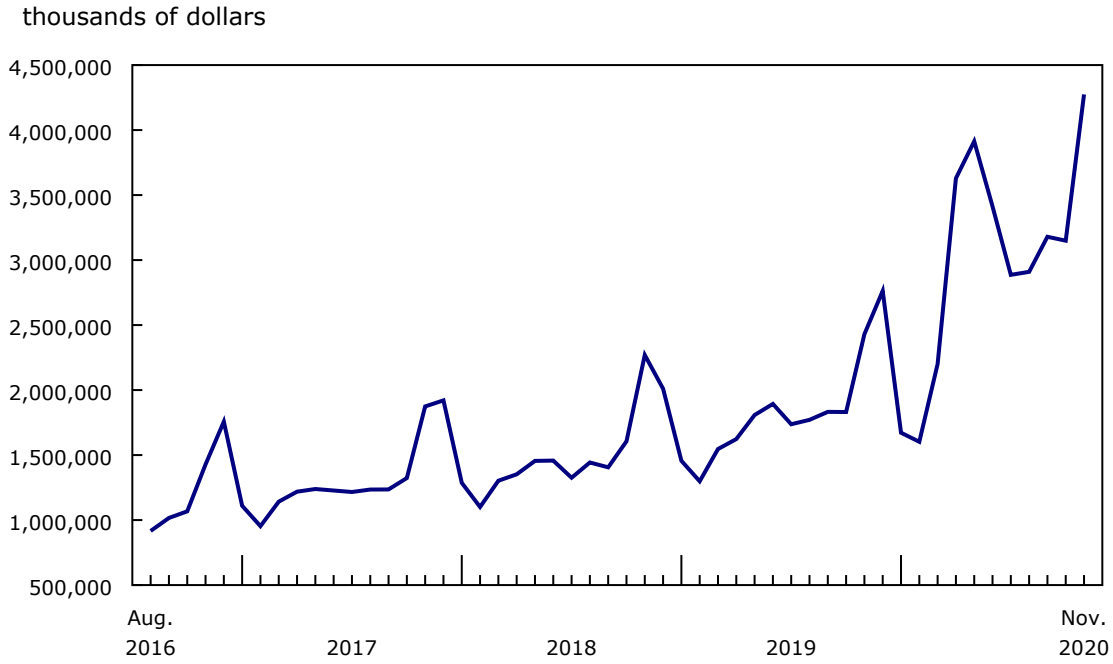
Retail e-commerce sales surge

On an unadjusted basis, retail e-commerce sales reached \$4.3 billion in November, accounting for 7.4% of total retail trade—the largest share since May. The share of e-commerce sales out of total retail sales (7.4%) rose 2.0 percentage points from October and was up 3.0 percentage points year over year. The rise in sales coincided with retailers urging online shoppers to buy early to avoid shipping delays, as well as promotional events such as Black Friday.

Retail e-commerce sales were up by three-quarters (+75.9%) year over year in November, while total unadjusted retail sales increased 5.8%.

When adjusted for basic seasonal effects, retail e-commerce increased 2.7%.

Chart 3
Retail e-commerce increases in November



Source(s): Monthly Retail Trade Survey (2406).

Note to readers

All data in this release are seasonally adjusted and expressed in current dollars, unless otherwise noted.

Seasonally adjusted data are data that have been modified to eliminate the effect of seasonal and calendar influences to allow for more meaningful comparisons of economic conditions from period to period. For more information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

The percentage change for the advance estimate for retail sales is calculated using seasonally adjusted data and is expressed in current dollars.

This early indicator is a special product being provided in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to offer Canadians timely information on the retail sector. The data sources and methodology used are the exact same as those outlined in the [Monthly Retail Trade Survey](#) information page.

Trend-cycle estimates are included in selected charts as a complement to the seasonally adjusted series. These data represent a smoothed version of the seasonally adjusted time series and provide information on longer-term movements, including changes in direction underlying the series. For information on trend-cycle data, see [Trend-cycle estimates – Frequently asked questions](#).

Both seasonally adjusted data and trend-cycle estimates are subject to revision as additional observations become available. These revisions could be large and could even lead to a reversal of movement, especially for reference months near the end of the series or during periods of economic disruption.

For information regarding cannabis statistics, consult the [Cannabis Stats Hub](#).

Seasonally adjusted estimates for cannabis store retailers are presented in unadjusted form as there is no seasonal pattern established by official statistics yet. Establishing such a pattern requires several months of observed data. In the interim, the seasonally adjusted estimates for cannabis store retailers will be identical to the unadjusted figures.

Statistics Canada's retail e-commerce figures include the electronic sales of two distinct types of retailers. The first type does 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) code 45411—electronic shopping and mail-order houses. The second type has a storefront and is commonly referred to as a brick-and-mortar retailer. If the online operations of a brick-and-mortar retailer are separately managed, they too are classified to NAICS code 45411.

Some common e-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 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.

Real-time tables

Real-time tables 20-10-0054-01 and 20-10-0079-01 will be updated soon.

Next release

Data on retail trade for December 2020 will be released on February 19, 2021.

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

	November 2019	October 2020 ^r	November 2020 ^p	October to November 2020	November 2019 to November 2020
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	51,333	54,491	55,193	1.3	7.5
Newfoundland and Labrador	747	783	824	5.2	10.3
Prince Edward Island	211	229	240	4.9	13.6
Nova Scotia	1,356	1,428	1,479	3.6	9.0
New Brunswick	1,124	1,139	1,206	6.0	7.3
Quebec	10,971	11,851	12,085	2.0	10.1
Montréal	5,288	5,525	5,608	1.5	6.0
Ontario	19,556	20,270	20,450	0.9	4.6
Toronto	8,179	8,105	8,127	0.3	-0.6
Manitoba	1,730	1,899	1,840	-3.1	6.3
Saskatchewan	1,598	1,671	1,707	2.2	6.8
Alberta	6,644	7,069	7,141	1.0	7.5
British Columbia	7,220	7,955	8,018	0.8	11.1
Vancouver	3,350	3,671	3,724	1.4	11.2
Yukon	69	79	81	2.6	16.2
Northwest Territories	65	73	78	6.1	20.1
Nunavut	41	45	46	0.9	11.3

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

Source(s): Table [20-10-0008-01](#).

Table 2
Retail sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	November 2019	October 2020 ^r	November 2020 ^p	October to November 2020	November 2019 to November 2020
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade (current dollars)	51,333	54,491	55,193	1.3	7.5
Total retail trade (2012 chained dollars)	47,450	50,235	50,857	1.2	7.2
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	37,360	39,880	40,717	2.1	9.0
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations	32,053	35,463	36,369	2.6	13.5
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	13,973	14,611	14,477	-0.9	3.6
New car dealers	11,154	11,412	11,299	-1.0	1.3
Used car dealers	1,050	1,145	1,124	-1.8	7.1
Other motor vehicle dealers	927	1,102	1,097	-0.4	18.4
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	842	952	956	0.4	13.5
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,550	1,835	1,850	0.8	19.4
Furniture stores	973	1,205	1,204	-0.1	23.7
Home furnishings stores	576	629	646	2.7	12.1
Electronics and appliance stores	1,161	1,369	1,431	4.5	23.2
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	3,161	3,960	4,046	2.2	28.0
Food and beverage stores	10,862	11,593	12,271	5.9	13.0
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	7,517	8,000	8,520	6.5	13.3
Convenience stores	638	713	729	2.2	14.2
Specialty food stores	682	758	772	1.8	13.1
Beer, wine and liquor stores	2,025	2,122	2,252	6.1	11.2
Health and personal care stores	3,807	4,354	4,331	-0.5	13.8
Gasoline stations	5,307	4,417	4,347	-1.6	-18.1
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,953	2,620	2,543	-3.0	-13.9
Clothing stores	2,306	2,026	1,969	-2.8	-14.6
Shoe stores	337	287	271	-5.7	-19.5
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	311	307	303	-1.4	-2.6
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	982	1,225	1,251	2.2	27.4
General merchandise stores	6,118	6,790	6,896	1.6	12.7
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,459	1,717	1,751	2.0	20.0
Cannabis stores ¹	137	270	261	-3.2	91.1

^r revised

^p preliminary

1. Data for this Canadian industry are presented in unadjusted form as there is no seasonal pattern established by official statistics yet.

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

Source(s): Tables [20-10-0008-01](#) and [20-10-0078-01](#).

Table 3
Retail sales by industry at 2012 constant prices – Seasonally adjusted

	November 2019	October 2020 ^r	November 2020 ^p	October to November 2020	November 2019 to November 2020
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade at 2012 constant prices¹	47,464	50,289	50,850	1.1	7.1
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	35,485	38,008	38,670	1.7	9.0
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations	30,049	33,068	33,841	2.3	12.6
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	11,979	12,281	12,180	-0.8	1.7
New car dealers	9,532	9,552	9,464	-0.9	-0.7
Used car dealers	888	948	933	-1.6	5.1
Other motor vehicle dealers	772	908	909	0.1	17.7
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	786	872	875	0.3	11.3
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,485	1,751	1,758	0.4	18.4
Furniture stores	948	1,173	1,167	-0.5	23.1
Home furnishings stores	537	578	591	2.2	10.1
Electronics and appliance stores	1,412	1,658	1,726	4.1	22.2
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	2,827	3,445	3,555	3.2	25.8
Food and beverage stores	9,518	9,921	10,558	6.4	10.9
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	6,598	6,867	7,351	7.0	11.4
Convenience stores	509	537	558	3.9	9.6
Specialty food stores	580	627	642	2.4	10.7
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,831	1,890	2,008	6.2	9.7
Health and personal care stores	3,944	4,543	4,460	-1.8	13.1
Gasoline stations	5,436	4,940	4,829	-2.2	-11.2
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,816	2,603	2,497	-4.1	-11.3
Clothing stores	2,206	2,047	1,964	-4.1	-11.0
Shoe stores	330	292	276	-5.5	-16.4
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	280	264	257	-2.7	-8.2
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	954	1,218	1,235	1.4	29.5
General merchandise stores	5,763	6,345	6,441	1.5	11.8
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,332	1,584	1,611	1.7	20.9
Cannabis stores ²	126	287	279	-2.8	121.4

^r revised

^p preliminary

1. Calculated using the Laspeyres method.

2. Data for this Canadian industry are presented in unadjusted form as there is no seasonal pattern established by official statistics yet.

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

Source(s): Table 20-10-0078-01.

Table 4
Retail e-commerce sales – Unadjusted

	November 2019	October 2020	November 2020	November 2020
	millions of dollars			year-over-year % change
Retail trade sales (44-453)	53,178	56,608	55,435	4.2
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses sales (45411)	1,775	2,068	2,704	52.3
Retail e-commerce ¹	2,430	3,149	4,274	75.9
Retail e-commerce ¹ (% of total retail trade)	4.42	5.37	7.35	...

... not applicable

1. Retail e-commerce includes e-sales from both store retailers included in North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes 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): Table [20-10-0072-01](#).

Available tables: [20-10-0008-01](#), [20-10-0072-01](#) and [20-10-0078-01](#).

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

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).