

Retail trade, July 2021

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Retail sales fell 0.6% to \$55.8 billion in July, the third decrease in four months. The decline was primarily driven by lower sales at food and beverage stores (-3.4%) and building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers (-7.3%). In July, much of the country continued to implement reopening measures, which eased restrictions on both retailers and services.

Sales decreased in 5 of 11 subsectors, representing 38.7% of retail trade.

Core retail sales—which exclude gasoline stations and motor vehicle and parts dealers—decreased 1.3%.

In volume terms, retail sales decreased 1.1% in July.

Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in Canada, provincial governments eased public health restrictions in several regions across the country, which directly affected the retail sector. In light of evolving restrictions, both retailers and consumers have adapted to changing business conditions.

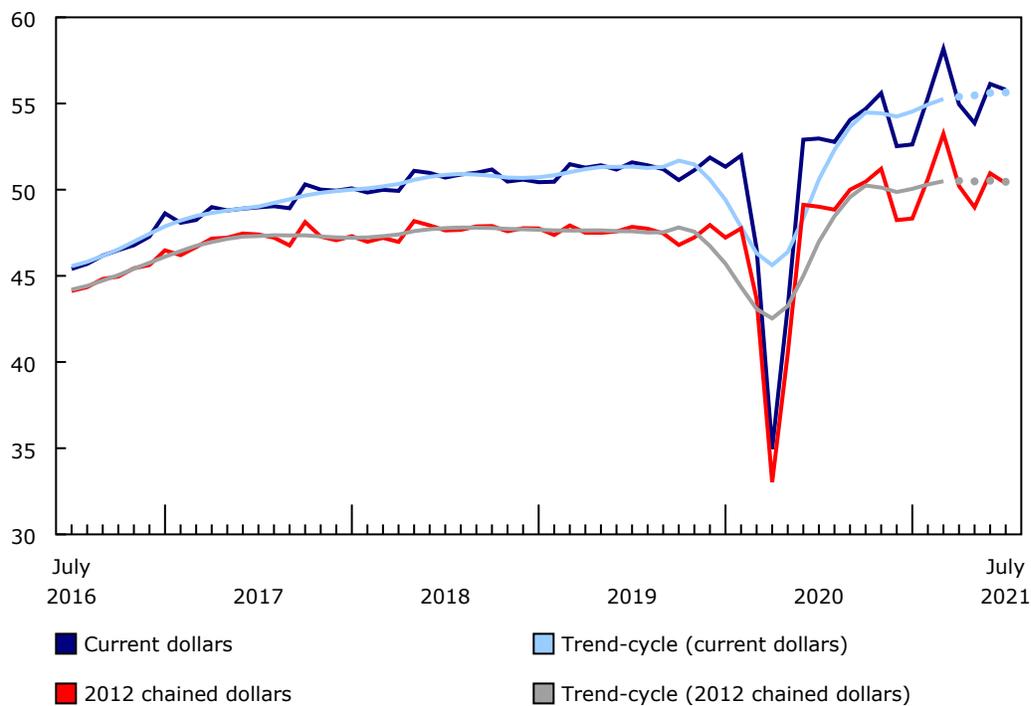
Based on respondent feedback, 0.5% of retailers were closed at some point in July, compared with approximately 5.2% of retailers that were closed in June.

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 increased 2.1% in August. Owing to its preliminary nature, this figure will be revised. This unofficial estimate was calculated based on responses received from 50.4% of the companies surveyed. The average final response rate for the survey over the previous 12 months has been 90.6%.

Chart 1
Retail sales decrease in July

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 previous three months. For more information, see the Note to readers.

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

Core retail sales decline on lower sales at food and beverage stores and at building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers

Core retail fell for the third time in four months, decreasing 1.3% in July.

Posting its second consecutive decline, sales at food and beverage stores subsector were down 3.4%. Lower sales were observed in all four store types in this subsector, led by supermarkets and other grocery stores (-3.4%). Beer, wine, and liquor stores posted its first decline in three months, decreasing 2.7% in July. The drop at food and beverage stores coincided with the easing of COVID-19-related restrictions on food service and drinking places throughout the country. In July, [more consumers returned to restaurants and patios](#) to enjoy the summer weather amid eased capacity restrictions.

Sales at building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were down for a fourth consecutive month, falling 7.3% in July. Despite the decline, the level of sales in July was elevated compared with pre-pandemic levels.

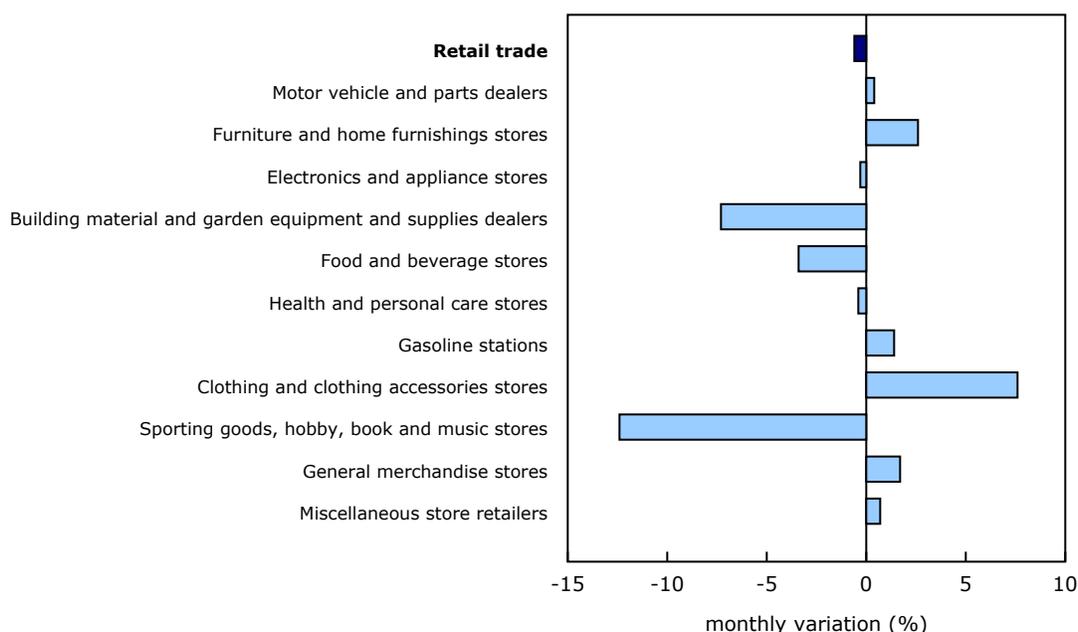
Sales at clothing and clothing accessories stores subsector increased 7.6% in July, reaching its highest level since the onset of the pandemic. Gains were spread across all three store types in this subsector, led by jewellery, luggage, and leather goods stores (+33.7%). In July, 1.5% of clothing and clothing accessories stores were closed, while 18.2% of stores in this subsector reported closures in June.

Sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations continue to rise

Increasing for a second consecutive month, sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers rose 0.4% in July, led by higher sales at new car dealers (+0.8%). The increase in sales coincided with higher prices of passenger vehicles, which is partly attributable to the global shortage of semiconductor chips.

Receipts at gasoline stations rose 1.4% for the third straight month. Higher prices contributed to the growth amid growing global demand. In volume terms, sales at gasoline stations were up 0.3%.

Chart 2 Sales decrease in 5 of 11 subsectors



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

Sales down in eight provinces

Quebec (-1.1%) posted the largest provincial decline in July. In the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Montréal, sales fell 1.3%.

Alberta (-1.8%) and British Columbia (-1.2%) posted the second and third largest provincial declines. Lower sales in both provinces were led by declines at building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers. The drops in both provinces were the largest since December 2020.

Ontario (+0.9%) was able to offset some of the declines seen in other provinces. Higher sales were posted at clothing and clothing accessories stores and general merchandise stores. In the Toronto CMA, sales rose 1.8%.

Retail e-commerce in Canada

On a seasonally adjusted basis, retail e-commerce sales fell 19.5% in July.

On an unadjusted basis, retail e-commerce sales were down 2.9% year over year to \$2.9 billion in July, accounting for 4.6% of retail trade. With the continued easing of in-person retail capacity limits in several provinces, the share of e-commerce sales in total retail sales fell 1.6 percentage points in July from June, reaching its lowest level since February 2020.

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 of 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 exactly the same as those outlined on 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 extensive and could even lead to a reversal of movement, especially for the reference months near the end of the series or during periods of economic disruption.

Seasonally adjusted estimates for cannabis store retailers are presented in unadjusted form since 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 under the 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 under 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 August will be released on October 22, 2021.

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

	July 2020	June 2021 ^r	July 2021 ^p	June to July 2021	July 2020 to July 2021
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	52,969	56,134	55,798	-0.6	5.3
Newfoundland and Labrador	791	821	815	-0.7	3.1
Prince Edward Island	206	245	236	-3.8	14.7
Nova Scotia	1,362	1,579	1,526	-3.3	12.0
New Brunswick	1,168	1,251	1,253	0.2	7.3
Quebec	11,712	12,470	12,329	-1.1	5.3
Montréal	5,609	5,852	5,776	-1.3	3.0
Ontario	19,556	20,007	20,192	0.9	3.3
Toronto	7,801	7,988	8,130	1.8	4.2
Manitoba	1,899	2,001	1,964	-1.9	3.4
Saskatchewan	1,677	1,799	1,754	-2.5	4.6
Alberta	6,883	7,457	7,324	-1.8	6.4
British Columbia	7,521	8,304	8,207	-1.2	9.1
Vancouver	3,334	3,936	3,831	-2.7	14.9
Yukon	73	77	77	-0.4	4.3
Northwest Territories	75	77	76	-0.5	1.5
Nunavut	47	46	46	0.2	-2.4

^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

	July 2020	June 2021 ^r	July 2021 ^p	June to July 2021	July 2020 to July 2021
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade (current dollars)	52,969	56,134	55,798	-0.6	5.3
Total retail trade (2012 chained dollars)	49,011	50,951	50,374	-1.1	2.8
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	38,859	41,265	40,870	-1.0	5.2
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations	34,389	35,914	35,442	-1.3	3.1
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	14,110	14,869	14,928	0.4	5.8
New car dealers	10,766	11,608	11,703	0.8	8.7
Used car dealers	1,130	1,148	1,151	0.2	1.8
Other motor vehicle dealers	1,271	1,148	1,110	-3.3	-12.6
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	943	964	964	-0.0	2.2
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,682	1,834	1,882	2.6	11.9
Furniture stores	1,096	1,167	1,204	3.2	9.8
Home furnishings stores	586	666	678	1.7	15.7
Electronics and appliance stores	1,270	1,295	1,290	-0.3	1.6
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	3,517	3,909	3,623	-7.3	3.0
Food and beverage stores	11,777	11,764	11,360	-3.4	-3.5
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	8,193	8,137	7,856	-3.4	-4.1
Convenience stores	695	709	649	-8.4	-6.7
Specialty food stores	718	677	674	-0.4	-6.2
Beer, wine and liquor stores	2,171	2,242	2,181	-2.7	0.5
Health and personal care stores	4,126	4,280	4,264	-0.4	3.3
Gasoline stations	4,471	5,352	5,428	1.4	21.4
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,509	2,701	2,906	7.6	15.8
Clothing stores	1,903	2,142	2,221	3.7	16.7
Shoe stores	312	305	346	13.1	10.6
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	294	254	339	33.7	15.4
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	1,140	1,224	1,072	-12.4	-6.0
General merchandise stores	6,751	7,078	7,202	1.7	6.7
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,615	1,829	1,842	0.7	14.1
Cannabis stores ¹	233	319	339	6.2	45.6

^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, at 2012 constant prices, by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	July 2020	June 2021 ^r	July 2021 ^P	June to July 2021	July 2020 to July 2021
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade at 2012 constant prices¹	49,059	51,074	50,546	-1.0	3.0
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	37,174	38,596	38,097	-1.3	2.5
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations	32,180	33,279	32,764	-1.5	1.8
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	11,885	12,478	12,449	-0.2	4.7
New car dealers	9,029	9,656	9,675	0.2	7.2
Used car dealers	937	944	940	-0.4	0.3
Other motor vehicle dealers	1,050	998	959	-3.9	-8.7
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	869	880	875	-0.6	0.7
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,624	1,699	1,720	1.2	5.9
Furniture stores	1,083	1,099	1,109	0.9	2.4
Home furnishings stores	542	600	611	1.8	12.7
Electronics and appliance stores	1,556	1,645	1,632	-0.8	4.9
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	3,077	3,099	2,871	-7.4	-6.7
Food and beverage stores	10,188	10,178	9,800	-3.7	-3.8
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	7,108	7,098	6,830	-3.8	-3.9
Convenience stores	537	542	494	-8.9	-8.0
Specialty food stores	593	556	551	-0.9	-7.1
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,951	1,982	1,925	-2.9	-1.3
Health and personal care stores	4,305	4,513	4,490	-0.5	4.3
Gasoline stations	4,994	5,317	5,333	0.3	6.8
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,495	2,634	2,808	6.6	12.5
Clothing stores	1,920	2,120	2,187	3.2	13.9
Shoe stores	319	317	361	13.9	13.2
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	257	197	261	32.5	1.6
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	1,117	1,189	1,044	-12.2	-6.5
General merchandise stores	6,337	6,671	6,720	0.7	6.0
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,481	1,652	1,680	1.7	13.4
Cannabis stores ²	233	345	387	12.2	66.1

^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

	July 2020	June 2021	July 2021	July 2021
	millions of dollars			year-over-year change (%)
Retail trade sales (44-453)	57,076	60,443	60,020	5.2
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses sales (45411)	1,948	2,416	1,856	-4.7
Retail e-commerce ¹	2,941	3,874	2,856	-2.9
Retail e-commerce ¹ (% of total retail trade)	5.0	6.2	4.6	...

... 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).