Retail Commodity Survey, November 2021

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Monday, February 7, 2022

Retail sales reached $60.0 billion in November, an increase of 6.9% compared with the same month in 2020. Higher sales were reported in 15 of the 19 commodity classes.

The advance estimate provided by the Monthly Retail Trade Survey suggest that unadjusted total retail sales in December increased by 8.0%. Because of its preliminary nature, this figure will be revised.

Automotive fuels lead growth

The largest increase in dollar terms came from sales of automotive and household fuels, which rose 54.2% compared with the same month in 2020. This marked the ninth consecutive sales increase of the commodity class. This gain was spurred by higher prices seen at the pump, with sales of automotive fuels continuing to exceed pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels, up 16.7% compared with November 2019.

Following two consecutive months of decline, sales of motor vehicles increased by 3.5% in November. Sales of used motor vehicles (+14.7%) continued to rise, the ninth consecutive year-over-year increase of the subclass. Higher sales of used minivans, sport utility vehicles and light trucks (+23.3%) were the largest contributor to this gain. Sales of new motor vehicles declined 3.8%, driven by lower sales of new minivans, sport utility vehicles and light trucks (-2.4%).

With ongoing demand for used vehicles, higher year-over-year sales of motor vehicle parts and accessories (+6.3%) were reported in November. Receipts generated by motor vehicle maintenance and repair services posted a 5.7% increase, as Canadians continued to prolong the life cycle of their vehicles.

Projects related to home improvement continued to remain a priority for Canadians in November, with sales of hardware, tools, and renovation and lawn and garden products increasing by 9.2% from the same month in 2020. The largest contributors to the growth in this class were sales of renovation materials and supplies (+8.7%) and hardware and tools (+16.5%).

Holiday shopping

With holiday season sales emerging via Black Friday promotions, sales of clothing increased by 23.9%. All clothing subclasses posted sales gains, the largest of which was for women's clothing (+26.2%). Sales of men's clothing rose 23.4%, followed by sales of children's and infant clothing (+18.0%).

Sales of home furniture, furnishings, housewares, appliances and electronics increased by 0.3% in November. Sales of home furnishings rose 7.2%, led by decorative home furnishings (+6.9%), which include products like Christmas decorations and lights. Sales of home appliances increased by 1.3%, led by small home appliances (+10.7%), while sales of major home appliances decreased by 3.5%. Sales of home electronics dropped by 6.2% in November, with the decline mainly coming from televisions and home audiovisual equipment (-6.3%), and computers, peripherals and networking equipment (-7.2%).

The largest decline in dollar terms for November came from sales of sporting and leisure products (-7.1%). The decrease was led by lower sales of toys and games (-11.7%), caused largely by the timing of product releases associated with this subclass. Sporting equipment also saw lower sales, posting a 5.8% decline from the same month in 2020.

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

	November 2020[r]	October 2021[r]	November 2021[p]	November 2020 to November 2021
	millions of dollars			% change
Total commodities, retail trade commissions and miscellaneous services	**56,094,952**	**58,946,550**	**59,991,741**	**6.9**
Food	10,027,989	10,549,135	10,062,351	0.3
Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages	3,201,066	3,431,163	3,281,903	2.5
Cannabis products	259,421	364,150	353,814	36.4
Clothing	2,748,372	2,942,806	3,405,220	23.9
Footwear	680,288	692,913	798,283	17.3
Jewellery and watches, luggage and briefcases	463,619	406,965	528,128	13.9
Home furniture, furnishings, housewares, appliances and electronics	6,353,789	5,139,504	6,369,837	0.3
Sporting and leisure products (except publications, audio and video recordings, and game software)	1,514,354	1,111,676	1,406,761	-7.1
Publications	283,408	218,356	271,813	-4.1
Audio and video recordings, and game software	151,765	85,380	130,291	-14.1
Motor vehicles	10,346,729	11,238,463	10,708,494	3.5
Recreational vehicles	646,634	726,664	600,908	-7.1
Motor vehicle parts, accessories and supplies	2,390,397	2,411,759	2,540,618	6.3
Automotive and household fuels	3,317,675	5,180,863	5,116,765	54.2
Home health products	3,526,152	3,539,578	3,564,385	1.1
Infant care, personal and beauty products	1,340,575	1,258,909	1,390,463	3.7
Hardware, tools, and renovation and lawn and garden products	4,315,903	4,822,105	4,711,418	9.2
Miscellaneous products	2,637,621	2,888,835	2,811,366	6.6
Total retail trade commissions and miscellaneous services	1,889,192	1,937,325	1,938,925	2.6

r revised
p preliminary
Note(s): Data may not add up to totals because of rounding.
Source(s): Table **20-10-0017-01**.

Note to readers

The Retail Commodity Survey collects national-level retail sales data, by commodity, from the same businesses surveyed in the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. No data have been seasonally adjusted. All percentage changes are year over year.

New retail commodity data for e-commerce now available

Estimates from the Retail Commodity Survey are now available for the electronic shopping and mail-order houses industry (North American Industry Classification System [NAICS] code 454110).

E-commerce figures from brick-and-mortar retailers are included with the retailer's commodity sales. If the online operations of a brick-and-mortar retailer are separately managed, they are classified under NAICS code 45411 (electronic shopping and mail-order houses). Businesses commonly referred to as pure-play Internet retailers are also classified under NAICS code 45411. Total retail sales figures do not include sales from retailers classified under NAICS code 45411.

Find more statistics on retail trade.

Available tables: table 20-10-0017-01.

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; **infostats@statcan.gc.ca**) or Media Relations (**statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca**).