

Wholesale trade, May 2023

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Wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) rose 3.5% to \$83.6 billion in May. The reported gain in sales was the largest monthly increase since November 2021. Sales increased in four of the seven subsectors. The growth in sales was led by the machinery, equipment and supplies, the miscellaneous, and the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsectors, representing slightly over half of the sector sales. Wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) were higher (+3.8%) than in May 2022.

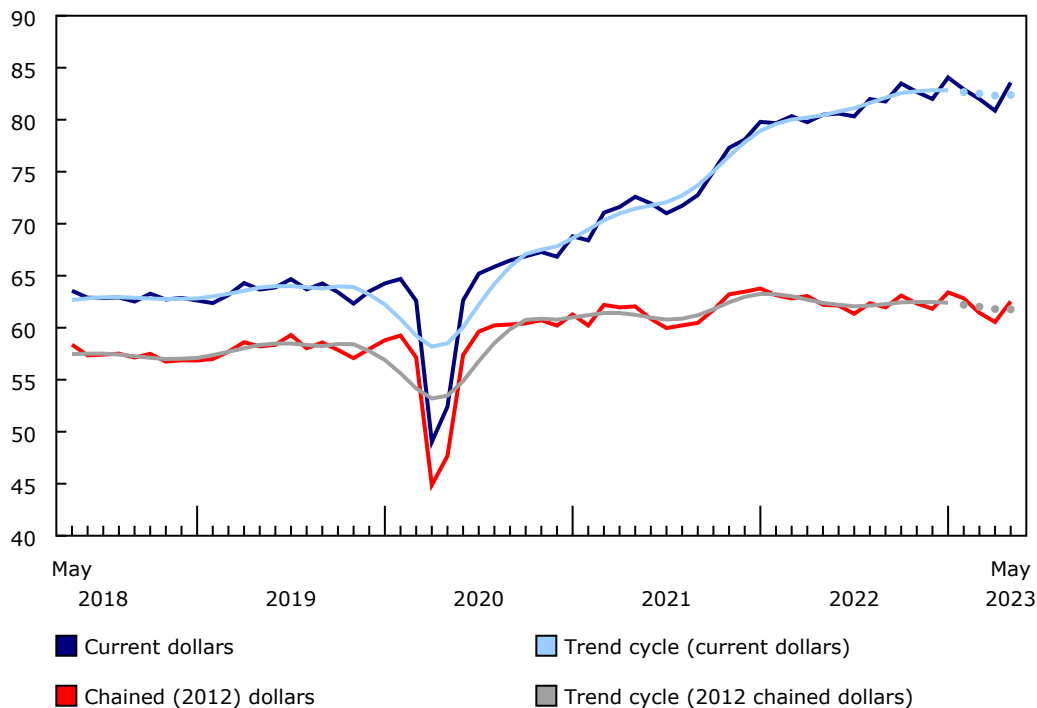
Petroleum products as well as oilseed and grain data continue to be available in data tables but will be excluded from monthly analysis until historical data are available for monthly and annual analysis.

Constant dollar sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) grew 3.3% in May 2023.

Chart 1

Wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) increase in May

billions of dollars



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

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



Increase of sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector leads the wholesale sales growth

Sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector grew 5.6% to \$18.9 billion in May. All industry groups reported a monthly increase, leading to the subsector's largest monthly increase since June 2020. The construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies industry group led the growth, up 6.9% to \$6.2 billion in May. As reported in a release regarding April 2023, there has been an [increase of investment in building construction](#), leading to higher demand for equipment. The computer and communications equipment and supplies (+6.3% to \$5.1 billion) and other machinery, equipment and supplies (+4.9% to \$4.8 billion) industry groups also influenced positive movement in May. [Residential construction and commercial projects surged in May](#), which is reflective of the rise of the machinery and equipment subsector.

The miscellaneous subsector also contributed to the sector increase, up 8.8% to \$11.3 billion in May. Though the majority of the industry groups reported a climb in sales, the increase of sales in the agricultural supplies industry group (+26.1% to \$4.2 billion) drove the overall subsector movement. Agricultural supply wholesalers reported delivery of multiple orders in addition to the seasonal demand for products.

The third subsector that contributed to the strong monthly sector increase was the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector, up 7.1% to \$13.7 billion in May. The motor vehicle industry group led the subsector rise, reporting an increase of sales (+8.8%) in May. [Imports of motor vehicles and parts](#) reached a record high in May, reflecting an improvement in supply chain conditions for Canadian automakers.

Sales in Ontario lead provincial increase

Sales increased in the majority of the provinces in May 2023, led by higher sales in Ontario, followed by Alberta.

Wholesale sales in Ontario rose 3.1% to \$42.6 billion in May. Sales increased in five of seven subsectors, with the largest contributor being the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+7.0% to \$9.4 billion), followed by the miscellaneous subsector (+6.7% to \$4.8 billion).

Sales in Alberta increased by 6.8% to \$10.0 billion in May. All seven subsectors had an increase in sales, led by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+11.9% to \$3.5 billion) and the miscellaneous subsector (+9.1% to \$1.4 billion).

Inventories fall in May

Wholesale inventories (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) fell 0.2% to \$129.0 billion in May, the second decline of 2023.

A decrease of inventories was reported in four of the seven subsectors in May, led by the miscellaneous subsector (-4.9% to \$16.0 billion) and followed by the building material and supplies subsector (-2.4% to \$23.7 billion).

The inventory-to-sales ratio decreased from 1.58 in April to 1.54 in May. This ratio is a measure of the time (in months) required to exhaust inventories if sales were to remain at their current levels.

Table 1
Wholesale merchants' sales by industry—seasonally adjusted

	May 2022	April 2023 ^f	May 2023 ^p	April to May 2023	May 2022 to May 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)	80,485	127,586	128,075	0.4	59.1
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding petroleum and oilseed and grain	..	80,870	83,574	3.5	3.8
Total, wholesale sales (2012 chained dollars), excluding petroleum and oilseed and grain	..	60,553	62,527	3.3	..
Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts	68,635	114,798	114,376	-0.4	66.6
Farm product (excluding oilseed and grain)	1,215	1,394	1,363	-2.2	12.2
Oilseed and grain merchant ¹	..	2,652	3,313	24.9	..
Petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons ¹	..	44,154	41,188	-6.7	..
Food, beverage and tobacco	14,315	14,693	14,841	1.0	3.7
Food	12,751	13,041	13,149	0.8	3.1
Beverage	848	939	972	3.5	14.6
Cigarette and tobacco product	505	505	497	-1.7	-1.5
Cannabis	211	208	223	7.3	5.5
Personal and household goods	11,420	11,783	11,636	-1.2	1.9
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,694	1,616 ^E	1,512	-6.4	-10.7
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	941	822	818	-0.5	-13.0
Home furnishings	731	694	692	-0.2	-5.3
Personal goods	1,146	1,052	1,055	0.3	-7.9
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	6,908	7,599	7,558	-0.5	9.4
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,173	1,058	1,038	-1.9	-11.6
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	11,849	12,788	13,699	7.1	15.6
Motor vehicle	9,126	10,256	11,163	8.8	22.3
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,652	2,460	2,458	-0.1	-7.3
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	71	73	78	7.9	10.4
Building material and supplies	13,111	11,883	11,877	-0.0	-9.4
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	3,713	3,816	3,810	-0.2	2.6
Metal service centres	2,717	2,406	2,389	-0.7	-12.1
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	6,681	5,661	5,679	0.3	-15.0
Machinery, equipment and supplies	16,839	17,860	18,866	5.6	12.0
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	2,248	2,644	2,725	3.1	21.2
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	5,445	5,844	6,245	6.9	14.7

Table 1 - continued
Wholesale merchants' sales by industry—seasonally adjusted

	May 2022	April 2023 ^r	May 2023 ^p	April to May 2023	May 2022 to May 2023
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	5,273	4,759	5,056	6.3	-4.1
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	3,873	4,613	4,840	4.9	25.0
Miscellaneous	11,755	10,379	11,292	8.8	-3.9
Recyclable material	1,587	1,319	1,285	-2.6	-19.0
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,230	1,224	1,228	0.4	-0.1
Agricultural supplies	3,862	3,305	4,168	26.1	7.9
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	2,064	1,808	1,861	3.0	-9.8
Mineral, ore and precious metal	..	607	603	-0.7	..
Log, wood chips, and other wood products	..	90	131	44.9	..
Other miscellaneous	3,013	2,027	2,015	-0.6	-33.1

^r revised

^p preliminary

.. not available for a specific reference period

E use with caution

1. Unadjusted and not included in wholesale sales calculation.

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

	May 2022	April 2023 ^r	May 2023 ^p	April to May 2023	May 2022 to May 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	80,485	80,780	83,574	3.5	3.8
Newfoundland and Labrador	394	402	402	0.0	2.0
Prince Edward Island	130	120	124	3.5	-4.4
Nova Scotia	1,170	1,124	1,096	-2.5	-6.4
New Brunswick	774	777	699	-10.0	-9.7
Quebec	14,809	14,669	15,275	4.1	3.1
Ontario	40,647	41,355	42,644	3.1	4.9
Manitoba	1,758	1,878	1,713	-8.8	-2.6
Saskatchewan	3,704	3,582	3,692	3.1	-0.3
Alberta	8,846	9,349	9,985	6.8	12.9
British Columbia	8,190	7,459	7,865	5.5	-4.0
Yukon	20	x	x	x	x
Northwest Territories	35	37	49	35.4	43.1
Nunavut	14	x	x	x	x

^r revised

^p preliminary

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

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

	May 2022	April 2023 ^r	May 2023 ^p	April to May 2023	May 2022 to May 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale inventories	116,291	151,700	189,471	24.9	62.9
Total, wholesale inventories (excluding Petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons)	116,291	129,248	129,043	-0.2	11.0
Farm product (excluding oilseed and grain)	280	339	355	4.5	25.3
Petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons ¹
Food, beverage and tobacco	12,807	13,939	13,704	-1.7	7.0
Food	11,349	12,293	12,042	-2.0	6.1
Beverage	791	864	907	4.9	14.6
Cigarette and tobacco product	436	505	483	-4.3	10.8
Cannabis	230	277	272	-1.7	17.9
Personal and household goods	19,326	21,605	21,265	-1.6	10.0
Textile, clothing and footwear	3,764	4,768 ^E	4,412	-7.5	17.2
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	1,363	1,497	1,478	-1.3	8.4
Home furnishings	1,902	2,039	2,009	-1.5	5.6
Personal goods	2,784	3,175	3,112	-2.0	11.8
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	8,395	9,031	9,169	1.5	9.2
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,117	1,096	1,085	-1.0	-2.9
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	12,975	15,681	15,927	1.6	22.7
Motor vehicle	6,681	9,662	9,928	2.7	48.6
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	6,192	5,882	5,862	-0.3	-5.3
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	F	F	F	F	F
Building material and supplies	22,187	24,279	23,698	-2.4	6.8
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	6,477	7,115	6,907	-2.9	6.6
Metal service centres	6,120	6,424	6,406	-0.3	4.7
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	9,589	10,740	10,385	-3.3	8.3
Machinery, equipment and supplies	31,491	36,653	38,162	4.1	21.2
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	6,271	7,600	8,754	15.2	39.6
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	14,049	17,123	17,518	2.3	24.7
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	4,389	3,982	3,933	-1.2	-10.4
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	6,782	7,947	7,956	0.1	17.3
Miscellaneous	17,225	16,752	15,934	-4.9	-7.5
Recyclable material	1,326	1,073 ^E	1,134 ^E	5.6	-14.5
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,300	1,456	1,422	-2.4	9.4
Agricultural supplies	7,956	7,811	7,061	-9.6	-11.2
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,901	1,906	1,835	-3.7	-3.5
Mineral, ore and precious metal	..	206	185	5.6	..
Log, wood chips, and other wood	..	102	104	-1.9	..
Other miscellaneous	4,743	4,198	4,194	-0.1	-11.6

^r revised

^p preliminary

.. not available for a specific reference period

... not applicable

^E use with caution

^F too unreliable to be published

1. Unadjusted and not included in wholesale sales calculation.

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.

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 [Section 2: Issues related to analysis and interpretation](#).

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 (see [Section 1: Concepts and definitions](#)) and provide information on longer-term movements, including underlying changes in direction in 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 disruptions.

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 the publication "[Deflation of wholesale sales](#)."

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 business-to-business electronic markets, and agents and brokers (NAICS 419).

Real-time data tables

Real-time data tables 20-10-0019-01, 20-10-0020-01 and 20-10-0005-01 will be updated soon.

Next release

Wholesale trade data for June will be released on August 16.

Available tables: [20-10-0003-01](#), [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0076-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2401](#).

The product "[Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey: Interactive Tool](#)" ([71-607-X](#)) is available online. This product is based on the data published in the tables of the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey: [20-10-0074-01](#), [20-10-0076-01](#) and [20-10-0003-01](#).

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).