

# Wholesale trade, July 2023

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Wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) grew 0.2% to \$81.3 billion in July. Despite the majority of subsectors reporting a monthly decline, it was the increase of sales in the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector and the building material and supplies subsector that drove the overall sector to an increase. On an annual basis, wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) were up 1.1%.

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.

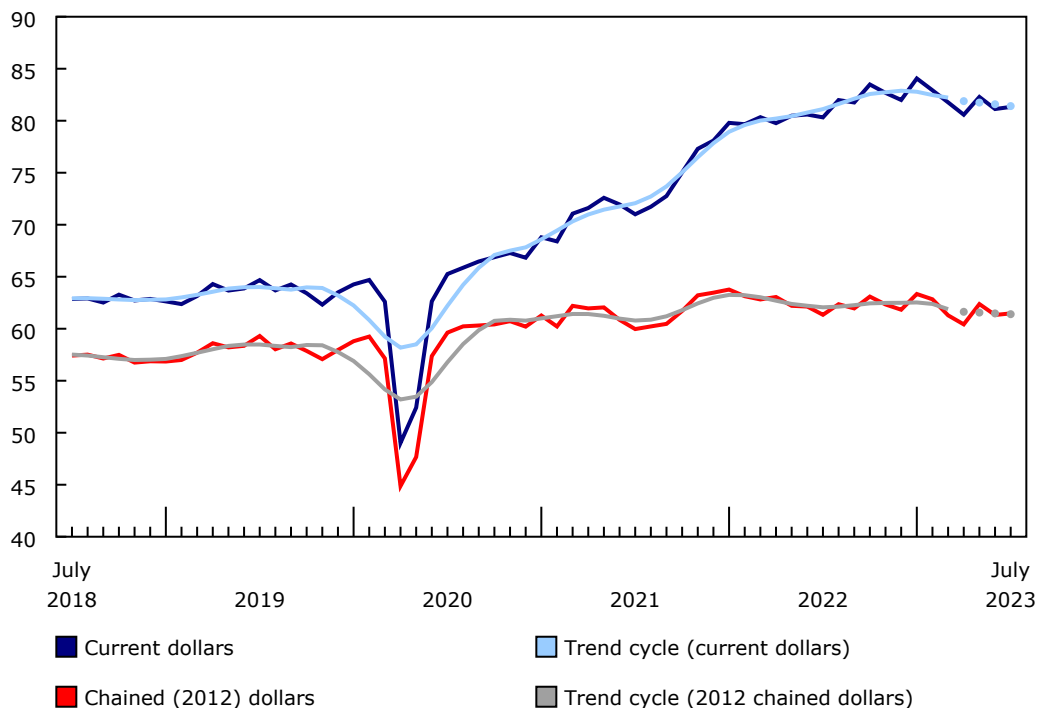
The port strike in British Columbia that disrupted supply chains primarily on the west coast of Canada had a minor impact on the wholesale sector in July. At the national level, the port strike impacted less than 5% of wholesale businesses.

Constant dollar sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) increased 0.2% in July.

## Chart 1

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

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](#).



## Higher sales in the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector drive the wholesale sales growth in July

Sales in the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector grew by 3.9% to \$14.1 billion in July—the third monthly increase in the subsector since the start of 2023. A monthly increase was reported in July by two of the three industry groups, however it was mainly sales in the motor vehicle industry group (+4.2% to \$11.4 billion) that influenced the subsector movement. [Exports of motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts](#) (+2.1%) also reported a monthly increase in July.

The building material and supplies subsector reported growth (+2.7% to \$12.0 billion) in July, marking the first subsector increase since March 2023. An increase in sales was reported by two of the three industry groups, however it was the lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies industry group (+4.6% to \$5.9 billion) that most influenced the subsector movement. [Higher prices of lumber](#), due to multiple factors such as the wildfires in the Pacific Northwest and the strike by port workers in British Columbia, contributed to the higher level of sales in July.

Growth in the sector was partially offset by a decline in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (-2.2% to \$17.4 billion). The majority of the industry groups reported monthly declines, with the downward movement led by the decrease in sales from the farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment industry group (-13.2% to \$2.2 billion) and the computer and communications equipment and supplies industry group (-4.7% to \$4.9 billion).

## Sales from Alberta lead provincial gains

Growth of provincial sales was reported in half of the provinces in July, led by Alberta and followed by Quebec.

After leading the provincial declines in June, wholesale sales in Alberta bounced back, increasing by 5.2% to \$9.1 billion in July. Growth from Alberta was reported in all seven subsectors, with the largest growth coming from the building material and supplies subsector (+10.7% to \$1.5 billion), followed by the miscellaneous subsector (+13.7% to \$1.2 billion).

Wholesale sales in Quebec grew 0.5% to \$14.9 billion, led by the building material and supplies subsector (+5.3% to \$2.4 billion).

Partially offsetting the overall growth of provincial sales was a drop in sales from Ontario. Wholesale sales in the province fell 0.4% to \$42.4 billion in July, led by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (-4.6% to \$8.6 billion).

## Inventories grow in July

Wholesale inventories (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) rose 0.4% to \$128.4 billion in July.

An increase of inventories was reported in four of the seven subsectors in July, led by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+1.5% to \$37.8 billion), followed by the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector (+1.6% to \$16.2 billion).

The inventory-to-sales ratio decreased from 1.59 in June to 1.58 in July. This ratio is a measure of the time (in months) required to exhaust inventories if sales were to remain at their current levels.

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## Early estimates from the 2022 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey

Preliminary estimates for the 2022 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey are currently being processed and analyzed prior to their release. This portion of the article includes an early indication of some key figures, including petroleum products which are excluded from the monthly analysis. Final results will be released on December 11, 2023. Since these estimates were calculated based on a lower weighted response rate, they may be subject to a higher revision rate than the regular annual release.

The total operating revenue of Canadian wholesalers increased 26.5% in 2022 to \$1.6 trillion. The cost of goods sold was up 30.3% to \$1.4 trillion. Therefore, gross margins for wholesalers declined from 16.8% in 2021 to 14.3% for 2022. Growth in total operating revenue and cost of goods sold was driven by the petroleum and petroleum products subsector, and the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector. Together, these two subsectors accounted for 46.1% of the revenue in the wholesale industry, which translates to 70.1% of the growth in this sector.

Petroleum wholesalers, the largest contributor to wholesale revenues in Canada, saw their revenues increase 65.4% to \$544.4 billion in 2022. The cost of goods sold by the petroleum subsector rose 70.0% in 2022 to \$533.8 billion. During that time, the Raw Materials Price Index for energy and petroleum products rose by 53.3%, following a 42.8% increase in 2021. Gross margins for petroleum wholesalers decreased to 2.0% in 2022 from 4.3% in 2021 as the cost of goods sold grew at a higher rate than revenues.

The machinery, equipment and supplies wholesale subsector reported total operating revenue of \$213.2 billion in 2022. This represented an increase of 13.6%, with much of this growth attributed to the construction, forestry, mining and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies industry group. Growth recorded by the cost of goods sold reached 11.3%, while gross margins remained relatively the same, edging up from 26.5% in 2021 to 26.6% in 2022.

**Table 1**  
**Wholesale merchants' sales by industry—seasonally adjusted**

	July 2022	June 2023 <sup>f</sup>	July 2023 <sup>p</sup>	June to July 2023	July 2022 to July 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)</b>	<b>80,452</b>	<b>121,585</b>	<b>127,995</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>59.1</b>
<b>Total, wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding petroleum and oilseed and grain</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>81,125</b>	<b>81,327</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Total, wholesale sales (2012 chained dollars), excluding petroleum and oilseed and grain</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>61,323</b>	<b>61,473</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts</b>	<b>68,337</b>	<b>67,513</b>	<b>67,183</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>-1.7</b>
Farm product (excluding oilseed and grain)	1,218	1,252	1,249	-0.2	2.6
Oilseed and grain merchant <sup>1</sup>	..	2,619	2,480	-5.3	..
Petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons <sup>1</sup>	..	37,841	44,188	16.8	..
Food, beverage and tobacco	14,381	14,992	15,001	0.1	4.3
Food	12,770	13,301	13,188	-0.8	3.3
Beverage	907	915	925	1.0	2.0
Cigarette and tobacco product	488	526	640	21.6	31.2
Cannabis	217	249	248	-0.6	14.5
Personal and household goods	10,670	11,555	11,554	0.0	8.3
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,353	1,452	1,570	8.1	16.0
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	838	821	828	0.9	-1.1
Home furnishings	717	714	669	-6.2	-6.6
Personal goods	1,029	1,174	1,035	-11.8	0.6
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	6,733	7,395	7,452	0.8	10.7
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,148	1,129	1,121	-0.7	-2.4
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	12,045	13,612	14,145	3.9	17.4
Motor vehicle	9,441	10,963	11,419	4.2	21.0
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,512	2,575	2,653	3.0	5.6
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	92 <sup>E</sup>	74	73	-1.5	-20.4
Building material and supplies	12,594	11,651	11,968	2.7	-5.0
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	3,639	3,790	3,777	-0.3	3.8
Metal service centres	2,720	2,227	2,300	3.3	-15.4
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	6,235	5,633	5,891	4.6	-5.5
Machinery, equipment and supplies	17,096	17,804	17,410	-2.2	1.8
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	2,329	2,572	2,234	-13.2	-4.1
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	5,750	5,851	6,169	5.4	7.3
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	5,254	5,146	4,906	-4.7	-6.6

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

	July 2022	June 2023 <sup>r</sup>	July 2023 <sup>p</sup>	June to July 2023	July 2022 to July 2023
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	3,763	4,235	4,101	-3.2	9.0
Miscellaneous	12,322	10,260	10,001	-2.5	-18.8
Recyclable material	1,367	1,236	1,148	-7.1	-16.0
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,297	1,176	1,185	0.8	-8.6
Agricultural supplies	4,659	3,298	3,181	-3.5	-31.7
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,986	1,809	1,760	-2.7	-11.4
Mineral, ore and precious metal	..	566	513	-9.4	..
Log, wood chips, and other wood products	..	107	98	-8.8	..
Other miscellaneous	3,013	2,069	2,116	2.3	-29.8

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> 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**

	July 2022	June 2023 <sup>r</sup>	July 2023 <sup>p</sup>	June to July 2023	July 2022 to July 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Canada</b>	<b>80,452</b>	<b>81,125</b>	<b>81,327</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	394	385	395	2.6	0.2
Prince Edward Island	125	127	128	1.1	2.8
Nova Scotia	1,213	1,057	1,046	-1.0	-13.7
New Brunswick	773	748	755	1.0	-2.3
Quebec	14,113	14,862	14,943	0.5	5.9
Ontario	40,639	42,605	42,441	-0.4	4.4
Manitoba	2,013	1,927	1,892	-1.8	-6.0
Saskatchewan	4,412	3,039	2,970	-2.3	-32.7
Alberta	8,653	8,632	9,082	5.2	5.0
British Columbia	8,048	7,657	7,595	-0.8	-5.6
Yukon	x	x	x	x	x
Northwest Territories	39	54	40	-27.0	3.0
Nunavut	x	x	x	x	x

<sup>r</sup> revised

<sup>p</sup> 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**

	July 2022	June 2023 <sup>r</sup>	July 2023 <sup>p</sup>	June to July 2023	July 2022 to July 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
<b>Total, wholesale inventories</b>	<b>121,630</b>	<b>145,391</b>	<b>147,277</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>21.1</b>
Total, wholesale inventories (excluding Petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons)	121,609	127,825	128,362	0.4	5.6
Farm product (excluding oilseed and grain)	291	2,583	2,728	5.6	839.2
Petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons <sup>1</sup>	..	..	...	..	..
Food, beverage and tobacco	13,462	13,710	13,360	-2.6	-0.8
Food	11,917	12,026	11,579	-3.7	-2.8
Beverage	832	916	924	0.9	11.1
Cigarette and tobacco product	462	505	595	17.9	28.7
Cannabis	251	263	262	-0.5	4.4
Personal and household goods	19,496	21,388	21,283	-0.5	9.2
Textile, clothing and footwear	3,536	4,550	4,797	5.4	35.7
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	1,490	1,413	1,371	-3.0	-8.0
Home furnishings	1,993	1,915	1,753	-8.5	-12.0
Personal goods	2,781	3,106	2,801	-9.8	0.7
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	8,535	9,259	9,421	1.7	10.4
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,160	1,145	1,138	-0.6	-1.9
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	13,095	15,947	16,203	1.6	23.7
Motor vehicle	6,856	9,965	10,334	3.7	50.7
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	6,076	5,838	5,725	-1.9	-5.8
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	F	F	F	F	F
Building material and supplies	23,630	23,221	23,385	0.7	-1.0
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	6,814	6,960	6,911	-0.7	1.4
Metal service centres	6,780	6,271	6,469	3.2	-4.6
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	10,036	9,991	10,006	0.2	-0.3
Machinery, equipment and supplies	33,045	37,236	37,812	1.5	14.4
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	6,733	8,502	8,413	-1.1	25.0
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	14,855	17,738	18,508	4.3	24.6
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	4,727	3,574	3,424	-4.2	-27.6
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	6,729	7,422	7,468	0.6	11.0
Miscellaneous	18,612	15,945	15,946	0.0	-14.3
Recyclable material	1,142	1,094	1,229	12.4	7.6
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,286	1,456	1,430	-1.8	11.2
Agricultural supplies	9,153	7,113	7,143	0.4	-22.0
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,938	1,681	1,717	2.2	-11.4
Mineral, ore and precious metal	..	200	230	14.9	..
Log, wood chips, and other wood	..	76	77	1.0	..
Other miscellaneous	5,093	4,325	4,121	-4.7	-19.1

r revised

p preliminary

... not available for a specific reference period

... not applicable

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 July will be released on October 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](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).