

Wholesale trade, August 2023

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Wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) increased 2.3% to \$83.0 billion in August. Sales increased in five of the seven subsectors, led by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector and the miscellaneous subsector. On an annual basis, wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) were higher (+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.

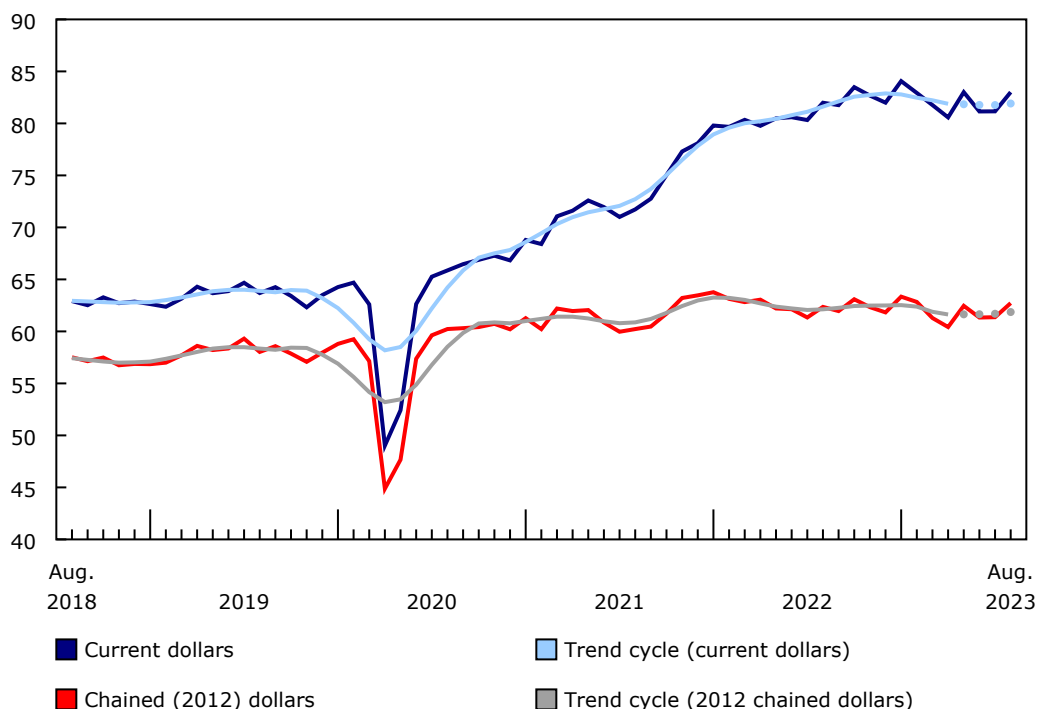
Based on respondent feedback, the strike at the ports in British Columbia affected the business activities of approximately 1.4% of Canadian wholesalers in August, which is lower than the reported impact in July (3.7%). In August, a supply shortage or material delays and transportation disruptions impacted the wholesale businesses the most. On an unadjusted basis, the largest estimated impacts on sales in dollar terms were in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector.

In volume terms, wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) grew 2.2% in August.

Chart 1

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

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.



Statistics Canada
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Canada

Higher sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector lead wholesale sales growth in August

Sales in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector grew by 5.2% to \$18.6 billion in August, recording their first increase in three months. The increase was widespread across all four industry groups in August, led by higher sales in the farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment industry group (+17.6% to \$2.6 billion). The increase in the subsector sales aligns with the [higher imports of industrial machinery and equipment](#) (+7.5%) reported in August.

The miscellaneous subsector (+6.9% to \$10.3 billion) also contributed to the sector growth in August. A majority of the industry groups reported a decline in sales. However, the agricultural supplies industry group (+22.0% to \$3.5 billion) and the recyclable material industry group (+21.3% to \$1.3 billion) recorded significant growth that offset the declines and led the subsector to report an increase. Higher sales in the agricultural supplies industry group were due to shipments of completed orders and [higher prices of related products](#), such as agricultural chemical products.

The third subsector to report a gain in August was the building material and supplies subsector, up 1.0% to \$12.0 billion. Of the subsector's three industry groups, two reported a monthly increase, led by the electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies industry group (+2.9% to \$3.9 billion).

Sales in Ontario lead provincial gains

A majority of the provinces reported growth in wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain), led by Ontario and followed by Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

Wholesale sales (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) in Ontario increased by 2.1% to \$43.6 billion in August. Growth in Ontario was reported in six of the seven subsectors, with the largest growth coming from the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+6.4% to \$9.3 billion), followed by the miscellaneous subsector (+6.2% to \$4.9 billion).

The second-largest provincial growth was in Saskatchewan, up 12.4% to \$3.4 billion in August. Higher sales were recorded in the miscellaneous subsector (+15.1% to \$1.4 billion) and the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+19.8% to \$1.1 billion).

Sales in British Columbia rose 4.6% to \$7.9 billion. Growth was reported in all of the subsectors, with the largest increase coming from the miscellaneous subsector (+15.5% to \$937.1 million), followed by the food, beverage and tobacco subsector (+4.5% to \$1.6 billion) and the building material and supplies subsector (+3.4% to \$2.1 billion).

Inventories continue to grow in August

Wholesale inventories (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons and excluding oilseed and grain) rose 0.5% to \$128.5 billion in August.

Increased inventories were reported in four of the seven subsectors, led by the building material and supplies subsector (+2.8% to \$23.7 billion), followed by the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (+1.1% to \$38.2 billion).

The inventory-to-sales ratio fell from 1.58 in July to 1.55 in August. 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

	August 2022	July 2023 ^f	August 2023 ^p	July to August 2023	August 2022 to August 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)	81,987	125,163	130,353	4.1	59.0
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding petroleum and oilseed and grain	..	81,160	83,004	2.3	1.1
Total, wholesale sales (2012 chained dollars), excluding petroleum and oilseed and grain	..	61,366	62,719	2.2	..
Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts	69,794	67,025	68,816	2.7	-1.5
Farm product (excluding oilseed and grain)	1,126	1,280	1,338	4.5	18.8
Oilseed and grain merchant ¹	..	2,541	2,274	-10.5	..
Petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons ¹	..	41,461	45,074	8.7	..
Food, beverage and tobacco	14,693	14,897	14,871	-0.2	1.2
Food	13,039	13,103	13,070	-0.3	0.2
Beverage	909	923	919	-0.5	1.1
Cigarette and tobacco product	522	617	612	-0.8	17.2
Cannabis	223	253	270	6.9	21.5
Personal and household goods	10,833	11,658	11,707	0.4	8.1
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,355	1,559	1,495	-4.1	10.3
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	739	837	805	-3.8	9.0
Home furnishings	724	681	646	-5.2	-10.8
Personal goods	981	984	1,047	6.4	6.7
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	7,034	7,597	7,715	1.6	9.7
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,107	1,130	1,163	2.9	5.0
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	12,193	14,136	14,188	0.4	16.4
Motor vehicle	9,749	11,420	11,574	1.3	18.7
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,365	2,643	2,544	-3.7	7.6
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	79	72	70	-3.0	-11.5
Building material and supplies	12,449	11,880	11,996	1.0	-3.6
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	3,647	3,781	3,890	2.9	6.7
Metal service centres	2,604	2,267	2,219	-2.1	-14.8
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	6,198	5,833	5,887	0.9	-5.0
Machinery, equipment and supplies	17,658	17,653	18,577	5.2	5.2
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	2,440	2,242	2,636	17.6	8.1
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	6,197	6,298	6,517	3.5	5.2
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	5,004	4,943	5,147	4.1	2.9

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

	August 2022	July 2023 ^r	August 2023 ^p	July to August 2023	August 2022 to August 2023
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	4,017	4,170	4,276	2.5	6.4
Miscellaneous	13,040	9,658	10,326	6.9	-20.8
Recyclable material	1,321	1,081	1,312	21.3	-0.7
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,269	1,176	1,171	-0.5	-7.8
Agricultural supplies	5,511	2,895	3,532	22.0	-35.9
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	2,047	1,789	1,766	-1.3	-13.8
Mineral, ore and precious metal	..	516	556	7.8	..
Log, wood chips, and other wood products	..	90	70	-22.1	..
Other miscellaneous	2,892	2,111	1,920	-9.1	-33.6

^r revised

^p preliminary

.. not available for a specific reference period

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

	August 2022	July 2023 ^r	August 2023 ^p	July to August 2023	August 2022 to August 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	82,122	81,161	83,004	2.3	1.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	400	398	413	5.7	3.1
Prince Edward Island	118	117	110	-5.8	-6.8
Nova Scotia	1,158	1,086	1,165	7.3	0.6
New Brunswick	791	734	768	4.6	-2.9
Quebec	14,604	14,750	14,662	-0.6	0.4
Ontario	41,516	42,670	43,572	2.1	5.0
Manitoba	2,014	1,843	1,913	3.8	-5.0
Saskatchewan	4,404	3,003	3,374	12.4	-23.4
Alberta	9,161	8,929	9,065	1.5	-1.0
British Columbia	7,889	7,550	7,895	4.6	0.1
Yukon	x	x	x	x	x
Northwest Territories	37	39	34	-14.0	-8.9
Nunavut	x	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

	August 2022	July 2023 ^r	August 2023 ^p	July to August 2023	August 2022 to August 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale inventories	123,561	144,525	145,125	0.4	17.5
Total, wholesale inventories (excluding petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons)	123,465	127,812	128,479	0.5	4.1
Farm product (excluding oilseed and grain)	321	359	337	-6.0	5.2
Petroleum, petroleum products, and other hydrocarbons ¹
Food, beverage and tobacco	13,661	13,434	13,752	2.4	0.7
Food	12,110	11,600	11,820	1.9	-2.4
Beverage	826	904	912	0.9	10.3
Cigarette and tobacco product	474	680	752	10.5	58.5
Cannabis	251	251	269	7.5	7.3
Personal and household goods	19,814	21,262	20,711	-2.6	4.5
Textile, clothing and footwear	3,974	4,733	4,534	-4.2	14.1
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	1,463	1,362	1,351	-0.8	-7.6
Home furnishings	2,031	1,765	1,734	-1.8	-14.6
Personal goods	2,696	2,860	2,807	-1.9	4.1
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	8,476	9,405	9,173	-2.5	8.2
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,175	1,138	1,112	-2.3	-5.3
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	13,511	16,142	16,405	1.6	21.4
Motor vehicle	7,433	10,262	10,438	1.7	40.4
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	5,963	5,736	5,845	1.9	-2.0
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	F	F	F	F	F
Building material and supplies	24,257	23,046	23,688	2.8	-2.3
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	7,098	6,937	7,110	2.5	0.2
Metal service centres	6,961	6,449	6,780	5.1	-2.6
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	10,198	9,659	9,799	1.5	-3.9
Machinery, equipment and supplies	33,524	37,758	38,160	1.1	13.8
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	6,465	8,221	8,137	-1.0	25.9
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	15,345	18,534	18,897	2.0	23.1
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	4,598	3,459	3,450	-0.3	-25.0
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	7,116	7,544	7,675	1.7	7.9
Miscellaneous	18,472	15,811	15,426	-2.4	-16.5
Recyclable material	1,133	1,279	1,371 ^E	7.2	21.0
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,329	1,425	1,410	-1.1	6.1
Agricultural supplies	8,949	7,040	6,713	-4.6	-25.0
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,931	1,746	1,744	-0.1	-9.7
Mineral, ore and precious metal	..	229	213	-7.1	..
Log, wood chips, and other wood	..	76	75	0.4	..
Other miscellaneous	5,130	4,017	3,900	-2.9	-24.0

^r revised

^p preliminary

.. not available for a specific reference period

^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 September will be released on November 15.

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).