

Retail trade, August 2023

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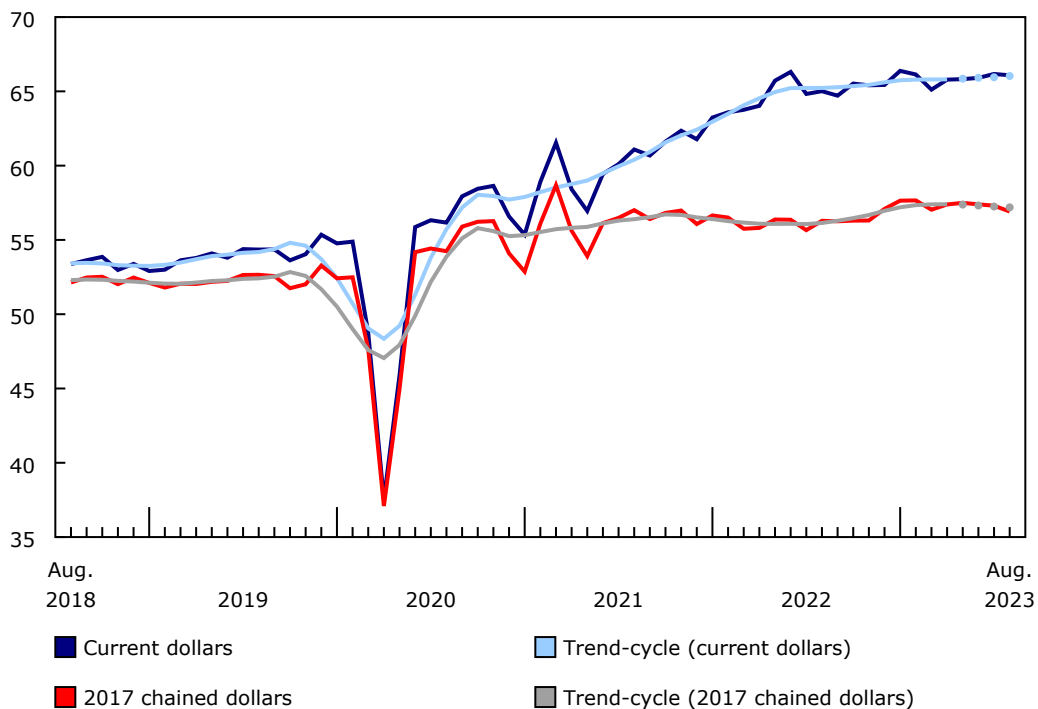
Retail sales decreased 0.1% to \$66.1 billion in August. Sales were down in six of nine subsectors and were led by decreases at motor vehicle and parts dealers (-0.9%).

Core retail sales—which exclude gasoline stations and fuel vendors and motor vehicle and parts dealers—were down 0.3% in August.

In volume terms, retail sales declined 0.7% in August.

Chart 1
Retail sales decrease in August

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 [20-10-0056-01](#) and [20-10-0067-01](#).

Port strike in British Columbia

Based on respondent feedback, approximately 12% of Canadian retailers reported that their business activities in August had been affected by the strike at the ports in British Columbia.



Sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers fall

The decrease in retail sales in August was led by lower sales in the motor vehicle and parts dealers subsector (-0.9%), down for a second consecutive month. Lower sales were reported at new car dealers (-1.1%) and used car dealers (-0.5%). Other motor vehicle dealers (+1.1%) were the only store type in this subsector to increase in August.

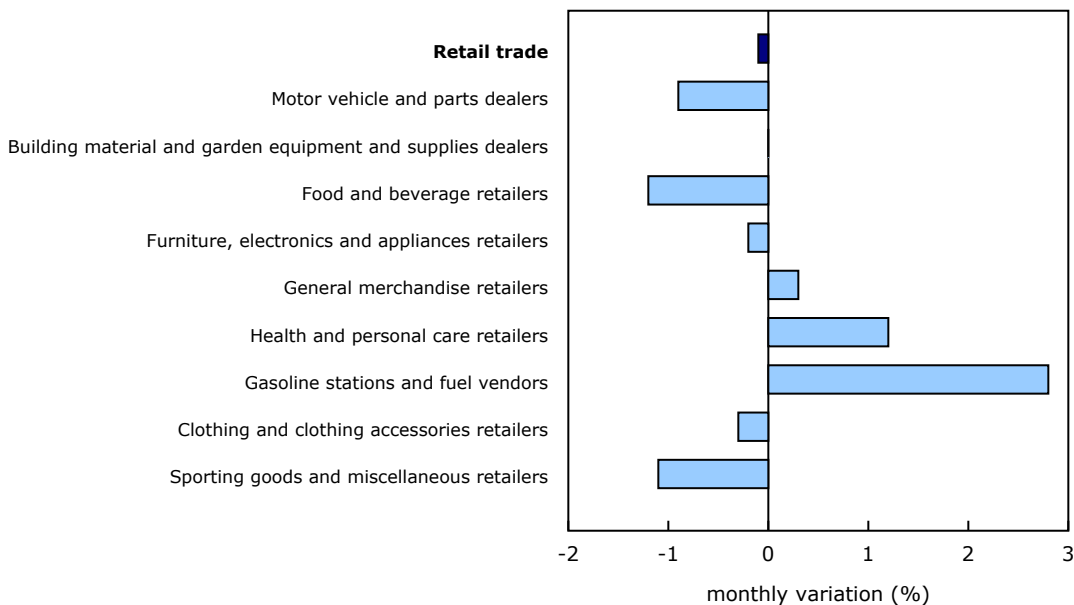
The largest increase in retail sales in August was observed at gasoline stations and fuel vendors (+2.8%). In volume terms, sales at gasoline stations and fuel vendors decreased 2.9%.

Core retail sales decline

Core retail sales decreased 0.3% in August, led by lower sales at food and beverage retailers (-1.2%) and, to a lesser extent, sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, book and miscellaneous retailers (-1.1%). Sales at food and beverage retailers were down from lower sales at supermarkets and other grocery retailers (except convenience retailers) (-1.6%) and beer, wine and liquor retailers (-1.2%).

The largest increase to core retail sales came from health and personal care retailers (+1.2%).

Chart 2 Sales decrease in six of nine subsectors in August



Source(s): Table 20-10-0056-01.

Sales down in six provinces

Retail sales decreased in six provinces in August. The largest provincial decrease was observed in British Columbia (-1.1%), led by lower sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers. In the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Vancouver, sales were down 1.6%.

In Quebec, retail sales were down 0.5% in August. In the CMA of Montréal, retail sales edged down 0.2%.

The largest provincial increase in August was observed in Alberta (+0.9%). This increase was driven by higher sales at gasoline stations and fuel vendors.

Retail sales dropped 22.1% in the Northwest Territories in August, coinciding with wildfire evacuations.

Retail e-commerce sales in Canada

On a seasonally adjusted basis, retail e-commerce sales were down 2.0% to \$3.9 billion in August, accounting for 5.8% of total retail trade, compared with 6.0% in July.

Advance retail indicator

Statistics Canada is providing an advance estimate of retail sales, which suggests that sales were unchanged in September. Owing to its early nature, this figure will be revised. This unofficial estimate was calculated based on responses received from 36.5% of companies surveyed. The average final response rate for the survey over the previous 12 months was 88.7%.

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 unofficial estimate 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 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, as no seasonal pattern has been 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.

Some common e-commerce transactions, such as travel and accommodation bookings, ticket purchases and financial transactions, are not included in Canadian retail sales figures.

Total retail sales expressed in volume terms are calculated by deflating current-dollar values using consumer price indexes.

Find more [statistics on retail trade](#).

Next release

Data on retail trade for September will be released on November 24.

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

	August 2022	July 2023 ^r	August 2023 ^p	July to August 2023	August 2022 to August 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	65,011	66,170	66,079	-0.1	1.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	959	986	958	-2.8	-0.1
Prince Edward Island	282	298	305	2.3	8.2
Nova Scotia	1,714	1,725	1,757	1.8	2.5
New Brunswick	1,368	1,457	1,443	-1.0	5.4
Quebec	14,352	14,928	14,857	-0.5	3.5
Montréal	7,114	7,434	7,416	-0.2	4.2
Ontario	24,321	24,737	24,731	-0.0	1.7
Toronto	11,042	11,305	11,334	0.3	2.6
Manitoba	2,231	2,192	2,228	1.6	-0.1
Saskatchewan	2,110	2,071	2,071	-0.0	-1.9
Alberta	8,312	8,427	8,502	0.9	2.3
British Columbia	9,145	9,114	9,010	-1.1	-1.5
Vancouver	4,560	4,534	4,464	-1.6	-2.1
Yukon	93	107	105	-1.6	13.5
Northwest Territories	76	77	60	-22.1	-20.7
Nunavut	48	50	51	1.8	6.2

^r revised

^p preliminary

Note(s): Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Source(s): Table [20-10-0056-01](#).

Table 2
Retail sales, 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 retail trade (current dollars)	65,011	66,170	66,079	-0.1	1.6
Retail e-commerce	3,775	3,945	3,864	-2.0	2.3
Total retail trade (2017 chained dollars)	56,287	57,304	56,911	-0.7	1.1
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	48,590	48,683	48,749	0.1	0.3
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations and fuel vendors	41,186	42,153	42,036	-0.3	2.1
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	16,421	17,487	17,331	-0.9	5.5
New car dealers	12,635	13,694	13,541	-1.1	7.2
Used car dealers	1,389	1,376	1,369	-0.5	-1.5
Other motor vehicle dealers	1,194	1,147	1,160	1.1	-2.9
Automotive parts, accessories and tire retailers	1,202	1,270	1,260	-0.7	4.8
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	4,219	3,891	3,891	-0.0	-7.8
Food and beverage retailers	12,493	12,979	12,830	-1.2	2.7
Supermarkets and other grocery retailers (except convenience)	8,610	9,158	9,011	-1.6	4.6
Convenience retailers and vending machine operators	710	746	752	0.8	6.0
Specialty food retailers	883	869	887	2.1	0.6
Beer, wine and liquor retailers	2,290	2,205	2,179	-1.2	-4.8
Furniture, home furnishings, electronics and appliances retailers	3,639	3,681	3,675	-0.2	1.0
Furniture retailers	1,260	1,196	1,176	-1.6	-6.7
Floor covering, window treatment and other home furnishing retailers	743	680	688	1.1	-7.5
Electronics and appliances retailers	1,635	1,806	1,811	0.3	10.8
General merchandise retailers	8,491	8,731	8,758	0.3	3.1
Health and personal care retailers	5,021	5,379	5,443	1.2	8.4
Gasoline stations and fuel vendors	7,404	6,530	6,712	2.8	-9.3
Clothing, clothing accessories, shoes, jewellery, luggage and leather goods retailers	3,395	3,599	3,589	-0.3	5.7
Clothing and clothing accessories retailers	2,640	2,785	2,790	0.2	5.7
Shoe retailers	371	420	413	-1.6	11.2
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods retailers	383	394	386	-2.0	0.8
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, book, and miscellaneous retailers	3,929	3,894	3,851	-1.1	-2.0
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument and book retailers and news dealers	1,455	1,411	1,408	-0.2	-3.3
Miscellaneous store retailers	2,474	2,483	2,443	-1.6	-1.2
Cannabis retailers ¹	390	447	464	3.9	19.1

^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 [20-10-0056-01](#) and [20-10-0067-01](#).

Table 3
Retail sales at 2017 constant prices, 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 retail trade at 2017 constant prices¹	56,612	57,632	57,283	-0.6	1.2
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	42,262	42,701	42,330	-0.9	0.2
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations and fuel vendors	37,324	37,393	37,175	-0.6	-0.4
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	14,350	14,931	14,953	0.1	4.2
New car dealers	10,961	11,588	11,601	0.1	5.8
Used car dealers	1,209	1,167	1,176	0.8	-2.7
Other motor vehicle dealers	1,141	1,136	1,146	0.9	0.4
Automotive parts, accessories and tire retailers	1,040	1,041	1,030	-1.1	-1.0
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	3,823	3,822	3,800	-0.6	-0.6
Food and beverage retailers	10,572	10,388	10,234	-1.5	-3.2
Supermarkets and other grocery retailers (except convenience retailers)	7,267	7,330	7,187	-2.0	-1.1
Convenience retailers and vending machine operators	578	569	572	0.5	-1.0
Specialty food retailers	746	711	723	1.7	-3.1
Beer, wine and liquor retailers	1,981	1,778	1,752	-1.5	-11.6
Furniture, home furnishings, electronics and appliances retailers	3,501	3,610	3,593	-0.5	2.6
Furniture retailers	1,067	1,026	995	-3.0	-6.7
Floor covering, window treatment and other home furnishing retailers	669	626	632	1.0	-5.5
Electronics and appliances retailers	1,766	1,959	1,966	0.4	11.3
General merchandise retailers	7,456	7,343	7,323	-0.3	-1.8
Health and personal care retailers	4,979	5,100	5,142	0.8	3.3
Gasoline stations and fuel vendors	4,938	5,308	5,155	-2.9	4.4
Clothing, clothing accessories, shoes, jewellery, luggage and leather goods retailers	3,359	3,540	3,522	-0.5	4.9
Clothing and clothing accessories retailers	2,681	2,796	2,799	0.1	4.4
Shoe retailers	378	437	437	0.0	15.6
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods retailers	300	307	286	-6.8	-4.7
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, book and miscellaneous retailers	3,635	3,589	3,560	-0.8	-2.1
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument and book retailers and news dealers	1,364	1,307	1,305	-0.2	-4.3
Miscellaneous store retailers	2,270	2,282	2,255	-1.2	-0.7
Cannabis retailers ²	467	562	586	4.3	25.5

^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 20-10-0067-01.

Available tables: [20-10-0056-01](#) and [20-10-0067-01](#).

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