

Retail trade, March 2019

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Retail sales increased for the second consecutive month, rising 1.1% to \$51.3 billion in March. Sales were higher in 7 of 11 subsectors, representing 39% of retail trade.

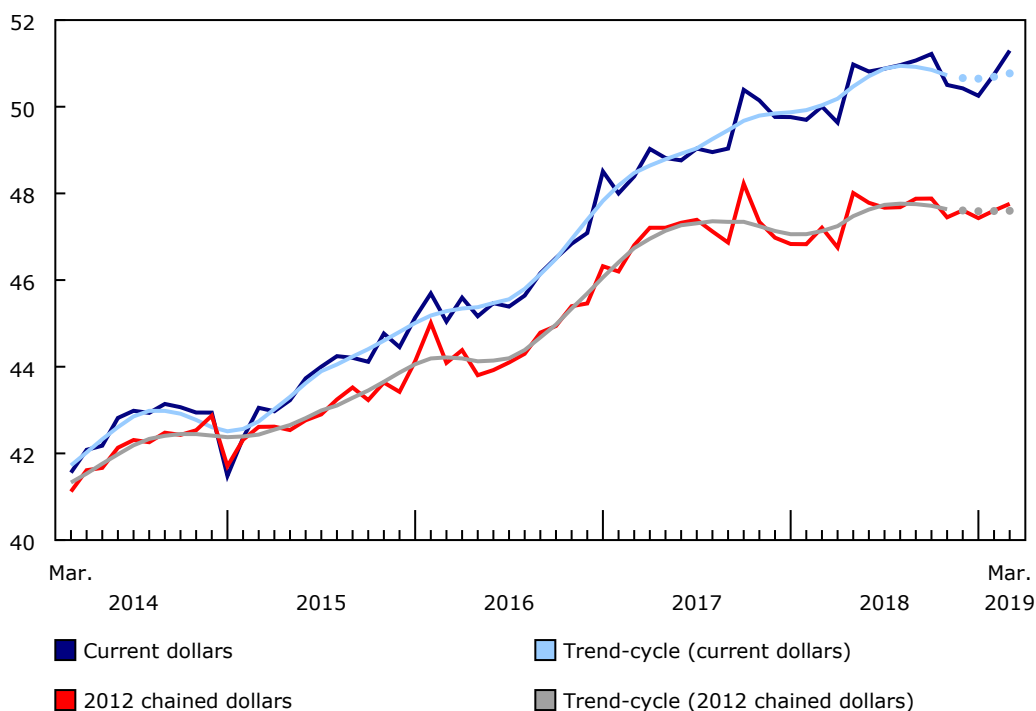
Higher sales at gasoline stations and building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were the main contributors to the increase.

After removing the effects of price changes, retail sales in volume terms were up 0.3%.

For the first quarter, retail sales edged up 0.1% following a 0.5% decrease in the fourth quarter. In volume terms, retail sales edged down 0.1% in the first quarter.

Chart 1
Retail sales increase in March

billions of dollars



Source(s): Tables [20-10-0008-01](#) and [20-10-0078-01](#).

Retail sales up in seven subsectors

Sales at gasoline stations increased for the second consecutive month, up 6.0% in March due in large part to higher prices at the pump. In volume terms, sales at gasoline stations were relatively unchanged from February.

Following a decline in February, sales at building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers increased 4.3% in March. This was the third increase in four months.



Sales at clothing and clothing accessories stores rose 3.4% in March. While all store types within this subsector reported increases, the gain was led largely by higher sales at clothing stores.

Following a 1.7% increase in February, sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers decreased 0.7% in March. Lower sales at new car dealers (-2.2%) more than offset the gains at all other store types within this subsector, as other motor vehicle dealers (+12.2%), used car dealers (+5.0%) and automotive parts, accessories and tire stores (+1.0%) were all up in March. Despite the overall decline in the subsector, unadjusted sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers were above the level observed in March 2018.

Sales increase in nine provinces

Total retail sales increased for the second consecutive month in Alberta (+2.4%) on the strength of higher sales in all subsectors. The majority of the provincial gain stemmed from higher sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations.

In Ontario, retail sales increased 0.8% on the strength of higher sales at gasoline stations. Sales in the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Toronto increased 2.5%.

Retail sales in Quebec (+0.7%) increased for the third consecutive month. Sales in the CMA of Montréal were up 0.4%, the second monthly increase in a row.

E-commerce sales by Canadian retailers

The figures in the sections below are based on unadjusted (that is, not seasonally adjusted) estimates.

On an unadjusted basis, retail e-commerce sales were \$1.6 billion in March, accounting for 3.1% of total retail trade, compared with 2.0% of total retail trade in March 2016—the year when official monthly statistics for retail e-commerce were first published. On a year-over-year basis, retail e-commerce increased 20.0%, while total unadjusted retail sales increased 1.9%.

Note to readers

All data in this release are seasonally adjusted and expressed in current dollars, unless otherwise noted. For information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

As of October 17, 2018, the date of legalization, the monthly retail trade survey now collects and disseminates sales of licensed cannabis stores. This includes both in-store and Internet-based sales.

For more information regarding cannabis statistics, consult the [Cannabis Stats Hub](#).

Seasonally adjusted estimates for cannabis store retailers are presented in unadjusted form as there is no seasonal pattern 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.

Statistics Canada's retail e-commerce figures include the electronic sales of two distinct types of retailers. The first type do not have a storefront. These businesses are commonly referred to as pure-play Internet retailers and are classified to North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 45411—Electronic Shopping and Mail Order Houses. The second type have a storefront and are commonly referred to as brick and mortar retailers. If the online operations of a brick and mortar retailer are separately managed, they too are classified to NAICS 45411.

Common electronic commerce transactions, such as travel and accommodation bookings, ticket purchases and financial transactions are not included in Canadian retail sales figures.

For more information on retail e-commerce in Canada, see [Retail E-Commerce in Canada](#).

Total retail sales expressed in volume terms are calculated by deflating current dollar values using consumer price indexes. The retail sales series in chained (2012) dollars is a chained Fisher volume index with 2012 as the reference year. For more information, see [Calculation of Volume of Retail Trade Sales](#).

For information on trend-cycle data, see the [StatCan Blog](#) and [Trend-cycle estimates – Frequently asked questions](#).

Real-time tables

Real-time tables 20-10-0054-01 and 20-10-0079-01 will be updated on June 3.

Next release

Data on retail trade for April will be released on June 21.

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

	March 2018	February 2019 ^r	March 2019 ^p	February to March 2019	March 2018 to March 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	50,005	50,745	51,295	1.1	2.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	764	738	769	4.1	0.6
Prince Edward Island	201	206	212	2.7	5.6
Nova Scotia	1,329	1,345	1,385	3.0	4.2
New Brunswick	1,072	1,082	1,104	2.1	3.0
Quebec	10,748	11,034	11,106	0.7	3.3
Montréal	5,030	5,398	5,423	0.4	7.8
Ontario	18,432	18,809	18,951	0.8	2.8
Toronto	7,383	7,771	7,967	2.5	7.9
Manitoba	1,721	1,763	1,750	-0.7	1.7
Saskatchewan	1,611	1,619	1,653	2.1	2.6
Alberta	6,782	6,763	6,923	2.4	2.1
British Columbia	7,177	7,213	7,266	0.7	1.2
Vancouver	3,423	3,331	3,381	1.5	-1.2
Yukon	67	69	71	3.7	6.5
Northwest Territories	66	64	65	0.5	-1.7
Nunavut	36	39	39	0.4	8.6

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

Source(s): Table [20-10-0008-01](#).

Table 2
Retail sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	March 2018	February 2019 ^r	March 2019 ^p	February to March 2019	March 2018 to March 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade (current dollars)	50,005	50,745	51,295	1.1	2.6
Total retail trade (2012 chained dollars)	47,208	47,603	47,759	0.3	1.2
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	36,527	36,963	37,603	1.7	2.9
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations	31,003	31,786	32,115	1.0	3.6
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	13,479	13,782	13,692	-0.7	1.6
New car dealers	10,827	11,072	10,823	-2.2	-0.0
Used car dealers	948	1,014	1,064	5.0	12.3
Other motor vehicle dealers	886	827	927	12.2	4.7
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	819	870	878	1.0	7.2
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,594	1,544	1,595	3.3	0.1
Furniture stores	988	955	976	2.2	-1.2
Home furnishings stores	606	589	619	5.1	2.1
Electronics and appliance stores	1,229	1,220	1,245	2.0	1.3
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	3,150	3,083	3,215	4.3	2.1
Food and beverage stores	10,200	10,696	10,691	-0.1	4.8
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	6,942	7,353	7,355	0.0	5.9
Convenience stores	666	678	678	-0.0	1.7
Specialty food stores	651	659	649	-1.5	-0.4
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,940	2,006	2,010	0.2	3.6
Health and personal care stores	3,896	3,999	4,017	0.4	3.1
Gasoline stations	5,524	5,176	5,487	6.0	-0.7
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,878	2,900	2,999	3.4	4.2
Clothing stores	2,221	2,243	2,318	3.4	4.4
Shoe stores	348	341	351	2.9	1.0
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	309	316	330	4.3	6.7
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	1,053	1,041	1,036	-0.4	-1.5
General merchandise stores	5,741	5,983	5,983	-0.0	4.2
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,262	1,321	1,334	1.0	5.7
Cannabis stores ¹		52	61	17.2	

^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 [20-10-0008-01](#) and [20-10-0078-01](#).

Table 3
Retail sales by industry at 2012 constant prices – Seasonally adjusted

	March 2019 ^P	January to February 2019	February 2018 to February 2019	February to March 2019	March 2018 to March 2019
	millions of dollars	% change			
Total retail trade at 2012 constant prices¹	47,819	0.3	1.7	0.4	1.3
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	35,903	0.0	1.5	0.9	2.0
Total excluding motor vehicles and parts dealers and gasoline stations	30,419	0.0	1.5	1.1	2.1
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	11,916	1.1	2.2	-1.2	-1.0
New car dealers	9,370	2.9	2.4	-2.9	-3.0
Used car dealers	918	-1.9	5.7	4.8	9.7
Other motor vehicle dealers	803	-10.8	-4.4	10.9	5.9
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	826	-3.2	1.7	0.7	4.8
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,522	-0.4	-0.2	3.7	-1.2
Furniture stores	934	-1.3	-0.2	2.5	-2.4
Home furnishings stores	588	1.1	-0.4	5.6	0.9
Electronics and appliance stores	1,469	-3.8	-0.4	2.8	5.7
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	2,880	-3.5	-5.7	4.3	-1.2
Food and beverage stores	9,529	0.5	2.0	-0.1	1.8
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	6,582	1.1	2.5	-0.1	2.5
Convenience stores	556	-2.1	-2.6	0.5	-2.5
Specialty food stores	568	-0.3	-1.0	-1.7	-3.2
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,823	-0.8	2.5	0.2	2.2
Health and personal care stores	4,209	-0.0	4.6	0.5	4.9
Gasoline stations	5,484	0.1	1.7	-0.0	1.8
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,917	-1.2	0.5	3.8	2.0
Clothing stores	2,273	-2.8	0.0	3.7	2.1
Shoe stores	344	-2.4	-3.2	3.6	-0.9
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	300	15.7	9.1	4.2	5.3
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	1,004	0.2	-3.6	0.0	-2.1
General merchandise stores	5,655	3.5	4.1	-0.2	2.8
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,233	-2.3	3.6	0.7	3.2
Cannabis stores ²	55	-5.6		9.7	

^P preliminary

1. Using 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 20-10-0078-01.

Table 4
Retail e-commerce sales – Unadjusted

	March 2018	February 2019	March 2019	March 2019
	millions of dollars			% change
Retail trade sales (44-453)	47,832	40,157	48,578	1.6
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses sales (45411)	933	974	1,123	20.3
Retail e-commerce ¹	1,304	1,328	1,565	20.0
Retail e-commerce ¹ (% of total retail trade)	2.68	3.23	3.15	...

... not applicable

1. Retail e-commerce includes e-sales from both store retailers included in the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) 44-453 and non-store retailers included in electronic shopping and mail order houses (NAICS 45411).

Note(s): For more information on retail e-commerce, see [Retail E-Commerce in Canada](#).

Source(s): Table [20-10-0072-01](#).

Available tables: [20-10-0008-01](#), [20-10-0072-01](#) and [20-10-0078-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [2406](#) and [2408](#).

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300;
STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jason Aston (613-951-0746; jason.aston@canada.ca), Retail and Service Industries Division.