

Retail trade, May 2020

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Retail sales were up 18.7% in May to \$41.8 billion. Motor vehicle and parts dealers led the growth, followed by an increase in sales in almost all other subsectors. Although sales increased in May, retail sales remain 20.0% below February levels.

In comparison, retail sales rose 19.7% in the United States in May.

Following COVID-19-related store closures in April, a number of provinces moved ahead with plans to re-open their respective economies, which impacted the retail sector in May.

Based on respondent feedback, approximately 23% of retailers were closed during May. The average length of shutdown was five business days. Despite these challenging times, many retailers reported their sales figures and Statistics Canada thanks them for their continued collaboration.

Sales were up in 10 out of 11 subsectors in May. Motor vehicle and parts dealers, general merchandise stores, as well as clothing and clothing accessories stores were the main contributors to the strength seen in May. Although most subsectors were up in May, it is important to note they have not rebounded to sales levels seen before COVID-19.

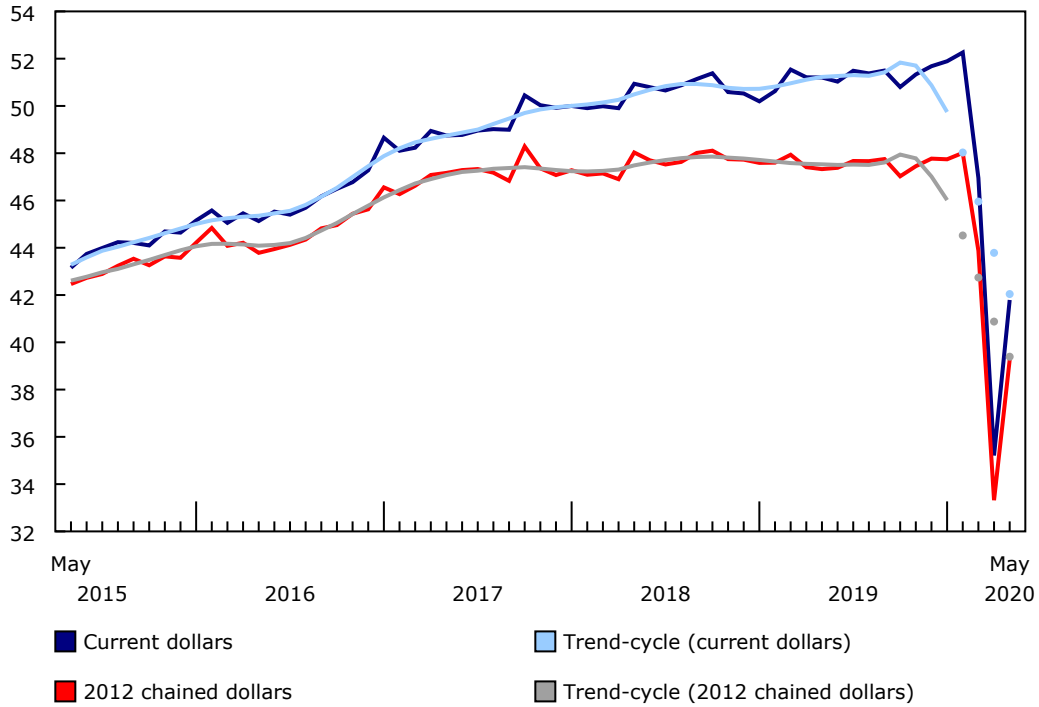
Retail sales in volume terms were up 17.8% in May, following a record decline of 24.1% in April.

Given the rapidly-evolving economic situation, Statistics Canada is providing an advance estimate of June sales. Early estimates suggest that retail sales increased by 24.5% in June. Owing to its preliminary nature, this figure should be expected to be revised.



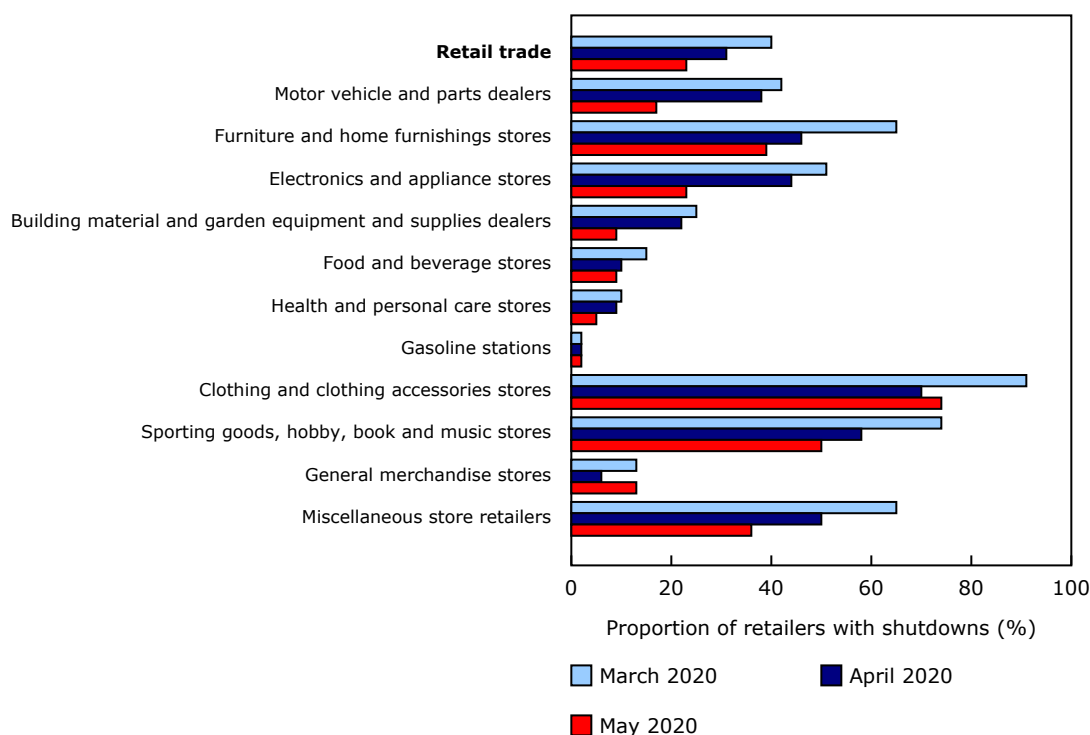
Chart 1
Retail sales increase in May

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 three previous months. For more information, see the note to readers.
Source(s): Tables [20-10-0008-01](#) and [20-10-0078-01](#).

Chart 2
Proportion of Canadian retailers with shutdowns decreases in May



Source(s): Monthly Retail Trade Survey (2406).

Sales up in all but one subsector

Retail sales were up in almost every subsector in May. Most subsectors experienced large monthly increases after numerous restrictions relating to COVID-19 were lifted. These increases coincided with the re-opening of many brick-and-mortar retail locations after being subject to closures in mid-March and April. The only subsector down in May was food and beverage stores (-2.0%), which experienced a record-high increase in March (+23.2%).

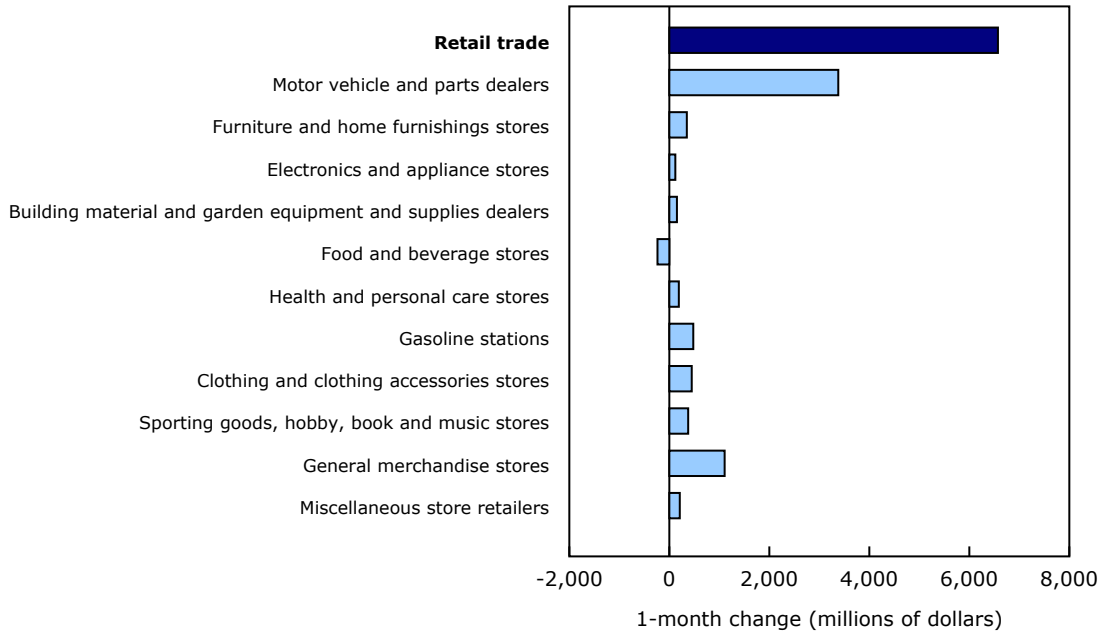
Sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers (+66.3%) were up for the first time in three months in May, to \$8.5 billion. Although sales increased in May, sales in the subsector have not returned to pre-pandemic levels seen in February.

General merchandise stores saw sales increase 20.4% in May.

Clothing and clothing accessories (+92.6%), sporting goods, hobby, book and music (+101.2%) as well as furniture and home furnishings (+58.6%) stores all experienced significant increases in sales, following large drops in April.

Sales at the pump were up 17.1%, following the largest decline on record in April (-35.4%), while the volume of gasoline sold increased 11.1% in May.

Chart 3
Sales up in all but one subsector



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

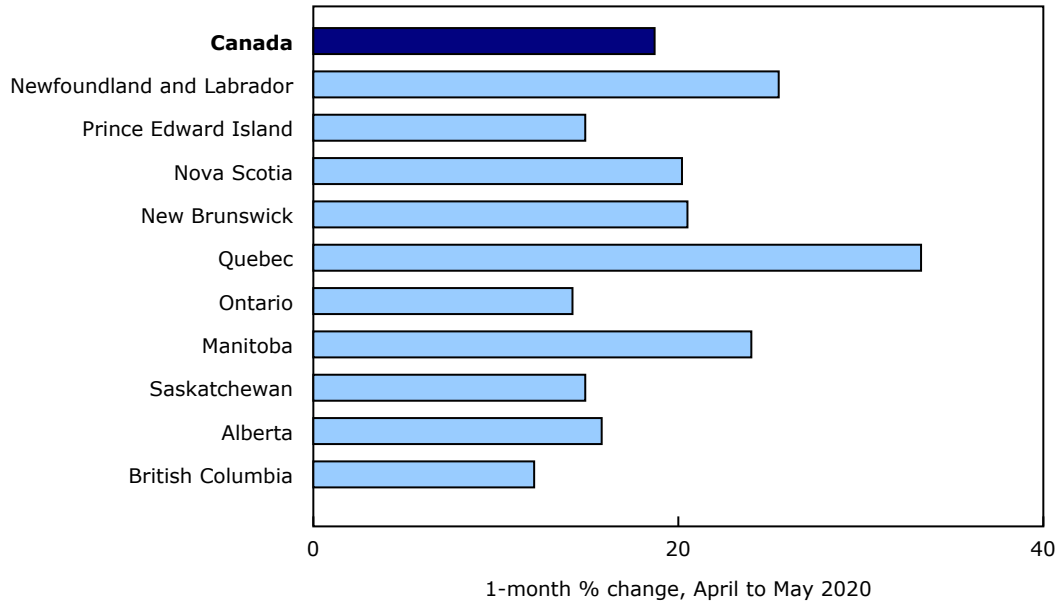
Sales up in every province, led by Quebec and Ontario

Sales were up in every province in May. These monthly increases were largely attributable to the motor vehicle and parts dealers and general merchandise stores subsectors.

Sales increased by 33.3% in Quebec. Sales in the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Montréal were up 32.0%.

Retail sales were up 14.2% in Ontario, following a 30.9% decrease in April. Sales in the CMA of Toronto were up 8.0%.

Chart 4
Sales up in every province



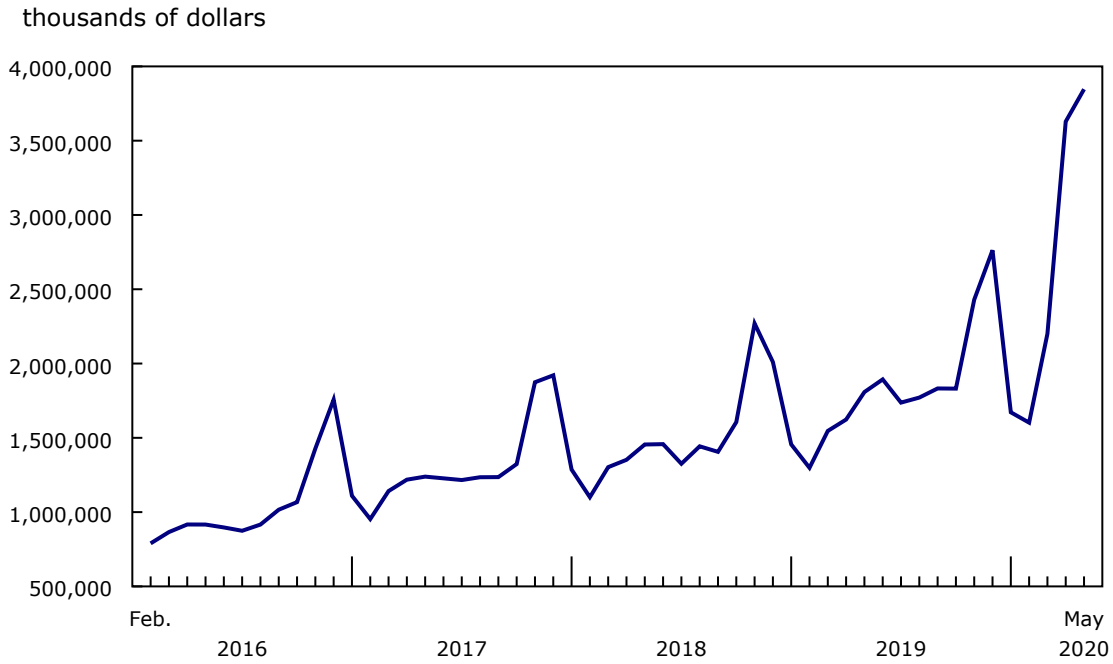
Source(s): Table [20-10-0008-01](#).

E-commerce sales by Canadian retailers

On an unadjusted basis, retail e-commerce sales were \$3.8 billion in May, accounting for 8.0% of total retail trade. On a year-over-year basis, retail e-commerce increased 112.7%, while total unadjusted retail sales fell 18.2%.

When adjusted for basic seasonal effects, retail e-commerce grew 0.7% in May.

Chart 5
Retail E-commerce sales continue to rise



Source(s): Monthly Retail Trade Survey (2406).

Note to readers

With this release, unadjusted monthly data were revised back to January 2018, while seasonally adjusted data were revised back to January 2015. Factors influencing revisions include late receipt of respondent information, correction of information in the data provided, the replacement of estimated figures with actual values (once available), the re-classification of companies within, into and out of the retail trade industry and updates to seasonal factors.

Sales, price, and volume data in table 20-10-0078-01 have been revised back to January 2015.

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](#).

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 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.

For 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.

Some 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.

Canadian seasonally adjusted retail trade statistics measure monthly sales in industries 441 through 453 of NAICS. US total retail sales have been adjusted to match this industrial composition.

Real-time tables

Real-time tables 20-10-0054-01 and 20-10-0079-01 will be updated soon.

Next release

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

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

	May 2019	April 2020 ^r	May 2020 ^p	April to May 2020	May 2019 to May 2020
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	51,204	35,219	41,791	18.7	-18.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	735	562	705	25.5	-4.1
Prince Edward Island	197	161	184	14.9	-6.6
Nova Scotia	1,332	945	1,136	20.2	-14.7
New Brunswick	1,093	848	1,022	20.5	-6.5
Quebec	10,969	6,829	9,106	33.3	-17.0
Montréal	5,405	3,020	3,986	32.0	-26.2
Ontario	19,387	12,491	14,267	14.2	-26.4
Toronto	8,099	4,902	5,296	8.0	-34.6
Manitoba	1,743	1,308	1,623	24.0	-6.9
Saskatchewan	1,650	1,285	1,476	14.9	-10.6
Alberta	6,747	4,901	5,675	15.8	-15.9
British Columbia	7,173	5,717	6,408	12.1	-10.7
Vancouver	3,332	2,484	2,841	14.4	-14.7
Yukon	74	63	69	10.3	-6.4
Northwest Territories	64	60	68	13.6	6.1
Nunavut	41	49	51	5.7	26.2

^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

	May 2019	April 2020 ^r	May 2020 ^p	April to May 2020	May 2019 to May 2020
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade (current dollars)	51,204	35,219	41,791	18.7	-18.4
Total retail trade (2012 chained dollars)	47,327	33,320	39,262	17.8	-17.0
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	37,254	30,124	33,318	10.6	-10.6
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations	31,799	27,326	30,042	9.9	-5.5
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	13,950	5,095	8,473	66.3	-39.3
New car dealers	11,118	3,693	6,183	67.4	-44.4
Used car dealers	1,051	355	688	93.7	-34.5
Other motor vehicle dealers	895	404	771	91.0	-13.9
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	885	642	830	29.2	-6.2
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,609	597	947	58.6	-41.1
Furniture stores	1,014	353	620	75.5	-38.8
Home furnishings stores	595	244	327	34.0	-45.1
Electronics and appliance stores	1,181	989	1,109	12.1	-6.0
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	3,150	2,758	2,910	5.5	-7.6
Food and beverage stores	10,619	12,085	11,847	-2.0	11.6
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	7,301	8,617	8,259	-4.2	13.1
Convenience stores	651	728	795	9.2	22.1
Specialty food stores	664	657	736	12.0	10.8
Beer, wine and liquor stores	2,002	2,083	2,058	-1.2	2.8
Health and personal care stores	4,030	3,576	3,766	5.3	-6.6
Gasoline stations	5,455	2,797	3,276	17.1	-39.9
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,879	484	932	92.6	-67.6
Clothing stores	2,245	338	703	107.9	-68.7
Shoe stores	323	75	129	70.9	-60.2
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	310	70	100	42.4	-67.8
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	1,016	373	750	101.2	-26.2
General merchandise stores	5,920	5,412	6,518	20.4	10.1
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,396	1,053	1,262	19.9	-9.6
Cannabis stores ¹	86	178	186	4.2	116.3

^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

	May 2019	April 2020 ^r	May 2020 ^P	April to May 2020	May 2019 to May 2020
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade at 2012 constant prices¹	47,356	33,513	39,387	17.5	-16.8
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	35,317	29,135	32,178	10.4	-8.9
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations	30,060	25,394	28,021	10.3	-6.8
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	12,039	4,378	7,209	64.7	-40.1
New car dealers	9,577	3,141	5,219	66.2	-45.5
Used car dealers	900	299	575	92.3	-36.1
Other motor vehicle dealers	732	344	646	87.8	-11.7
Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	829	595	768	29.1	-7.4
Furniture and home furnishings stores	1,551	580	940	62.1	-39.4
Furniture stores	987	355	623	75.5	-36.9
Home furnishings stores	564	225	318	41.3	-43.6
Electronics and appliance stores	1,399	1,254	1,397	11.4	-0.1
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	2,826	2,427	2,559	5.4	-9.4
Food and beverage stores	9,404	10,448	10,212	-2.3	8.6
Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores	6,497	7,465	7,138	-4.4	9.9
Convenience stores	520	560	612	9.3	17.7
Specialty food stores	575	542	606	11.8	5.4
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,812	1,881	1,857	-1.3	2.5
Health and personal care stores	4,206	3,715	3,922	5.6	-6.8
Gasoline stations	5,257	3,741	4,157	11.1	-20.9
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	2,794	488	955	95.7	-65.8
Clothing stores	2,196	346	727	110.1	-66.9
Shoe stores	318	78	138	76.9	-56.6
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	280	64	90	40.6	-67.9
Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	988	376	750	99.5	-24.1
General merchandise stores	5,604	5,138	6,135	19.4	9.5
Miscellaneous store retailers	1,290	969	1,151	18.8	-10.8
Cannabis stores ²	79	178	185	3.9	134.2

^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 20-10-0078-01.

Table 4
Retail e-commerce sales – Unadjusted

	May 2019	April 2020	May 2020	May 2020
	millions of dollars			year-over-year % change
Retail trade sales (44-453)	57,707	34,869	46,171	-20.0
Electronic shopping and mail-order houses sales (45411)	1,410	2,061	2,208	56.6
Retail e-commerce ¹	1,808	3,629	3,846	112.7
Retail e-commerce ¹ (% of total retail trade)	3.06	9.83	7.95	...

... not applicable

1. Retail e-commerce includes e-sales from both store retailers included in the North American Industry 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, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).