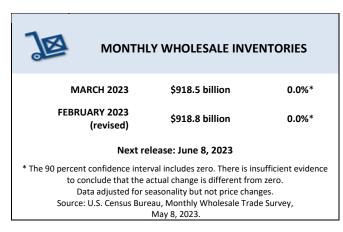
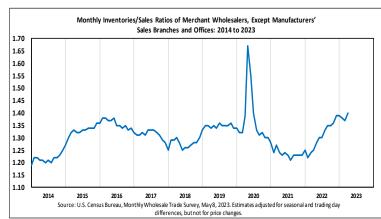
FOR RELEASE AT 10:00 AM EDT, MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE: SALES AND INVENTORIES, MARCH 2023

Release Number: CB23-67

May 8, 2023 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following new wholesale trade statistics for March 2023:





Sales

March 2023 sales of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences but not for price changes, were \$655.3 billion, down 2.1 percent (±0.5 percent) from the revised February level and were down 2.9 percent (±0.9 percent) from the revised March 2022 level. The January 2023 to February 2023 percent change was unrevised from the preliminary estimate of up 0.4 percent (±0.4 percent)*.

Inventories

Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, were \$918.5 billion at the end of March, virtually unchanged (±0.2 percent)* from the revised February level. Total inventories were down 9.1 percent (±0.9 percent) from the revised March 2022 level. The February 2023 to March 2023 percent change was revised from the advance estimate of up 0.1 percent (±0.2 percent)* to virtually unchanged (±0.2 percent)*.

Inventories/Sales Ratio

The March inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.40. The March 2022 ratio was 1.25.

Data Inquiries

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Release Schedule

The April 2023 Monthly Wholesale Trade Report is scheduled for release on June 8, 2023. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: www.census.gov/economic-indicators/.

For additional survey information, including customizable time series estimates by industry, visit <www.census.gov/wholesale/>.

Statement Regarding Natural Disasters

For information on the impact of natural disasters on the compilation of this report, please see www.census.gov/wholesale/natural disaster fags.html>.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Reliability of the Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation, as given in Table 2 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate, which can be used to construct a 90-percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is ± 1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.8 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.753 \times 0.8$ percent or ± 1.4 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is 1.2 ± 1.4 or ± 1.4 or ± 1.4 or ± 1.4 or ± 1.4 percent to ± 1.4 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the actual change is different from zero. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated monthly total $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times ($ the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of wholesale businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, model error, and other errors of

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collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Description of the Survey

The Census Bureau conducts the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey to provide national estimates of monthly sales, end-of-month inventories, and inventories-to-sales ratios by kind of business for wholesale firms located in the United States. Specifically, the MWTS covers wholesale merchants who sell goods on their own account and include such businesses as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, exporters, and importers. Sales offices and branches maintained by manufacturing, refining, or mining firms for the purpose of marketing their products are not covered in this report. Also excluded is NAICS Industry Group 4251: Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers.

The MWTS sample was selected using a stratified, one-stage design with strata defined by kind of business (e.g., Automotive, Furniture, Lumber, etc.) and annual sales size. The sample includes firms of all sizes and is updated on a quarterly basis to account for new wholesale firms, deaths, and other changes to the wholesale universe. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to employer firms selected in a probability sample of approximately 4,200. For surveyed companies, approximately 60.4 percent provided data for this reporting period, resulting in a total quantity response rate of 64.1 percent for sales and 66.1 percent for inventories.

Monthly sales and inventories estimates are obtained by summing weighted data (either reported or imputed). The monthly estimates are benchmarked to annual survey estimates and are adjusted for seasonal variation and trading day differences. Individuals who use estimates in this report to create new estimates should cite the Census Bureau as the source of only the original estimates. Additional information on the MWTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: www.census.gov/wholesale/.

RESOURCES

API

The Census Bureau's application programming interface lets developers create custom apps to reach new users and makes key demographic, socio-economic and housing statistics more accessible than ever before. www.census.gov/developers/>

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FRED Mobile App



Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App < https://fred.stlouisfed.org/fred-mobile/> for both Apple and Android devices. FRED, the signature database of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, now incorporates the Census Bureau's 13 economic indicators.

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* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

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Table 1. Estimates of Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers, Except Manufacturers' Sales Branches and Offices

[Total sales and inventories estimates are shown in millions of dollars. Estimates are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

		Sales							Inventories ⁴							D
NAICS1		Monthly			Percent change								cent change		Inventories/Sales Ratios	
code	Kind of Business	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.	Mar./	Feb./	Mar. 23/	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.	Mar./	Feb./	Mar. 23/	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.
		2023	2023	2022	Feb.	Jan.	Mar. 22	2023	2023	2022	Feb.	Jan.	Mar. 22	2023	2023	2022
		(p)	(r)	(r)				(p)	(r)	(r)				(p)	(r)	(r)
Adjusted ²																
42	U.S. Total	655,299	669,258	675,072	-2.1	0.4	-2.9	918,501	918,818	842,273	0.0	0.0	9.1	1.40	1.37	1.25
423	.Durable	306,718	314,004	315,861	-2.3	1.5	-2.9	560,716	560,452	496,425	0.0	0.5	13.0	1.83	1.78	1.57
4231	Automotive	47,994	48,433	43,919	-0.9	0.4	9.3	84,801	83,525	68,372	1.5	2.0	24.0	1.77	1.72	1.56
4232	Furniture	10,443	10,430	10,543	0.1	1.4	-0.9	18,845	19,108	18,464	-1.4	-1.8	2.1	1.80	1.83	1.75
4233	Lumber	18,472	18,944	22,661	-2.5	-1.2	-18.5	30,885	31,546	32,766	-2.1	-3.0	-5.7	1.67	1.67	1.45
4234	Prof. equip.	48,979	49,256	53,147	-0.6	2.2	-7.8	62,729	62,802	61,763	-0.1	-0.2	1.6	1.28	1.28	1.16
42343 4235	Comp. equip.	24,229 19,857	24,403 20,169	28,153 23,126	-0.7 -1.5	2.5 -0.3	-13.9 -14.1	20,472 43,504	20,702 43,818	23,321 43,838	-1.1 -0.7	-0.6 -0.8	-12.2 -0.8	0.84 2.19	0.85 2.17	0.83 1.90
4235	Metals Electrical	63,721	66,239	65,077	-3.8	-0.3 2.9	-14.1 -2.1	43,504 87,944	43,818 88,779	75,436	-0.7	2.1	-0.8 16.6	1.38	1.34	1.16
4230	Hardware	19,594	19,809	19,426	-3.6	-0.3	0.9	48,681	48,862	42,914	-0.9	0.4	13.4	2.48	2.47	2.21
4238	Machinery	52,166	53,602	46,355	-2.7	2.1	12.5	139,126	137,643	108,986	1.1	0.8	27.7	2.67	2.57	2.35
4239	Misc. Durable	25,492	27,122	31,607	-6.0	2.1	-19.3	44,201	44,369	43,886	-0.4	-0.3	0.7	1.73	1.64	1.39
424	.Nondurable	348,581	355,254	359,211	-1.9	-0.6	-3.0	357,785	358,366	345,848	-0.2	-0.7	3.5	1.03	1.01	0.96
4241	Paper	8,337	8,600	8,685	-3.1	2.2	-4.0	9,353	9,559	9,121	-2.2	-0.7	2.5	1.12	1.11	1.05
4242	Drugs	83,754	82,467	72,083	1.6	2.0	16.2	88,039	86,706	79,544	1.5	-0.5	10.7	1.05	1.05	1.10
4243	Apparel	13,268	13,360	14,644	-0.7	2.3	-9.4	40,455	40,635	34,302	-0.4	0.0	17.9	3.05	3.04	2.34
4244	Groceries	73,281	73,916	69,857	-0.9	0.9	4.9	55,525	55,714	53,378	-0.3	1.0	4.0	0.76	0.75	0.76
4245	Farm products	26,263	28,627	27,754	-8.3	-0.7	-5.4	33,059	33,705	44,078	-1.9	-3.6	-25.0	1.26	1.18	1.59
4246	Chemicals ³	13,866	13,918	14,707	-0.4	1.3	-5.7	16,437	16,523	16,213	-0.5	-1.2	1.4	1.19	1.19	1.10
4247	Petroleum	82,484	86,125	101,136	-4.2	-5.4	-18.4	29,419	30,532	30,968	-3.6	-4.3	-5.0	0.36	0.35	0.31
4248	Alcohol	15,964	16,407	16,087	-2.7	2.3	-0.8	26,338	25,968	21,844	1.4	2.2	20.6	1.65	1.58	1.36
4249	Misc. Nondur.	31,364	31,834	34,258	-1.5	-1.2	-8.4	59,160	59,024	56,400	0.2	-0.3	4.9	1.89	1.85	1.65
Not Adjus	ted													Sales to date		_
														2023		2022
42	U.S. Total	700,134	595,799	724,004	17.5	-4.4	-3.3	925,671	923,774	852,211	0.2	-0.5	8.6	1,918		1,902,132
423	.Durable	330,072	277,714	340,511	18.9	-2.7	-3.1	558,048	557,470	494,442	0.1	0.5	12.9		,299	893,117
4231	Automotive	52,409	44,074	48,004	18.9	-1.8	9.2	85,649	84,694	68,987	1.1	2.6	24.2		,358	125,296
4232	Furniture	11,299	9,324	11,471	21.2	-1.0	-1.5	18,336	18,764	18,002	-2.3	-3.1	1.9		,037	29,649
4233 4234	Lumber	19,322 53,534	16,368 42,754	23,726 58,090	18.0 25.2	-4.6 -4.3	-18.6 -7.8	31,287 60,722	31,514 61,672	33,225 59,848	-0.7 -1.5	-1.8 -1.5	-5.8 1.5		,847 ,953	60,623 152,488
42343	Prof. equip. Comp. equip.	26,289	20,084	30,574	30.9	-4.3 -7.1	-7.8 -14.0	19,407	20,019	22,108	-1.5	-1.5 -1.9	-12.2		,982	78,630
42343	Metals	22,021	18,636	25,832	18.2	-5.2	-14.8	43,243	43,467	43,619	-0.5	-1.5	-0.9		,317	67,522
4236	Electrical	66,142	56,899	67,875	16.2	-5.0	-2.6	86,273	87,714	74,531	-1.6	1.3	15.8		,943	184,398
4237	Hardware	20,495	17,511	20,436	17.0	-1.9	0.3	49,216	48,667	43,429	1.1	1.8	13.3	55	,865	54,024
4238	Machinery	56,809	47,331	50,341	20.0	0.2	12.8	139,961	137,230	109,749	2.0	1.5	27.5	151	,381	129,657
4239	Misc. Durable	28,041	24,817	34,736	13.0	0.3	-19.3	43,361	43,748	43,052	-0.9	-1.5	0.7	77	,598	89,460
424	.Nondurable	370,062	318,085	383,493	16.3	-5.8	-3.5	367,623	366,304	357,769	0.4	-2.0	2.8	1,025	,651	1,009,015
4241	Paper	8,796	7,714	9,171	14.0	-5.9	-4.1	9,147	9,463	8,957	-3.3	-1.9	2.1		,712	24,727
4242	Drugs	90,119	74,220	77,489	21.4	-6.2	16.3	89,272	84,365	80,737	5.8	-3.1	10.6		,471	215,092
4243	Apparel	14,051	12,545	15,567	12.0	7.9	-9.7	37,866	39,335	32,347	-3.7	-3.6	17.1		,223	40,634
4244	Groceries	76,652	66,672	73,280	15.0	-4.8	4.6	54,859	54,488	52,684	0.7	-0.7	4.1		,357	200,327
4245	Farm products	28,758	26,537	31,001	8.4	-9.9	-7.2	37,489	40,008	50,117	-6.3	-9.1	-25.2		,741	79,421
4246 4247	Chemicals	14,629 85,288	12,916	15,545	13.3 11.6	-3.2 -10.1	-5.9 -19.1	16,437	16,523	16,213	-0.5	-1.2	1.4		,892 ,671	42,097 268,554
4247 4248	Petroleum Alcohol	85,288 16,108	76,393 13,552	105,485 16,216	11.6 18.9	-10.1 11.1	-19.1 -0.7	30,154 26,022	31,265 25,163	31,773 21,604	-3.6 3.4	-3.6 2.0	-5.1 20.4		,861	41,436
4248 4249	Misc. Nondur.	35,661	27,536	39,739	29.5	-3.5	-10.3	66,377	65,694	63,337	1.0	3.0	4.8		,723	96,727
Footnotes:		22,301	,_500	22,.00	25.5	5.5	25.0	,	,	,,	2.0	3.0				,

Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at $<\!\!www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html>.$

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, May 8, 2023.

^p Preliminary estimate.

^r Revised estimate.

¹ For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see the 2012 NAICS manual or https://www.census.gov/naics/.

² Except where indicated, sales and inventories estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation. Estimates of sales are also adjusted for trading day differences and moving holidays. Estimates of inventories are also adjusted for trading day differences. See Table 3 for the combined adjustment factors. Adjusted sales-to-date estimates are not tabulated.

³ No significant seasonal pattern for this NAICS code was detected in the latest annual review of the seasonal adjustment for inventories. Consequently, the "Adjusted" inventories estimates are equal to the "Not Adjusted" estimates.

⁴ Adjusted and not adjusted inventories for aggregate NAICS levels 42, 423, and 424 are revised from the Advance Economic Indicators Report.

Table 2. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability of Monthly Wholesale Sales and Inventory Estimates

[Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

resumates	Kind of Business		ient of variati		,		ndard error f	or monthly t	Coefficient for	Standard error for percent change		
NAICS code		Preliminary estimates		Final estimates			consecutive nths		month to nth last year	Sales to date		Current year sales to date to
		Sales	lnv.	Sales	Inv.	Sales	lnv.	Sales	lnv.	Current year	Previous year	previous year sales to date
42	U.S. Total	1.1	2.0	1.0	2.0	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.2	0.5
423	.Durable	1.6	2.9	1.5	2.9	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.7	1.5	1.6	0.7
4231	Automotive	4.2	6.2	3.9	6.2	1.0	0.2	1.3	2.3	3.9	3.8	1.1
4232	Furniture	4.9	8.7	5.4	8.0	1.9	1.0	3.2	4.5	5.2	4.1	3.3
4233	Lumber	5.4	6.7	5.7	6.8	0.5	0.4	1.8	2.3	5.6	5.0	1.8
4234	Prof. equip.	3.3	5.4	3.4	5.4	1.5	0.3	1.1	1.2	3.3	3.4	0.9
42343	Comp. equip.	4.6	3.7	3.2	3.5	2.5	0.4	1.9	1.3	3.9	3.3	1.4
4235	Metals	4.5	6.8	4.3	6.6	0.9	0.4	1.9	3.0	4.6	4.9	1.6
4236	Electrical	3.4	5.1	3.3	5.2	0.5	0.3	1.1	1.3	3.2	3.5	1.1
4237	Hardware	5.4	10.9	6.2	10.9	1.3	0.4	1.5	1.7	5.8	5.3	1.5
4238	Machinery	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.4	1.0	0.3	2.0	1.5	3.3	2.6	2.0
4239	Misc. Durable	5.3	5.9	4.6	6.0	1.3	0.4	1.4	1.7	4.9	4.6	1.0
424	.Nondurable	1.2	1.8	1.2	1.8	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.5	0.7
4241	Paper	3.5	7.0	3.3	7.1	1.4	0.6	1.6	2.1	3.3	2.9	1.5
4242	Drugs	2.1	5.5	2.1	5.9	0.5	0.6	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.7	1.1
4243	Apparel	7.9	5.2	6.3	5.4	2.2	0.6	1.9	2.5	6.8	6.8	2.0
4244	Groceries	3.5	3.9	3.2	4.0	0.7	0.5	0.8	1.3	3.4	3.3	0.8
4245	Farm products	4.0	6.6	3.5	6.5	1.5	0.9	2.3	2.3	3.3	2.6	1.9
4246	Chemicals	4.5	8.7	4.7	8.6	0.9	0.7	1.8	2.7	4.6	4.7	1.5
4247	Petroleum	3.6	5.5	3.8	5.2	0.5	0.3	1.5	1.6	3.7	5.2	1.5
4248	Alcohol	8.1	11.9	9.0	11.7	3.1	0.5	3.1	2.7	8.1	8.0	1.8
4249	Misc. Nondur.	6.0	5.5	6.6	5.8	2.3	1.4	2.1	2.4	6.6	6.6	1.8

Note:

Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation, trading day differences, or moving holidays. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html>.

Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at <www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, May 8, 2023.

Table 3. Combined Adjustment Factors for Monthly Wholesale Sales and Inventory Estimates

[Combined adjustment factors are computed using the Census Bureau's X-13 ARIMA-SEATS program and are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

NAICS	Kind of	Sales							Inventories						
code	Business	2023				20	22		20	2022					
		Apr.	Mar.r	Feb.r	Jan.	Dec.	Mar.r	Apr.	Mar.r	Feb.r	Jan.	Dec.	Mar.r		
42	U.S. Total ²	0.971	1.073	0.892	0.932	0.991	1.077	1.008	1.011	1.009	1.013	1.008	1.013		
423	.Durable	0.958	1.075	0.884	0.917	1.005	1.078	1.001	0.996	0.996	0.996	0.989	0.998		
4231	Automotive	0.973	1.092	0.910	0.930	1.028	1.093	1.011	1.010	1.014	1.008	1.003	1.009		
4232	Furniture	0.950	1.082	0.894	0.915	0.963	1.088	0.971	0.973	0.982	0.995	0.990	0.975		
4233	Lumber	0.993	1.046	0.864	0.895	0.861	1.047	1.022	1.013	0.999	0.987	0.960	1.014		
4234	Prof. equip.	0.916	1.093	0.868	0.927	1.105	1.093	0.985	0.968	0.982	0.995	0.986	0.969		
42343	Comp. equip.	0.896	1.085	0.823	0.908	1.171	1.086	0.972	0.948	0.967	0.979	0.989	0.948		
4235	Metals	0.990	1.109	0.924	0.972	0.873	1.117	0.994	0.994	0.992	0.999	1.006	0.995		
4236	Electrical	0.908	1.038	0.859	0.931	1.027	1.043	0.998	0.981	0.988	0.996	0.990	0.988		
4237	Hardware	0.966	1.046	0.884	0.899	0.897	1.052	1.015	1.011	0.996	0.982	0.983	1.012		
4238	Machinery	0.983	1.089	0.883	0.900	1.037	1.086	1.003	1.006	0.997	0.990	0.982	1.007		
4239	Misc. Durable	0.960	1.100	0.915	0.931	0.969	1.099	0.985	0.981	0.986	0.998	0.987	0.981		
424	.Nondurable	0.988	1.061	0.894	0.934	0.973	1.065	1.016	1.035	1.029	1.040	1.033	1.037		
4241	Paper	0.938	1.055	0.897	0.975	0.977	1.056	0.992	0.978	0.990	1.002	1.009	0.982		
4242	Drugs	0.924	1.076	0.900	0.979	1.037	1.075	1.008	1.014	0.973	0.999	1.044	1.015		
4243	Apparel	0.899	1.059	0.939	0.890	0.875	1.063	0.952	0.936	0.968	1.004	0.972	0.943		
4244	Groceries	0.972	1.046	0.902	0.956	0.990	1.049	0.984	0.988	0.978	0.995	1.005	0.987		
4245	Farm products	0.968	1.095	0.927	1.021	1.072	1.117	1.064	1.134	1.187	1.258	1.226	1.137		
4246	Chemicals ³	0.958	1.055	0.928	0.971	0.920	1.057	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000		
4247	Petroleum	1.009	1.034	0.887	0.934	0.922	1.043	1.020	1.025	1.024	1.017	0.980	1.026		
4248	Alcohol	0.935	1.009	0.826	0.761	1.179	1.008	1.006	0.988	0.969	0.971	0.931	0.989		
4249	Misc. Nondur.	1.140	1.137	0.865	0.885	0.922	1.160	1.074	1.122	1.113	1.077	1.044	1.123		

Footnotes:

Note:

The seasonal adjustment factors shown are estimates derived from a model that uses sample survey data as input. Therefore, these estimates may contain sampling error and nonsampling error. Additional information on the general form of the model and the X-13 ARIMA-SEATS program may be found at https://www.census.gov/data/software/x13as.html.

Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at <www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, May 8, 2023.

r Revised factors.

¹Combined factors for sales include the effects of seasonal variation, trading day differences, and moving holidays. Combined factors for inventories include the effects of seasonal variation and trading day differences.

² Adjusted sales and inventories estimates for detailed kind-of-business levels in Table 1 are computed by dividing each "Not Adjusted" estimate by the combined adjustment factor for the corresponding kind of business and month. Adjusted estimates for broad kind-of-business levels are obtained by summing adjusted estimates at the appropriate detailed levels. Combined factors shown for broad kind-of-business levels may be used to approximate adjusted estimates at these levels, but the resulting estimates may differ slightly from the published estimates.

³ No significant seasonal pattern for this NAICS code was detected in the latest annual review of the seasonal adjustment for inventories. Therefore, the combined adjustment factors for inventories are set to one for this NAICS code.