

Wholesale trade, February 2019

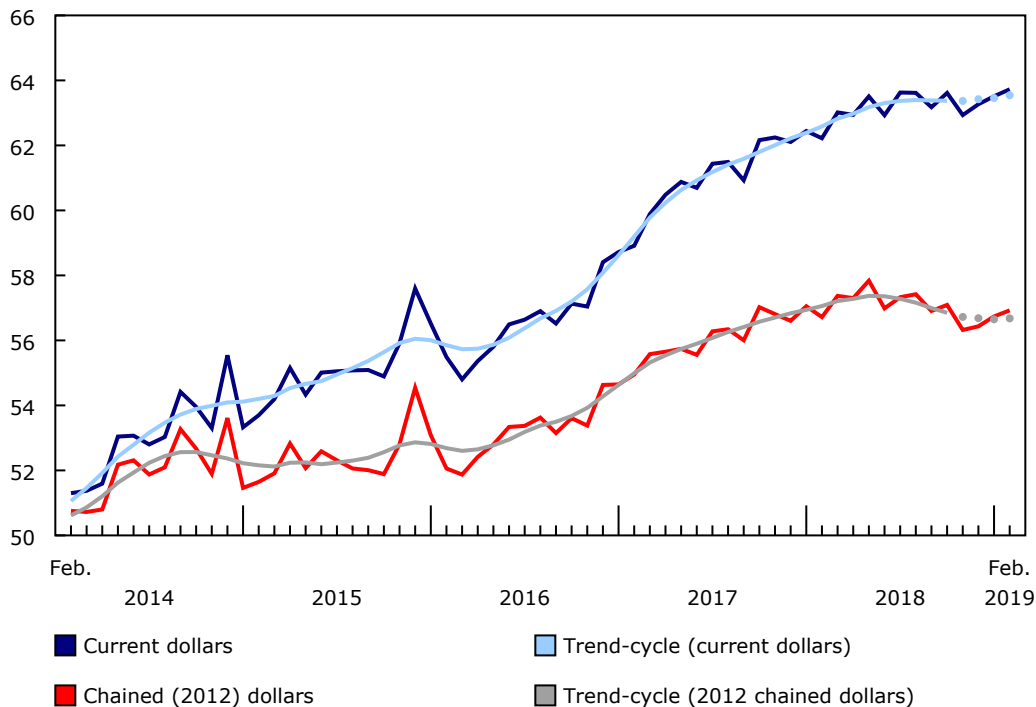
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, April 23, 2019

Wholesale sales increased 0.3% to \$63.7 billion in February, the third consecutive monthly gain. Higher sales were recorded in two of seven subsectors, led by the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector. Excluding this subsector, wholesale sales declined 1.5%.

In volume terms, wholesale sales increased 0.3%.

Chart 1
Wholesale sales increase in February

billions of dollars



Source(s): Tables [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0003-01](#).

Sales increase in two of seven subsectors

In dollar terms, the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector reported the largest increase in February, as sales rose 9.5% to \$11.6 billion. Sales were up in all three industries, led by the motor vehicle industry (+11.0%) following a 4.4% decline in January.

Sales in the miscellaneous subsector rose 0.5% to \$8.5 billion in February, entirely on the strength of sales in the other miscellaneous industry (+7.8%).

Following two consecutive monthly gains, the building material and supplies subsector decreased 5.3% to \$8.8 billion, the lowest level since January 2018. Declines were recorded in two of three industries, led by the lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies industry (-10.2%).



The machinery, equipment and supplies subsector declined for the third time in four months, down 1.3% to \$13.1 billion in February. Three of the subsector's four industries decreased in February, accounting for approximately 70% of the subsector's sales. In dollar terms, the construction, forestry, mining and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies industry (-2.4%) contributed the most to the decrease.

Sales up in two provinces

In February, wholesale sales increased in Ontario and Saskatchewan. In dollar terms, Ontario accounted for most of the gain.

Wholesale sales increased for the third consecutive month in Ontario, up 2.1% to \$33.1 billion. Sales were up in four of seven subsectors, led by the motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories subsector (+11.5% to \$8.1 billion), its third increase in four months. Sales were also up in the machinery, equipment and supplies (+1.1% to \$6.9 billion) and the food, beverage and tobacco (+0.8% to \$4.9 billion) subsectors.

In Saskatchewan, sales increased for the third time in four months, up 7.5% to \$2.4 billion. Higher sales in the miscellaneous subsector (+23.0% to \$1.1 billion) offset declines reported in others.

In dollar terms, Alberta recorded the largest decline in February, with sales down 3.4% to \$6.6 billion. This was the first decrease in three months and the lowest level since August 2017. Sales were down in six subsectors, led by the building material and supplies (-7.5% to \$1.0 billion) and the machinery, equipment and supplies (-2.6% to \$2.0 billion) subsectors.

The machinery, equipment and supplies subsector led declines in British Columbia, where sales decreased 3.4% to \$6.3 billion. The subsector declined for the third consecutive month, down 8.1% to \$1.0 billion in February. The miscellaneous (-8.5% to \$713 million) and the food, beverage and tobacco (-3.8% to \$1.4 billion) subsectors also contributed to lower sales in the province.

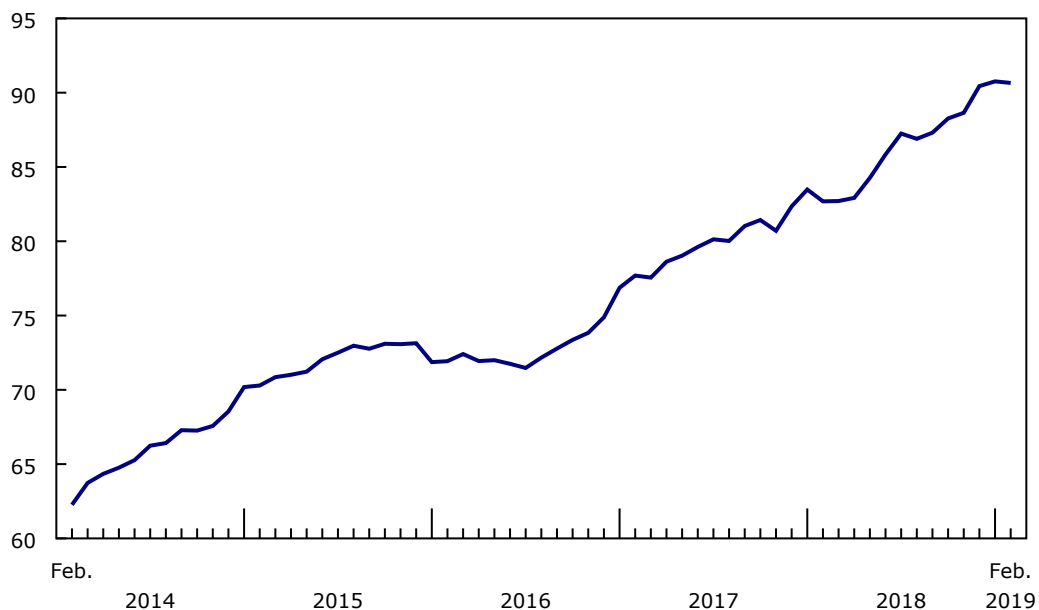
Sales in Quebec decreased for the third time in four months, down 0.5% to \$11.9 billion. The food, beverage and tobacco (-2.2% to \$3.0 billion) and the building material and supplies (-2.7% to \$1.9 billion) subsectors contributed the most to the decrease in February. Despite the recent declines, wholesale sales in Quebec were up 4.3% year over year.

Inventories edge down

Following five consecutive monthly increases, wholesale inventories edged down 0.1% to \$90.7 billion in February. Inventories were down in four of seven subsectors, representing about 58% of total wholesale inventories.

Chart 2
Inventories edge down in February

billions of dollars



Source(s): Table 20-10-0076-01.

Inventories in the miscellaneous subsector decreased 2.5% in February, representing the largest decline in dollar terms. Four of five industries within this subsector decreased, with the agricultural supplies industry (-2.9%) representing the largest decline.

For the second consecutive month, inventories in the machinery, equipment and supplies subsector (-0.8%) declined. The other machinery, equipment and supplies industry fell 2.4%, the largest decrease of the subsector.

Inventories in the personal and household goods subsector (+2.0%) increased for the fourth consecutive month. Five of six industries within this subsector increased, led by the textile, clothing and footwear industry.

The inventory-to-sales ratio fell slightly from 1.43 in January to 1.42 in February. This ratio is a measure of the time in months required to exhaust inventories if sales were to remain at their current level.

Table 1
Wholesale merchants' sales by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	February 2018	January 2019 ^r	February 2019 ^p	January to February 2019	February 2018 to February 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale sales (current dollars)	62,220	63,512	63,726	0.3	2.4
Total, wholesale sales (2012 chained dollars)	56,716	56,737	56,924	0.3	0.4
Total wholesale sales (current dollars), excluding motor vehicle and parts	51,033	52,873	52,076	-1.5	2.0
Farm product	790	855	805	-5.7	2.0
Food, beverage and tobacco	12,014	11,995	11,883	-0.9	-1.1
Food	10,803	10,720	10,591	-1.2	-2.0
Beverage	626	685	667	-2.7	6.5
Cigarette and tobacco product	585	589	626	6.2	7.0
Personal and household goods	8,739	8,911	8,900	-0.1	1.8
Textile, clothing and footwear	1,141	1,121	1,126	0.4	-1.3
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	833	805	717	-11.0	-13.9
Home furnishings	581	549	555	1.1	-4.5
Personal goods	865	893	907	1.6	4.9
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	4,520	4,707	4,825	2.5	6.7
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	799	836	770	-7.9	-3.6
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	11,187	10,639	11,650	9.5	4.1
Motor vehicle	8,981	8,355	9,271	11.0	3.2
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	2,140	2,219	2,312	4.2	8.0
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	66	65	67	2.3	1.2
Building material and supplies	8,912	9,312	8,823	-5.3	-1.0
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	2,805	2,807	2,821	0.5	0.6
Metal service centres	1,713	1,828	1,801	-1.5	5.1
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	4,394	4,678	4,201	-10.2	-4.4
Machinery, equipment and supplies	12,760	13,300	13,123	-1.3	2.8
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	1,649	1,740	1,681	-3.4	2.0
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	4,133	4,302	4,198	-2.4	1.6
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	3,855	3,911	3,919	0.2	1.7
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	3,123	3,347	3,324	-0.7	6.4
Miscellaneous	7,818	8,500	8,542	0.5	9.3
Recyclable material	1,077	985	899	-8.7	-16.6
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	1,074	1,087	1,061	-2.4	-1.3
Agricultural supplies	1,956	2,383	2,380	-0.1	21.7
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,509	1,546	1,509	-2.4	-0.0
Other miscellaneous	2,201	2,499	2,694	7.8	22.4

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

	February 2018	January 2019 ^r	February 2019 ^p	January to February 2019	February 2018 to February 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	62,220	63,512	63,726	0.3	2.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	360	384	382	-0.6	6.2
Prince Edward Island	90	80	79	-1.2	-12.3
Nova Scotia	849	866	835	-3.6	-1.6
New Brunswick	547	581	557	-4.1	1.8
Quebec	11,378	11,934	11,873	-0.5	4.3
Ontario	31,923	32,421	33,095	2.1	3.7
Manitoba	1,625	1,647	1,596	-3.1	-1.8
Saskatchewan	2,041	2,244	2,412	7.5	18.2
Alberta	6,819	6,802	6,572	-3.4	-3.6
British Columbia	6,508	6,473	6,251	-3.4	-4.0
Yukon	9	11	10	-15.5	9.2
Northwest Territories	56	58	52	-9.4	-6.6
Nunavut	14	10	11	7.1	-22.7

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

	February 2018	January 2019 ^r	February 2019 ^p	January to February 2019	February 2018 to February 2019
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total, wholesale inventories	82,685	90,761	90,655	-0.1	9.6
Farm product	204	191	180	-5.7	-11.9
Food, beverage and tobacco	8,457	8,800	8,821	0.2	4.3
Food	7,661	7,917	7,922	0.1	3.4
Beverage	522	560	577	3.1	10.7
Cigarette and tobacco product	274	323	321	-0.6	17.4
Personal and household goods	13,856	15,341	15,654	2.0	13.0
Textile, clothing and footwear	2,499	2,849	3,098	8.7	24.0
Home entertainment equipment and household appliance	1,087	1,117	1,118	0.1	2.9
Home furnishings	1,410	1,566	1,568	0.1	11.2
Personal goods	1,929 ^E	2,266	2,349	3.7	21.8
Pharmaceuticals and pharmacy supplies	5,890	6,491	6,532	0.6	10.9
Toiletries, cosmetics and sundries	1,041	1,051	989	-5.9	-5.0
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories	12,224	13,153	13,331	1.3	9.1
Motor vehicle	7,147	7,551	7,629	1.0	6.7
New motor vehicle parts and accessories	5,001	5,523	5,623	1.8	12.4
Used motor vehicle parts and accessories	76	80	78	-1.7	3.6
Building material and supplies	13,839	15,472	15,357	-0.7	11.0
Electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies	4,149	4,331	4,335	0.1	4.5
Metal service centres	3,672	4,695	4,615	-1.7	25.7
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies	6,018	6,446	6,407	-0.6	6.5
Machinery, equipment and supplies	23,960	26,353	26,148	-0.8	9.1
Farm, lawn and garden machinery and equipment	6,470	6,988	7,001	0.2	8.2
Construction, forestry, mining, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies	10,654	11,973	11,908	-0.5	11.8
Computer and communications equipment and supplies	2,319	2,537	2,499	-1.5	7.7
Other machinery, equipment and supplies	4,516	4,856	4,740	-2.4	5.0
Miscellaneous	10,145	11,451	11,165	-2.5	10.0
Recyclable material	812	864 ^E	798 ^E	-7.6	-1.7
Paper, paper product and disposable plastic product	803	876	877	0.1	9.1
Agricultural supplies	4,191	4,904	4,763	-2.9	13.6
Chemical (except agricultural) and allied product	1,426	1,592	1,574	-1.1	10.4
Other miscellaneous	2,913	3,216	3,153	-1.9	8.2

^r revised

^p preliminary

^E use with caution

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

Source(s): Table 20-10-0076-01.

Statistics Canada recently unveiled the new Automotive Statistics Portal. Bringing together data from across the agency's various statistical programs, the portal offers users a new one-stop shop for all things automotive-related, from retail trade, wholesale trade and manufacturing to employment and the gross domestic product.

The portal makes it easier for users to find, analyse and use automotive-related data. Visit the portal today and you will find a suite of new dynamic data tables to explore.

Experienced researchers looking for in-depth analyses will find access to more extensive data customisation. Data users looking for interesting statistics will also find them more easily.

Statistics Canada will continue to update and add to the portal as new automotive-related information becomes available.

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](#).

Effective with the release of the September 2018 wholesale trade estimates on November 21, 2018, wholesale sales estimates disseminated by Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade Division have been converted from a 2007 reference year to a 2012 reference year for its volume and price estimates. Constant price estimates and their associated price index are now using 2012 as their base year. Adopting a new reference year did not affect constant dollars sales estimates growth rates over the period from 2004 to 2011, as it represents a rescaling of the 2007-based data. However, levels and growth rates of the estimates for the period of 2012 to date have been affected by revisions to estimates at current prices and to price indices.

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 oilseed and grain merchant wholesalers (NAICS 41112), petroleum and petroleum products merchant wholesalers (NAICS 412) and business-to-business electronic markets, and agents and brokers (NAICS 419).

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

Real-time data tables

Real-time data tables 20-10-0019-01, 20-10-0020-01 and 20-10-0005-01 will be updated on May 6.

Next release

Wholesale trade data for March will be released on May 23.

Available tables: [20-10-0003-01](#), [20-10-0074-01](#) and [20-10-0076-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2401](#).

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 John Burton (613-862-4878; john.burton@canada.ca), Mining, Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade Division.