

Metal and Mineral (Except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers: 2021

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On December 14, 2022, the 2021 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey (AWTS) released estimates about Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers in the United States. The data tables containing the estimates can be found at www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/econ/awts/annual-reports.html, and a detailed description of the AWTS methodology is located at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/awts/technical-documentation/methodology.html. The subsequent sections provide background information and highlight the Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers estimates published in the 2021 AWTS data tables.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers industry group, which is 2012 North American Industry Classification System code 4235, comprises establishments primarily engaged in the merchant wholesale distribution of products of the primary metals industries (including metal service centers) and coal, coke, metal ores, and nonmetallic minerals (except precious and semiprecious stones and minerals used in construction). Business-to-business electronic markets, agents, and brokers primarily engaged

in wholesaling metals and minerals (generally on a commission or fee basis) are excluded. Recyclable metal scrap merchant wholesalers are excluded, too.

Merchant wholesalers are establishments that sell goods on their own account. Manufacturers' sales branches and offices (MSBOs) fall under the "merchant wholesalers" category as well. MSBOs are establishments maintained by some manufacturing, refining, or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products.

SALES

Sales are the dollar value of transactions between the reporting firm and its customers. Sales include transactions to foreign affiliates. Transactions among domestic affiliates are excluded. E-commerce sales are also included.

Merchant Wholesalers

Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers had sales of \$298.7 billion in 2021, an increase of 53.4 percent from \$194.7 billion in 2020 (Figure 1).

Merchant Wholesalers, Except MSBOs

Excluding MSBOs, Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers sales were \$222.7 billion in 2021, up 52.4 percent from \$146.1 billion in 2020. These firms accounted for 74.5 percent of the sales in the Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers industry group in 2021.

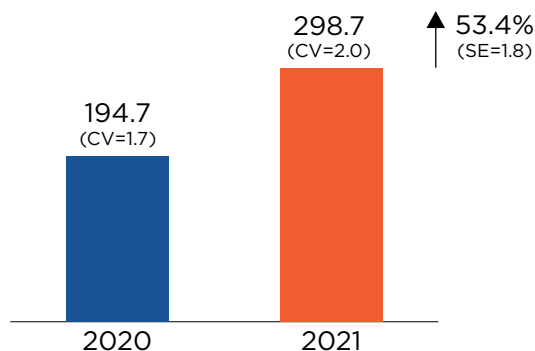
MSBOs

For MSBOs in the Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers industry group, sales increased 56.3 percent, from \$48.6 billion in 2020 to \$76.0 billion in 2021. In 2021, MSBOs accounted for 25.5 percent of the sales generated by establishments primarily engaged in the merchant wholesale distribution of metals and minerals.

INVENTORIES

Inventories are the value, at cost, of merchandise on hand and available for sale at the end of the reference year. All goods owned by a firm, regardless of location, are included. Items (such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies) that are not held for resale, and recyclable metal scrap merchant wholesalers are

Figure 1.
Estimated Sales of Metal and Mineral (Except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers: 2020 and 2021
(In billions of dollars)



Note: Estimates are not adjusted for price changes. Estimates of sampling variability are measured using coefficients of variation (CV) and standard errors (SE). CVs are expressed as a percentage of the estimate. SEs are expressed as percents. Differences between estimates may be attributed to sampling or nonsampling error, rather than underlying economic conditions. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/awts/technical-documentation/methodology.html. The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data used to produce this product (Data Management System number: P-7500133, Disclosure Review Board approval number: CBDRB-FY23-047).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey.

excluded. The value of goods on a firm's premises that are not owned by the firm is also excluded.

Merchant Wholesalers

Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers had inventories of \$54.0 billion in 2021, an increase of 47.8 percent from \$36.5 billion in 2020 (Figure 2).

Merchant Wholesalers, Except MSBOs

Excluding MSBOs, Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers inventories were \$42.6 billion in 2021, an increase of 46.5 percent from \$29.1 billion in 2020.

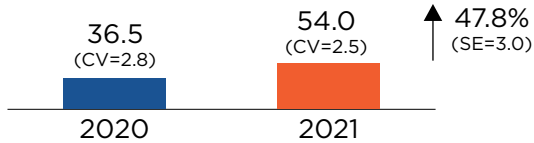
MSBOs

For MSBOs in the Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers industry group,

Figure 2.

Estimated Inventories of Metal and Mineral (Except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers: 2020 and 2021

(In billions of dollars)



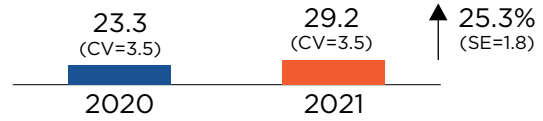
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey.

Figure 3.

Estimated Operating Expenses of Metal and Mineral (Except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers: 2020 and 2021

(In billions of dollars)



Note: Estimates are not adjusted for price changes. Estimates of sampling variability are measured using coefficients of variation (CV) and standard errors (SE). CVs are expressed as a percentage of the estimate. SEs are expressed as percents. Differences between estimates may be attributed to sampling or nonsampling error, rather than underlying economic conditions. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/awts/technical-documentation/methodology.html>. The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data used to produce this product (Data Management System number: P-7500133, Disclosure Review Board approval number: CBDRB-FY23-047).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey.

inventories increased 52.6 percent, from \$7.5 billion in 2020 to \$11.4 billion in 2021.

OPERATING EXPENSES

Operating expenses are the dollar value of expenses that arose from the normal course of business during the reference year. Payroll expenses are included. Bad debt, interest expense, purchases of goods for resale (and cost of goods sold), income taxes, impairment, and transfers made within the company are excluded.

Merchant Wholesalers

Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers had operating expenses of \$29.2 billion in 2021, an increase of 25.3 percent from \$23.3 billion in 2020 (Figure 3).

Merchant Wholesalers, Except MSBOs

Excluding MSBOs, Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers operating expenses were \$22.3 billion in 2021, an increase of 23.5 percent from \$18.0 billion in 2020.

MSBOs

MSBOs in the Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers industry group had operating expenses of \$6.9 billion in 2021, an increase of 31.3 percent from \$5.3 billion in 2020.¹

¹ Operating expenses estimates for 2020 and 2021 are not statistically different at the 90 percent confidence level.