



## Summary Report – March 2019 U.S. Automotive Sales

The first quarter has come to an end and the decline in automotive sales continued through March. U.S. sales fell 3.1 percent last month, a third consecutive drop. The industry has seen annual sales at or above 17 million since 2014, but automakers are struggling to maintain that solid pace and it is widely predicted the industry will fall short of that mark by the end of the year.

On a positive note – the seasonally adjusted annual rate of sales (SAAR) came in at 17.42 million, exceeding the 16.8 million forecast by analysts. The results were somewhat surprising considering factors like rising interest rates and climbing new-vehicle prices typically weigh more heavily on long-term projections.

The average transaction price for a light vehicle was \$36,733 in March, up 2.3 percent year-over-year. Higher prices and smaller IRS refund checks have interfered with dealership traffic. Consumers haven't had a convincing reason to buy and analysts aren't counting on this changing anytime soon.

Automaker	March 2019 (Units Sold)	March 2018 (Units Sold)	Percent Change	3 Months 2019	3 Months 2018	Percent Change
Volvo Cars N.A.	9,569	8,233	16.2%	22,058	20,083	9.8%
VW Group of America	62,574	57,684	8.5%	150,214	148,820	0.9%
Subaru of America	61,601	58,097	6.0%	156,754	149,703	4.7%
Hyundai - Kia	118,442	112,185	5.6%	288,384	275,822	4.6%
American Honda Motor Co.	148,509	142,392	4.3%	369,787	362,491	2.0%
BMW	32,228	31,311	2.9%	73,888	73,835	0.1%
Mercedes-Benz USA	30,627	31,484	-2.7%	78,878	86,981	-9.3%
Industry-wide	1,605,715	1,657,632	-3.1%	3,989,468	4,123,057	-3.2%
Toyota Motor Sales USA	214,947	222,787	-3.5%	543,716	572,041	-5.0%
Ford Motor Co.	220,848	233,669	-5.5%	561,981	574,332	-2.2%
Nissan North America	150,768	162,535	-7.2%	365,851	416,003	-12.1%
Fiat Chrysler US	200,307	216,063	-7.3%	498,425	514,769	-3.2%
General Motors	271,777	296,341	-8.3%	665,840	715,794	-7.0%
Mazda North America	26,934	33,302	-19.1%	70,833	83,995	-15.7%

### Additional Notes by Manufacturer

**Fiat Chrysler:** FCA sales dropped for the second consecutive month, reporting a 7.3 percent decline. While almost all FCA brands declined in sales, RAM posted a 15 percent increase. The manufacturer won't reveal if sales are attributable to the redesigned 1500 or closeouts of the previous model. According to J.D. Power, the retail share mix of the redesigned 1500 has slipped in recent months while deliveries of the classic model have risen.

**Ford:** Ford Motor Co.'s sales were down 5.2 percent. By brand, Lincoln sales were up 1.9 percent and Ford was down 5.5 percent. The EcoSport and Ranger saw a rise in sales this month and this quarter while the Escape and Edge surprisingly posted declines. Ending its production life cycle on a positive note, Fiesta sales rose 47 percent year over year and 29 percent for the quarter.

**General Motors:** According to the estimates from the Automotive News Data Center, GM sales were down 8.3 percent in March and 7 percent for the first quarter. All brands reported losses for the month. 80 percent of GM's first quarter sales were pickups, SUVs and crossovers. GM anticipated the first quarter was going to be challenging and the data has proven it out.

**Honda:** American Honda Motor Co. enjoyed its strongest March ever, posting an overall 4.3 percent sales gain. Honda car sales rose 3.3 percent and trucks were up 2.9 percent. Civic sales made a comeback from last month's decline rising 3.3 percent and setting a March record of 33,653 units sold. Acura sales rose 6.4 percent marking the eighth consecutive month the brand has posted an increase.

**Hyundai-Kia:** With a sales increase of 5.6 percent, Hyundai-Kia ended the first quarter strong. Hyundai Motors America sales were up 1.7 percent. The Elantra led the way selling 15,866 units. Kia Motors America experienced its best first quarter since 2016, increasing sales 10 percent. The Telluride crossover sold 5,080 units in its first full month of nationwide availability. The Genesis brand was up 4.7 percent.

**Mercedes-Benz:** Mercedes-Benz finished the first quarter behind rival BMW with a 4.9 percent sales drop and just 27,409 vehicles sold. The new A-Class sedan and GLE have yet to provide the expected boost in sales for the automaker. 2019 has been tough for Mercedes-Benz with three consecutive months of declining sales.

**Nissan:** Nissan has posted declines every month this year. If there is a silver lining, March's 7.2 percent drop is much less severe than previous months. Division vice president for Nissan regional operations, Billy Hayes, reported the manufacturer will continue to bring down fleet volume in 2019 and is optimistic April will end in positive sales territory compared to April 2018.

**Subaru:** Subaru's consecutive month-over-month sales increase streak continued and now stands at 88. The automaker sold 61,601 vehicles in March as sales rose 6 percent. With 7,032 vehicles sold, the Ascent surpassed its previous monthly sales record set in December 2018. Subaru has set a U.S. sales goal of 700,000 vehicles in 2019.

**Toyota:** Lexus sales were up 8.2 percent, but sales were down 3.5 percent overall for the manufacturer. Lexus attributed much of its jump to the introduction of the UX compact crossover. The Tacoma posted its 17th consecutive month of year-over-year sales increases and its best-ever March, but the Toyota brand reported a 5.1 percent decline.

**Volkswagen:** Volkswagen sales rose an impressive 14 percent and Audi's sales rose 1.1 percent buoyed by the strength of both brands' crossover lineups. The Volkswagen Tiguan and Atlas had record months, each increasing 22 percent. The combination of demand for SUVs and successful sales of the redesigned Jetta enabled Volkswagen to experience its best March since 2013.

For more information about the March numbers, and to review the complete report, click [here](#) to read the full *Automotive News* article.