

FEDERAL RESERVE statistical release



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For release at 9:15 a.m. (EDT)
July 16, 1998

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AND CAPACITY UTILIZATION

Industrial production declined 0.6 percent in June after a revised gain of 0.3 percent in May. Ongoing strikes, which have curtailed the output of motor vehicles and parts, accounted for the decrease in industrial production. Excluding motor vehicles, the output of business equipment posted a strong gain in June; the output of most other major market groups weakened or remained about unchanged. At 128.1 percent of its 1992 average, industrial production in June was 3.7 percent higher than it was in June 1997; excluding the output of motor vehicles and parts, the twelve-month increase was 4.1 percent. Capacity utilization dropped 0.8 percentage point in June, to 81.6 percent.

For the second quarter, industrial output rose 2.5 percent at an annual rate after a gain of 1.2 percent in the first quarter. The improvement in the second quarter was largely attributable to a rebound in utility output as temperatures throughout the country returned to more normal levels. However, manufacturing production decelerated from a 2.3 percent rate of increase in the first quarter to a 1.7 percent rate in the second quarter; manufacturing output excluding motor vehicles also slowed.

(over)

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AND CAPACITY UTILIZATION: SUMMARY

Seasonally adjusted

Industrial Production	Index, 1992=100				Percent change				June 97 to June 98
	1998 Mar. ^r	Apr. ^r	May ^r	June ^P	1998 Mar. ^r	Apr. ^r	May ^r	June ^P	
Total index	128.0	128.5	128.9	128.1	.5	.4	.3	-.6	3.7
Previous estimates	127.8	128.2	128.8		.4	.3	.5		
Major market groups:									
Products, total	121.3	121.9	122.1	121.4	.6	.5	.2	-.6	3.2
Consumer goods	116.0	116.7	116.9	115.5	.8	.6	.2	-1.2	1.8
Business equipment	148.7	150.2	150.5	150.6	1.3	1.0	.3	.0	7.4
Construction supplies	124.2	124.0	125.3	125.0	-1.6	-2	1.1	-.3	2.3
Materials	138.7	139.2	139.7	138.8	.4	.4	.3	-.6	4.4
Major industry groups:									
Manufacturing	130.8	131.6	131.7	130.9	.2	.6	.0	-.6	3.8
Durable	148.6	149.6	150.3	148.8	.5	.7	.5	-1.0	5.4
Nondurable	112.6	113.3	112.7	112.6	-.3	.6	-.5	-.1	1.9
Mining	108.0	107.0	108.0	105.8	-.7	-.9	.9	-2.0	.1
Utilities	114.3	113.5	116.2	116.7	5.7	-.7	2.4	.4	5.3
Capacity Utilization	Percent of capacity								Capacity growth
	Average 1967-97	1982 Low	1988-89 High	1997 June	1998 Mar. ^r	Apr. ^r	May ^r	June ^P	June 97 to June 98
Total industry	82.1	71.1	85.4	82.3	82.4	82.4	82.4	81.6	4.6
Previous estimates					82.2	82.1	82.2		
Manufacturing	81.1	69.0	85.7	81.3	81.2	81.4	81.1	80.3	5.2
Advanced processing	80.5	70.4	84.2	79.4	79.5	79.7	79.5	78.5	6.0
Primary processing	82.4	66.2	88.9	85.8	85.1	85.3	84.7	84.3	3.3
Mining	87.5	80.3	88.0	89.6	91.2	90.3	91.0	89.1	.7
Utilities	87.3	75.9	92.6	87.7	89.6	88.9	91.0	91.3	1.1

Market Groups

The output of consumer goods declined 1.2 percent in June, with the decline in motor vehicles accounting for much of the loss. The production of other consumer durables also fell noticeably and reversed most of the 1.8 percent increase in May. The output of consumer nondurable goods was unchanged in June. The production of nonenergy products has remained sluggish for several months; energy products, a category that was quite volatile earlier in the year, was also little changed last month.

The production of business equipment was unchanged; it was restrained by the drop in assemblies of business vehicles that led to a 5.2 percent decline in the output of transit equipment. Excluding motor vehicles, the production of business equipment advanced sharply in June. Led by a sharp increase in the production of construction machinery, the output of industrial equipment rebounded 2.2 percent after falling in May. The production of other equipment—notably farm machinery and equipment and office furniture and fixtures—also bounced back and more than reversed the decline in May. The output of information processing equipment advanced further, mainly on the strength of gains in the production of computing and office equipment and telephone apparatus.

The output of construction supplies edged down 0.3 percent after having increased 1.1 percent in May and remained close to the high level seen in the first quarter. The production of materials declined 0.6 percent, with weakness both in the durable goods materials used to make motor vehicles and in energy materials. The production of nondurable goods materials was flat, as activity in paper materials declined further and the output of textiles and chemicals continued to be sluggish.

Industry Groups

Manufacturing output declined 0.6 percent, largely owing to the 11 percent drop in production in the motor vehicle and parts industry. Although the strike in the motor vehicle and parts industry contributed significantly to the 1.0 percent drop in production in durable manufacturing, weakness was evident in other industries as well. Output rose in only three industry groups within durables: stone, clay, and glass products; industrial machinery and computing equipment; and electrical machinery. The output of nondurables was little changed, as gains in chemicals and products and in petroleum products were offset by declines in all other industries. Mining activity decreased 2 percent, and output at utilities rose 0.4 percent.

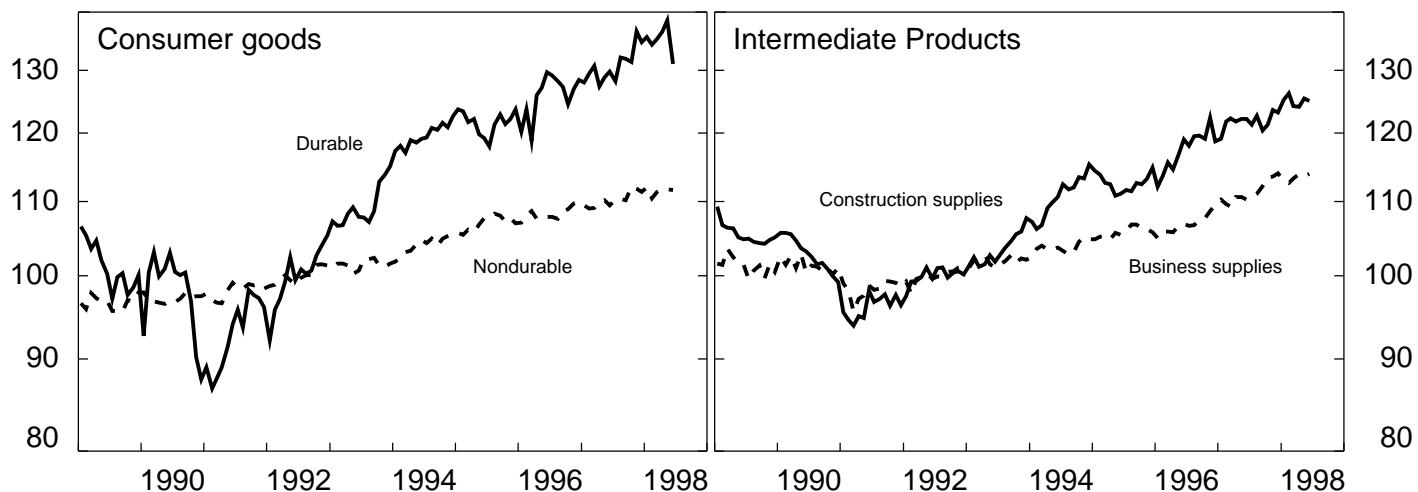
The factory operating rate decreased 0.8 percentage point, to 80.3 percent. The rate for advanced-processing industries fell 1.0 percentage point, to 78.5 percent; the operating rate for motor vehicles and parts fell 8.4 percentage points, a decrease mostly reflecting effects of strikes. The rate for primary-processing industries declined 0.4 percentage point, to 84.3 percent, and has fallen 2 percentage points since the end of last year. The operating rate at mines dropped 1.9 percentage points, to 89.1 percent, while the rate at utilities increased 0.3 percentage point, to 91.3 percent.

This release contains revised estimates of capacity for selected industries for the period March through December 1998. The revision lowered the estimated growth of aggregate capacity 0.5 percentage point between December 1997 and December 1998. In addition, the industrial production indexes were revised to reflect the semiannual revision to seasonal factors for motor vehicle assemblies and for series that use production-worker hours as their monthly indicator. Seasonal factors were not changed for the period before March 1998.

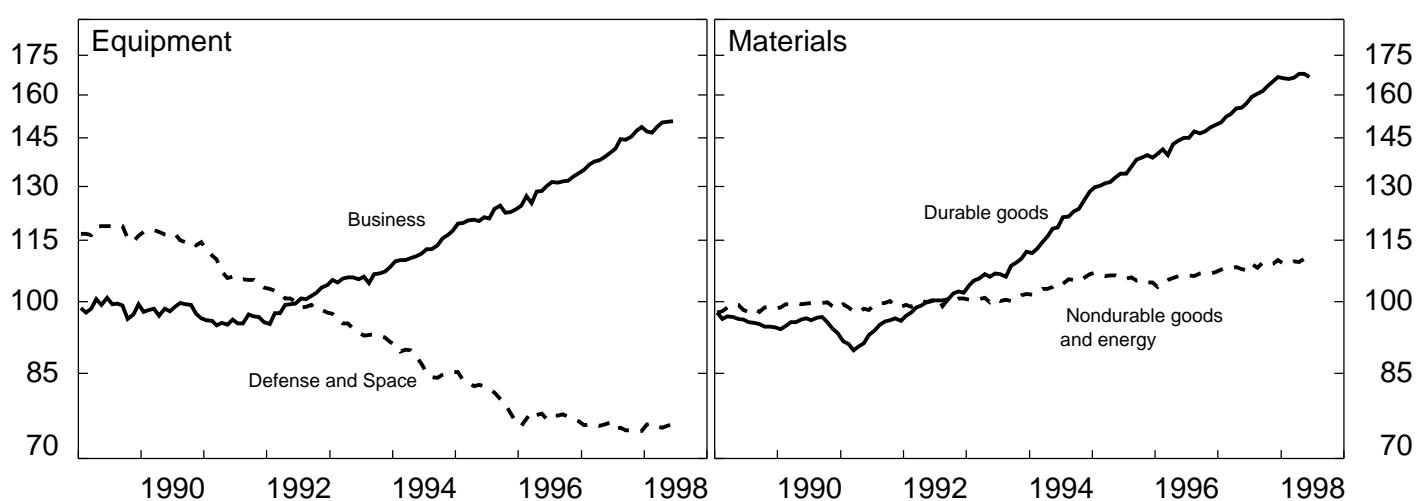
Industrial Production

(June data, seasonally adjusted)

Ratio scale, 1992 = 100



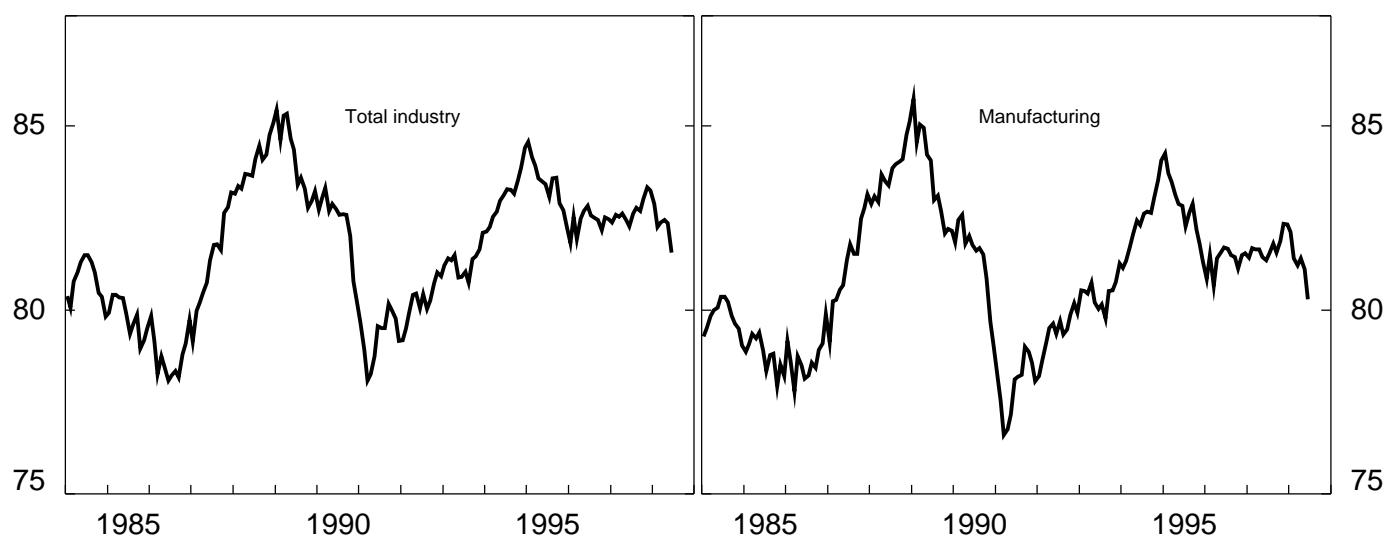
Ratio scale, 1992 = 100



Percent of capacity

Capacity Utilization

Percent of capacity



Explanatory Note

The statistical release of **Industrial Production and Capacity Utilization** reports measures of output, capacity, and capacity utilization in manufacturing, mining, and the electric and gas utilities industries. The release also includes monthly indexes on the use of electric power in manufacturing and mining. Data in the release and historical data are available under statistical releases at <http://www.bog.frb.fed.us>, the Board's World Wide Web site. These data are also available on line on the day of issue through the Economic Bulletin Board of the Department of Commerce. For information, call (202) 482-1986. Diskettes containing historical data and the data published in this release are available from the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Publications Services, (202) 452-3245.

Industrial Production

Coverage. The industrial production (IP) index measures output in the manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities industries; the reference period for the index is 1992. For the period since 1992, the total IP index has been constructed from 264 individual series based on the 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). These individual series are classified in two ways: (1) market groups (shown in table 1), such as consumer goods, equipment, intermediate products, and materials; and (2) industry groups (shown in tables 2 and 6), such as two-digit SIC industries and major aggregates of these industries—for example, durable and nondurable manufacturing, mining, and utilities.

Market groups. For purposes of analysis, the individual IP series are grouped into final products, intermediate products, and materials. Final products are assumed to be purchased by consumers, businesses, or government for final use. Intermediate products are expected to become inputs in nonindustrial sectors, such as construction, agriculture, and services. Materials are industrial output requiring further processing within the industrial sector. Total products comprise final and intermediate products, and final products are divided into consumer goods and equipment.

Timing. The first estimate of output for a month is published around the 15th of the following month. The estimate is preliminary (denoted by the superscript "p" in tables) and subject to revision in each of the subsequent three months as new source data become available. (Revised estimates are denoted by the superscript "r" in tables.) After the fourth month, indexes are not revised further until the time of an annual revision or a benchmark revision. The last three benchmark revisions were published in 1990, 1985, and 1976.

Source data. In annual or benchmark revisions, the individual IP indexes are constructed from a variety of source data, such as the quinquennial *Censuses of Manufactures and Mineral Industries* and the *Annual Survey of Manufactures*, prepared by the Bureau of the Census; the *Minerals Yearbook*, prepared by the Department of the Interior; and publications of the Department of Energy. On a monthly basis, the individual indexes of industrial production are constructed from two main types of source data: (1) output measured in physical units and (2) data on inputs to the production process, from which output is inferred. Data on physical products, such as tons of steel or barrels of oil, are obtained from private trade associations as well as from government agencies including those listed above; data of this type are used to estimate monthly IP where possible and appropriate. When suitable data on physical product are unavailable, estimates of output are based on either production-worker hours or electric power use by industry. Data on hours worked by production workers are collected in the monthly establishment survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data on electric power use are described below. The factors used to convert inputs into estimates of production are based on historical relationships between the inputs and the comprehensive data used to benchmark the IP indexes; these factors also may be influenced by technological or cyclical developments. Especially for the first and second estimates for a given month, the available source data are limited and subject to revision.

Weights. In the index, series that measure the output of an individual industry are weighted according to their proportion in the total value-added output of all industries. The industrial production index, which extends back to 1919, is built as an annually weighted chain-type index since 1977. The components of IP are combined using estimates of value added per unit of output. For months from January to June, the weights are drawn from the year containing the month being estimated and the preceding year; for months from July to December, the weights are drawn from the current and following year. The IP proportions shown in column 1 of tables 1A, 2A, and 6 are estimates of the industries' relative contributions to overall growth in the following year. For example, a 1 percent increase in durable goods manufacturing in 1997 would account for an increase in total IP of nearly 1/2 percent.

Seasonal adjustment. Individual series are seasonally adjusted by the X-11 ARIMA method, developed at Statistics Canada. For series based on production-worker hours, the current seasonal factors were estimated with data through October 1997; for other series, the factors were estimated with data through at least June 1997. In some cases, series were preadjusted for the effects of holidays or the business cycle before using X-11 ARIMA. For the data since 1977, all seasonally adjusted aggregate indexes are calculated by aggregating the seasonally adjusted indexes of the individual series.

Reliability. The average revision to the *level* of the total IP index, without regard to sign, between the first and the fourth estimates was 0.28 percent during the 1987–96 period. The average revision to the *percent change* in total IP, without regard to sign,

from the first to the fourth estimates was 0.21 percentage point during the 1987–96 period. In most cases (about 81 percent), the direction of change in output indicated by the first estimate for a given month is the same as that shown by the fourth estimate.

Rounding. The published percent changes are calculated from unrounded indexes, and may not be the same as percent changes calculated from the rounded indexes shown in the release.

Capacity Utilization

Definition. Capacity utilization is calculated for the manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities industries. For a given industry, the utilization rate is equal to an output index divided by a capacity index. Output is measured by seasonally adjusted indexes of industrial production. The capacity indexes attempt to capture the concept of sustainable practical capacity, which is defined as the greatest level of output that a plant can maintain within the framework of a realistic work schedule, taking account of normal downtime, and assuming sufficient availability of inputs to operate the machinery and equipment in place. The 76 individual capacity indexes are based on a variety of data, including capacity data measured in physical units compiled by trade associations, surveys of utilization rates and investment, and estimates of growth of the capital input.

Groups. Estimates of capacity and utilization are available for a variety of groups, including primary and advanced processing industries within manufacturing, durable and nondurable manufacturing, total manufacturing, mining, utilities, and total industry. Component industries of the primary and advanced processing groups within manufacturing are listed in the note on tables 2 and 3 of the release.

Weights. Although each utilization rate is the result of dividing an IP series by a corresponding capacity index, aggregate utilization rates are equivalent to combinations of individual utilization rates aggregated with proportions that reflect current capacity levels of output valued in current-period value added per unit of actual output. The implied proportions of individual industry operating rates in the rate for total industry for the most recent year are shown in the first column of table 3.

Perspective. The historical highs and lows in capacity utilization shown in the tables above are specific to each series and did not all occur in the same month. Industrial plants usually operate at capacity utilization rates that are well below 100 percent: none of the broad aggregates has ever reached 100 percent. For total industry and total manufacturing, utilization rates have exceeded 90 percent only in wartime.

Electric Power

Data on electric power (expressed in kilowatt hours) are collected by the Federal Reserve District Banks from electric utilities and also from manufacturing and mining establishments that generate electric power for their own use (cogenerators). The indexes of power use shown in table 9 are sums of kilowatt hours used by an industry or industry group expressed as a percentage of that industry's or group's usage in 1992. The first column of the table shows, for reference, electric power use in billions of kilowatt hours as reported by manufacturing and mining industries in the 1992 censuses of those industries. The supplementary group, "Total, less nuclear nondefense," is shown separately because the value-added proportion for the nondefense nuclear material series (part of SIC 2819) in total IP is considerably smaller than its share of total electric power use. Excluding this component from total power use facilitates comparisons with total IP.

References

The annual revision published on December 9, 1997 will be described more completely in the February 1998 *Federal Reserve Bulletin*.

A description of the aggregation methods for industrial production and capacity utilization is included in an article in the *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, vol. 83 (February 1997), pp. 67–92. *Industrial Production—1986 Edition* contains a more detailed description of the other methods used to compile the industrial production index, plus a history of its development, a glossary of terms, and a bibliography. To obtain *Industrial Production—1986 Edition* (\$9.00 per copy), write to Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Publications Services, Washington, DC 20551. The major revisions to the IP indexes and capacity utilization since 1990 have been described in the *Federal Reserve Bulletin* (April 1990, June 1990, June 1993, March 1994, January 1995, and January 1996). The basic methodology used to estimate capacity and utilization is discussed in the June 1990 *Federal Reserve Bulletin*.

Release Schedule for 1998

At 9:15 a.m. on January 16, February 17, March 17, April 17, May 15, June 16, July 16, August 14, September 16, October 16, November 16, and December 16.