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U.S. retail alcohol sales fell 1.2% in the first week of November

Case volume dropped 2.9% in off-premise channels after Halloween demand faded

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

U.S. retail alcohol sales weakened in the first week of November, according to Circana data reported by Brewbound, as demand fell back after Halloween.

In the week ending November 8, total beverage alcohol dollar sales in Circana-tracked off-premise channels declined 1.2% from a year earlier. Sales volume, measured in case sales, fell 2.9% year over year. Brewbound reported on Tuesday, November 17, that the figures covered total U.S. multi-outlet stores plus convenience stores in the market researcher’s weekly scan data.

The pullback marked a return to negative year-over-year results for the category at the start of November. Brewbound said sales retrenched after Halloween, a period that can give retailers a short seasonal lift as consumers stock up for parties and gatherings. The latest numbers suggest that boost did not carry into the following week.

The decline in volume was steeper than the decline in dollar sales, indicating that the number of cases sold dropped faster than revenue. The data released in the report excerpt did not provide a detailed breakdown by segment, brand or price tier, but the overall reading points to softer retail takeaway demand across the measured channels after the holiday.

The figures matter across the drinks business because they offer a nationwide read on consumer demand heading into the year-end selling period. Brewers, wineries, spirits suppliers and retailers often use weekly retail scans to gauge how much product is moving, how much inventory to hold and how aggressive to be on pricing and promotions before the holiday season. A weaker post-Halloween reading may lead some companies to watch stock levels and discount activity more closely in the weeks ahead.

Circana’s tracking in this report covers off-premise sales, meaning alcohol bought in stores for consumption elsewhere rather than drinks sold in bars or restaurants. That makes the data a closely watched measure of retail buying patterns, especially for large chains and convenience outlets, even though it does not capture the full beverage alcohol market.

Brewbound’s headline also said growth brands remained strong, but the published excerpt of the report did not include figures identifying those brands or quantifying that performance. The topline data that were disclosed showed a category-wide slowdown in both sales dollars and case volume for the week ending November 8.