



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cox Automotive Forecast: New-Vehicle Sales Slow in January, as Harsh Winter Weather and Economic Headwinds Hit Market

- January’s new-vehicle sales pace is expected to finish near 15.3 million, down from last January’s 15.5 million level and lower than December’s 16.1 million.
- Sales volume in January is expected to reach 1.14 million, up 3.2% from last year but down 23.5% from December.
- New-vehicle sales in January are expected to follow the seasonal trend of being significantly lower month over month; harsh winter weather during the final weekend likely slowed sales further.

ATLANTA, Jan. 27, 2026 – January new-vehicle sales are expected to start the year at a slower pace than last year and last month. The January seasonally adjusted annual rate of sales (SAAR) is forecasted to finish near 15.3 million, down slightly from last year’s 15.5 million pace and down from December’s upwardly revised 16.1 million level. After a strong third quarter, the automotive market slowed notably – a pace that has carried over into the new year.

New-vehicle sales volume is expected to increase by 3.2% over last year, although the year-over-year gain is largely due to one additional selling day in 2026 and does not reflect a stronger market than one year ago. Compared to December, new-vehicle sales volume is forecast to be lower by 23.5%. A month-over-month decline, however, is typical in January.

“The new-vehicle sales pace always slows in January after the holiday shopping season, and this year is no exception,” said [Charlie Chesbrough](#), senior economist at Cox Automotive. “Sales slowed in the fourth quarter of last year, and that trend is expected to continue into the start of 2026. The loss of EV tax credits at the end of Q3 led to fewer overall sales in Q4, and that will likely continue into the first quarter of 2026. Also, the market is slowing due to ongoing concerns about the U.S. economy and persistently high new-vehicle prices. These market conditions are expected to be major headwinds for the new market throughout 2026.”

January 2026 New-Vehicle Sales Forecast

Segment	Sales Forecast ¹					Market Share		
	Jan-26	Jan-25	Dec-25	YOY%	MOM%	Jan-26	Dec-25	MOM
Mid-Size Car	50,000	50,218	67,515	-0.4%	-25.9%	4.4%	4.5%	-0.1%
Compact Car	85,000	84,790	92,366	0.2%	-8.0%	7.5%	6.2%	1.3%
Compact SUV/Crossover	210,000	207,370	242,110	1.3%	-13.3%	18.4%	16.2%	2.2%
Full-Size Pickup Truck	165,000	149,556	233,313	10.3%	-29.3%	14.5%	15.7%	-1.2%
Mid-Size SUV/Crossover	170,000	163,848	250,814	3.8%	-32.2%	14.9%	16.8%	-1.9%
Other Segments	460,000	449,221	604,049	2.4%	-23.8%	40.4%	40.5%	-0.2%
Grand Total	1,140,000	1,105,003	1,490,167	3.2%	-23.5%			

¹ Cox Automotive Industry Insights data

January has 26 selling days, one more than last year and the same as last month.



Tax Refund Season May Provide Boost in Sales

This month's severe winter weather – Winter Storm Fern – disrupted conditions across much of the nation in the final weekend of January and will likely slow sales as consumers postpone shopping and dealerships face reduced traffic. Even so, some relief may be ahead as tax refunds begin hitting households. With the One Big Beautiful Bill passed in July 2025 expected to generate higher-than-usual refunds, many consumers may see a temporary boost in disposable income.

According to Chesbrough, "Tax season may offer a small but meaningful bump for the auto industry. With larger refunds expected, some consumers who held off earlier in the year may finally have the means – and the confidence – to return to the market."

Forecast: 2026

After ending 2025 at an estimated 16.3 million units, [Cox Automotive forecasts](#) that the new-vehicle sales pace in 2026 will decline to 15.8 million. Slower economic growth, softer job creation, and the loss of EV tax incentives are all expected to weigh on demand. While 2025 outperformed expectations across most metrics, the 2026 outlook points to a more subdued market shaped in part by [major forces](#) pulling the economy in different directions, which will simultaneously help and hinder the auto industry in the year ahead.

About Cox Automotive

Cox Automotive is the world's largest automotive services and technology provider. Fueled by the largest breadth of first-party data fed by 2.3 billion online interactions a year, Cox Automotive tailors leading solutions for car shoppers, auto manufacturers, dealers, lenders and fleets. The company has 29,000+ employees on five continents and a portfolio of industry-leading brands that include Autotrader®, Kelley Blue Book®, Manheim®, vAuto®, Dealertrack®, NextGear Capital™, CentralDispatch® and Cox Fleet®. Cox Automotive is a subsidiary of Cox Enterprises Inc., a privately owned, Atlanta-based company with \$23 billion in annual revenue. Cox Automotive has been included on Glassdoor's [Best Companies in Tech & AI 2026](#) and [Best Place to Work in 2026](#) lists. Visit coxautoinc.com or connect via [@CoxAutomotive](#) on X, [CoxAutoInc](#) on Facebook or [Cox-Automotive-Inc](#) on LinkedIn.

Media Contacts:

Mark Schirmer
734 883 6346
mark.schirmer@coxautoinc.com

Dara Hailes
470 658 0656
dara.hailes@coxautoinc.com