Canvas Tote Weight Selection Checklist

One printable page: the oz-to-GSM chart, the weight-band decision matrix, the combinations to reject, the tests to run before bulk, and the RFQ fields to lock. Compiled from 50 canvas tote prototype builds.

1 Convert every quote to GSM first

QUOTE (OZ/YD²)	GSM	TYPICAL USE
8 oz	≈ 271	Low-cost giveaways; light 1–2 color printing only
10 oz	≈ 339	Light branded totes with a soft drape
12 oz	≈ 407	Everyday branded totes; minimum for dense embroidery
14 oz	≈ 475	Premium retail and structured totes
16 oz	≈ 542	Heavy retail; bags that must stand upright when empty

Formula: GSM = oz/yd² × 33.906. Weights are nominal — confirm the **finished** GSM on the swatch approval form, not the greige number.

2 Match the use case to a weight band

USE CASE	WEIGHT	GSM	STRUCTURE TO LOCK	FAILURE TO AVOID	FREIGHT IMPACT
Trade-show giveaway	8 oz	271	Simple handles, light lining	Collapses under load; ink bleeds at high coverage	Lowest carton weight
Everyday branded tote	10–12 oz	339–407	12 oz shell, box-X handles, bonded thread	Thin-feeling “12 oz” from unfinished greige	Moderate
Grocery / load-bearing	12 oz + base board	407	Box-X, reinforced bottom, 2-ply handles	Bottom seam slip at 30 lb	Above 8 oz; below 16 oz
Premium retail / laptop	14–16 oz	475–542	Walking-foot sewing, interfacing, reinforced base	Stiff drape; slower line time	Highest by air
Heavy embroidery / patch	12 oz min.	407+	Density-adjusted backing and stabilizer	Puckering and needle cutting at 8 oz	Driven by shell weight, not decoration

3 Reject these combinations

- ☐ 8 oz + dense embroidery or high-coverage print
- ☐ 16 oz + air-freight promo program
- ☐ 14–16 oz without walking-foot machines
- ☐ 8–10 oz grocery bag without a reinforced base
- ☐ "12 oz" quote without a finished GSM figure
- ☐ 16 oz shell sewn with standard cotton thread

4 Tests to run before bulk

- ☐ Shell: ASTM D5034 grab tensile, warp and weft — record both directions
- ☐ Handle: 30 lb payload, 50 lift cycles — no seam slip, no anchor pull-out
- ☐ Durability: 30 lb payload, 100 drop cycles — no bottom seam failure
- ☐ Comparison: in our 15×16 in build, the 10 oz bag failed first at the bottom seam allowance
- ☐ QC: AQL 2.5 major / 4.0 minor at pre-shipment
- ☐ Golden sample: signed and matched to the RFQ line by line

5 RFQ fields to lock

- ☐ Exact weight in oz and **finished** GSM, plus tolerance
- ☐ Weave type and roll width (45 vs 60 in changes yield)
- ☐ Finish / sizing treatment and shrinkage limit
- ☐ Decoration method, coverage and minimum weight
- ☐ Carry-load target and handle construction (box-X, bonded thread)
- ☐ Lining and base reinforcement
- ☐ Carton weight and shipping mode (air vs sea)
- ☐ Sample status and QC standard
- ☐ RoHS / REACH or other compliance documents required
- ☐ Golden sample sign-off date

Guidance only — confirm all test standards and compliance documents with your own QA team.