The Joint Electoral Management Body has taken a number of steps to protect the integrity and security of all ballots cast in the September 18 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections, JEMB Chairman Bissmillah Bissmil announced.

“The secrecy and integrity of the ballots you cast on Election Day are paramount. We can assure all Afghan voters that your ballot will be protected in the best possible manner,” Mr Bissmil said.

“Voters will be prevented from casting more than one ballot. Special features in this year’s inking system ensure the staining of voters’ fingers after they have voted. Metal seals on ballot boxes will protect ballots once they have been cast, ensuring the boxes cannot be opened until the count begins.”

“The Afghan people can have faith and confidence in our meticulous planning to ensure the safety and security of their votes,” Mr Bissmil said.

Falsification of ballots are prevented by an embedded watermark, a background pattern and a microprint which have not been made public.

In addition, more than 10,000 observers, political party agents and independent candidates’ agents will scrutinize every step of the polling and counting process.

“I urge all voters to remember this on September 18: your ballot will be kept secret at every step of the process, and a series of protective measures are in place to prevent any interference with your ballot,” Mr Bissmil said.

“This way the decision on who wins a seat in the Wolesi Jirga or Provincial Councils will be made only by you, in the privacy of the ballot booth. No one except the voter – neither polling staff, counting staff, nor - will know who they voted for.”

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