May 2, 1961 J. E. KENT 2,982,041

KEY ATTACHMENT

Filed March 10, 1959

FIG. 1

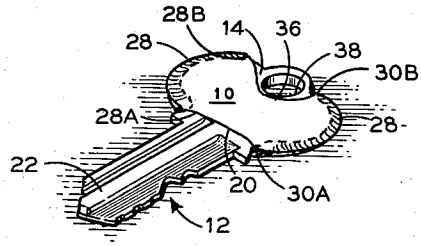


FIG. 2

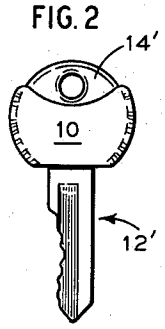


FIG. 3

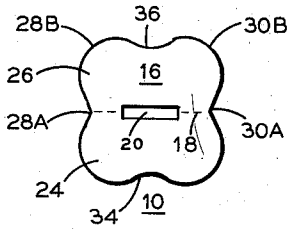


FIG. 5

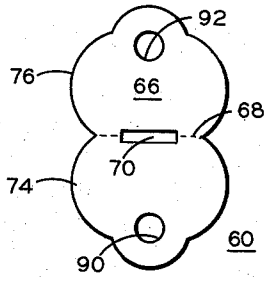
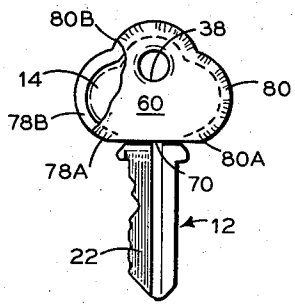


FIG. 4



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KEY ATTACHMENT

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This invention pertains to key attachments and more particularly to attachments to the head of a key for permitting the easy identification of a particular key from a group of similar keys.

In the past, there have been proposed many key identifiers which are basically attachments for the heads of keys. Some of these identifiers are molded rubber pockets that are stretched over the heads of keys. Although such identifiers achieve their desired purpose, they are most difficult to stretch over the key heads. Furthermore, such identifiers required expensive and complex molds. Other identifiers have been proposed which do not have these problems. In this second class of identifiers are metal sheets that are stamped in the outline of a key head with tabs extending from their edges. After placing the stamping on the key head, the tabs are folded over to engage the face of the key head. While it is true, such identifiers are easier and consequently cheaper to fabricate, the edges of the metal tabs have a tendency to snag the material of pockets, purses and the like in which a user normally carries the keys, and also to injure the hand or fingers of the user.

It is accordingly an object of the invention to provide an improved key attachment which permits the immediate identification of a desired key from a group of similar keys.

It is another object of the invention to provide an improved key attachment for the identification of keys which cannot cause injury to the person or the clothing of the user.

It is a further object of the invention to satisfy the above objects of the invention with a key attachment which while being durable is also very simple and inexpensive to fabricate.

Briefly, in accordance with the invention, a key attachment is provided which includes first and second surfaces of a resilient material. The surfaces are of substantially identical shape. The edges of the surfaces are joined to form a snugly fitting cover for the head of a key. A first opening is provided along one portion of the periphery of the joined surfaces through which the shank and at least a portion of the head of a key may pass. A second opening is also provided along the periphery of the joined surfaces through which the shank of the key may pass.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed description when read with the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a key with a key attachment on the head of the key in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of a key having a head of different outline covered by the key attachment of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a plan view of the blank for the key attachment of Figures 1 and 2;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a key having a key attachment on the head of the key in accordance with another embodiment of the invention; and

Figure 5 is a plan view of the blank for the key attachment of Figure 4.

Referring to Figure 1, a key attachment **10** is shown as an identifier means for a key **12**. The attachment **10** is fitted about the head **14** of the key **12**. The key attachment **10** is fabricated from a sheet **16** of elastic material, preferably a resilient plastic such as polyethylene, polystyrene or vinyl copolymers, or any suitable material which would serve the purpose.

As is shown in Figure 3, the sheet **16** is symmetrical in outline about a center line **18**. A slot **20** is disposed in sheet **16** along the center line **18**. Slot **20** is provided to permit the passing through of shank **22** of key **12** as is hereinafter more fully described. Sheet **16** is folded along center line **18** to form two surfaces or plies **24** and **26**. When sheet **16** is folded flat, corresponding portions of the edges of the plies **24** and **26** are seamed by using conventional dielectric heating techniques to form seams **28** and **30**. In particular, seam **28** starts from the end **28***a* of fold along center line **18** and continues to a point **28***b*. Similarly, seam **30** starts from the end **30***a* of the fold along the center line **18** and ends at a point **30***b*. The significance of the points **28***b* and **30***b* are hereinafter more fully described.

In general, the outline of each of the plies **24** and **26** follows the outline of the head **14** of key **12**. However, it should be noted that those edges **34** and **36** of the plies **24** and **26** opposite to the fold along center line **18** extend concavely inwardly toward the fold so that the conventional hole **38** in the head **14** of the key **12** is bare or exposed.

The space between the end of the seam **28** at the point **28***b* to the point **30***b* at the end of the seam **30** provides an opening through which the key **12** is inserted. The distance between the points **28***b* and **30***b* is chosen to be less than the maximum diameter of the head **14** of the key **12**.

To place the key attachment **10** on the key **12**, the shank **22** is inserted in the opening between the points **28***b* and **30***b* and guided through the slot **20**. When the head **14** reaches the opening between the points **28***b* and **30***b* it is necessary to stretch the elastic material of the sheet **16**. When the base of the head **14** is abutting the fold along the center line **18**, the stretching is relaxed and the key attachment **10** snugly fits about a portion of the head **14** with the hole **38** exposed.

Although the key **12** of Figure 1 has a head **14** which is in the shape of a cloverleaf, the key attachment **10** may equally well be used as an identifier for a key **12'** with a round head **14'**. The elastic properties of the material from which the key attachment **10** is fabricated can suitably accommodate such and other variations in the outline of key heads.

Figures 4 and 5 show an alternate embodiment of the invention in which the head of the key **12** is completely covered by key attachment **60**. Sheet **66** has two portions **74** and **76** that are symmetrically disposed about a center line **68**. Each of the portions **74** and **76** has an outline substantially conforming to the outline of the head **14** of the key **12**. Sheet **66** is folded along center line **68** so that the portions **74** and **76** form two plies extending from the center line **68**. A slot **70** is cut along center line **68** through which the shank **22** may pass. When sheet **66** is folded flat, corresponding edges of the plies or portions **74** and **76** are seamed by dielectric heating techniques. The seam **78** starts from the end of the fold **78***a* and continues to the point **78***b*, and the seam **80** starts from the end of the fold **80***a* and continues to the point **80***b*.

The space between the points **78***b* and **80***b* provide an opening through which the key **12** is inserted shank portion first. The shank **22** is guided through the slot **70** while the head **14** is slid through the opening between the

the points 78*b* and 80*b*. Holes 90 and 92 in the sheet 66 substantially register with the hole 38 in the head of the key 12. Thus when the key 12 is placed on a key ring, the key attachment 60 is helped to retain its position on the head of the key 12. Although key attachment is shown in clover leaf outline, it should be apparent to those skilled in the art that circular or other outlines which conform to other conventional key heads may be used.

It should be noted that, in general, the key attachments will be available in sets wherein each of the key attachments is of a different color. With present day plastics, the color is easily incorporated with the material so that a separate coloring step is unnecessary. The material used may also have a surface which permits writing thereon.

There will now be obvious to those skilled in the art many modifications and variations which satisfy the objects and realize many or all of the advantages but which do not depart from the spirit of the invention as defined in the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A key attachment comprising first and second surfaces of a thermoplastic resilient material, said first and second surfaces having substantially identical shapes, the peripheries of said first and second surfaces being fused to form a snug fitting cover for the head of a key, a first opening along the common periphery of the surfaces through which the shank and at least a portion of the head of a key may pass, and a second opening along the common periphery of the surfaces smaller than said first opening through which the shank of the key may pass.

2. A key attachment comprising a folded sheet of thermoplastic resilient material, the two sides of said sheet of resilient material being substantially symmetrically shaped about the fold line, a slot in said sheet of resilient material along said fold line through which the shank of a key may pass, said sheet of resilient material being folded substantially flat along said fold line, a fused seam for joining corresponding portions of the folded sheet of resilient material whereby a pocket is formed for accommodating at least a portion of the head of a key, said seam having an opening larger than said slot for permitting the passing through of the shank and at least a portion of the head of the key.

3. A key attachment comprising a folded sheet of elastic material, said folded sheet forming first and second surfaces being substantially symmetrically shaped about the fold line, a slot in said sheet of elastic material along said fold line through which the shank of a key may pass, said first and second surfaces being folded substantially flat along said fold line to form a pair of similarly shaped plies, a first seam joining corresponding portions of the edges of said plies from one end of the fold to a first point along said edges, a second seam joining corresponding portions of the edges of said plies from the other end of the fold to a second point along said edges to provide a snugly fitting pocket for at least a portion of a key head, the distance between said first and second points being less than the maximum transverse dimension of the key head and sufficient upon extension thereof to permit the insertion of the shank and at least a portion of the head of a key between said plies.

4. A key attachment comprising a folded sheet of elastic material, the two folds of said sheet of elastic material being substantially symmetrical about the fold line, a slot in said sheet of elastic material along said fold line, said slot being sufficiently large to only permit the passing through of the shank of a key, the portions of said folded sheet of elastic material on either side of said fold line being substantially similar in outline to the outline of the head of a key with the edges of said portions opposite said fold line being concave inward toward said fold line, said sheet of elastic material being folded substantially flat along said fold line to provide a pair of similarly shaped plies extending from said fold line, a first seam joining corresponding edges of said plies from one end of the fold to one end of the concave inward portion, a second seam joining corresponding edges of said plies disposed from the other end of the fold to the other end of the concave inward portion to provide a snugly fitting extensible pocket of the key head, the distance between said ends of the concave inward portion being less than the maximum transverse dimension of said key head, said concave inward portion being sufficiently long to permit the insertion of the shank and head of the key with the concave inward portion extending sufficiently toward the fold to provide for the exposure of opening in the head of the key.

5. A key attachment comprising a folded sheet of elastic material, the two folds of said sheet of elastic material being substantially symmetrical about the fold line, a slot in said sheet of elastic material along said fold line, said slot being sufficiently large to only permit the passing through the shank of a key, the portion of said elastic sheet on either side of said fold line being substantially similar in outline to the outline of a key head, said sheet of elastic material being folded substantially flat along said fold line to form a pair of similarly shaped plies, a first seam joining corresponding edges of said plies from one end of the fold to a first point along said edges, a second seam joining corresponding portions of the edges of said plies from the other end of said fold to a second point along said edges to provide a snugly fitting pocket for a key head, the distance between said first and second points being less than the maximum transverse dimension of the key head, the pocket being extensible to permit the insertion of said shank and head of the key.

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