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KEY CONTAINER

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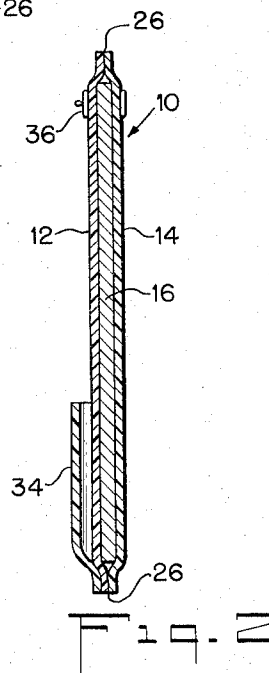
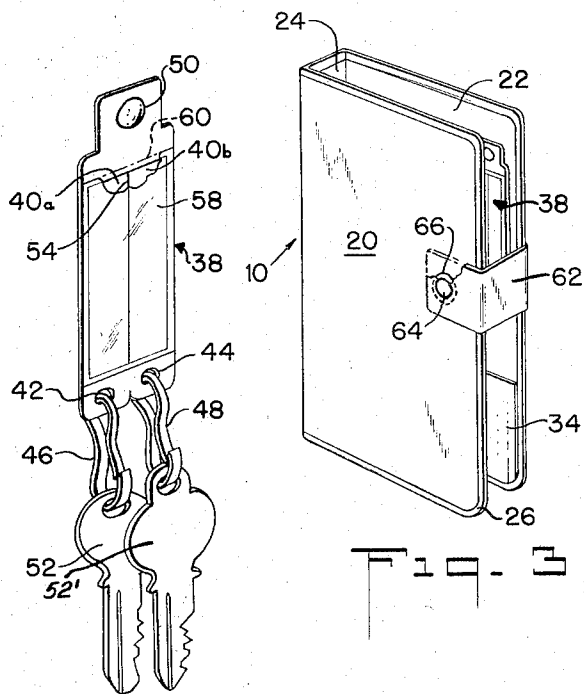
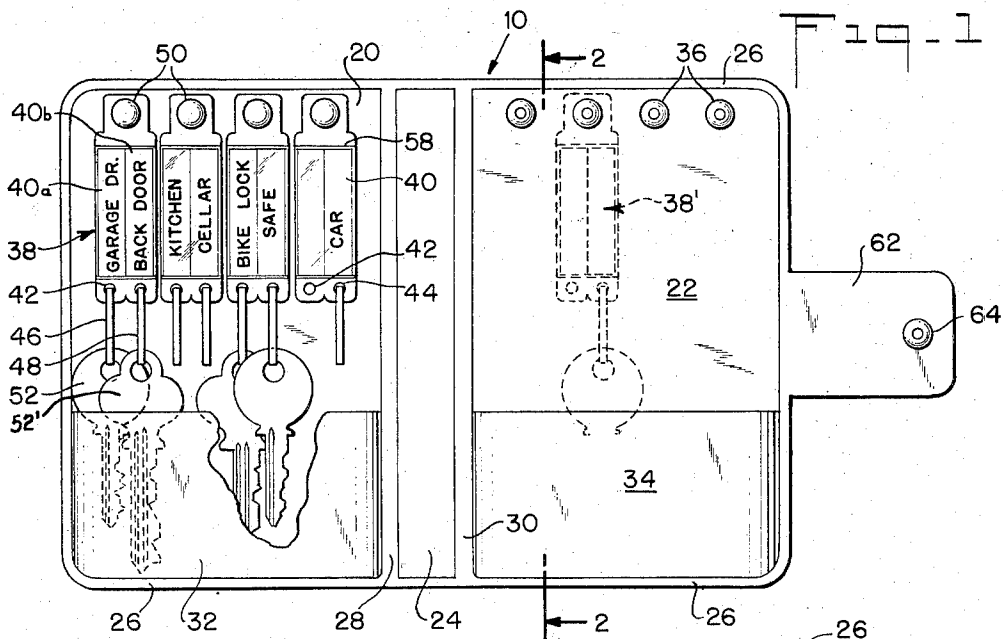


Fig. 4

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1

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KEY CONTAINER

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6 Claims. (Cl. 150—40)

This invention relates to improvements in key containers and in particular to a novel and improved key container in folding booklet form having means for identifying the keys stored therein.

One common problem in storing keys in the home or office is that a large number of keys accumulate and find their ways to various drawers and other receptacles, being then difficult to find and identify. As a result, when a particular key is sought, it is invariably difficult to locate. Often, a large collection of keys are finally discovered, and there is no way of determining which of the collection is the key being sought.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a key receptacle in foldable booklet form which in appearance is similar to a large wallet or bill-fold, and which is in flat compact form for convenient storage in a drawer or other easily-accessible place in the home or office.

Another object of the invention is the provision of a key container having means for quickly and removably attaching a large number of keys therein with the keys mounted in flat, side-by-side relationship, and with means for identifying each key at a glance.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a key container of the character described which is of a simple nature, so that it can be economically manufactured.

Additional objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent during the course of the following specification when taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is an inside plan view of the key container shown in open condition with a plurality of keys mounted therein;

Fig. 2 is a section taken along line 2—2 of Fig. 1, and on a slightly enlarged scale;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the key container, shown in folded position for storage; and

Fig. 4 is an enlarged perspective view of one of the key tags used to identify the keys and to mount the keys in the container, with a portion of the transparent window thereof broken away to reveal the paper slip contained therein.

Referring in detail to the drawings, there is shown in Fig. 1 a key container made in accordance with the invention. The container has a body portion 10 made of flexible sheet material which is preferably a flexible thermo-plastic material.

As shown in Fig. 2, the body portion 10 is formed of two sheets 12 and 14 of plastic material secured together in the form of a two-ply sheet. The body portion is fortified by a pair of stiffening sheets 16 which are preferably made of cardboard or other rigid material. The stiffening sheets are sized to reinforce a pair of cover panels 20 and 22, being sufficiently narrow to form therebetween a central panel 24 which has no stiffening insert and is therefore adapted to serve as a hinge to permit the cover panels to be brought to the open position of Fig. 1 and the closed position of Fig. 3.

2

When the stiffening sheets 16 are inserted between the flexible sheets 12 and 14, the thermo-plastic sheets 12 and 14 are heat sealed together along a sealing line 26 extending continuously around the periphery of the body portion 10, and also along sealing lines 28 and 30 which form the inner edges of the respective cover panels 20 and 22 and seal the stiffening sheets 16 within said cover panels. The sealing lines 28 and 30 also define the flexible central panel 24.

A pair of strips 32 and 34 of thermo-plastic material are also secured to the lower end of the respective cover panels 20 and 22 to form upwardly-opening pockets for the reception of the keys mounted in the container. The plastic strips 32 and 34 overlie the lower surface of the inner cover panel walls, and are secured thereto at their side and bottom edges by the lines of heat sealing 26, 28 and 30.

The inner surfaces of the cover panels 20 and 22 have secured along their upper edges respective rows of male snap-fastener elements 36. In the preferred embodiment shown in Fig. 1, each cover panel 20 and 22 is shown with a row of four such male snap-fastener elements 36. The latter are adapted to retain key tags 38 in mounted position.

Each key tag 38 is of elongated rectangular form, and is also preferably formed of a strip of thermo-plastic material. A sheet of transparent plastic 53 is secured to the front surface of each key tag 38, as by heat sealing, at its side and bottom edges, leaving a top edge opening 60 for the reception of a paper slip 40. The bottom end of each key tag 38 contains a pair of spaced apertures 42 and 44 in which are inserted a pair of respective split metal loops 46 and 48. At its top end, each key tag 38 has mounted a female snap fastener element 50 adapted to be removably secured to one of the male snap fastener elements 36 of the container cover panels.

The split metal loops 46 and 48 form means for attaching a pair of keys 52 and 52' to each key tag. To identify each key, the paper slip 40 is divided into two half-sections 40a and 40b by a central longitudinal line 54. The function of the particular key may then be written or printed on the paper slip 40 in the half-section located above the corresponding metal loops 46, 48. For example, in Fig. 1, the key tag 38 at the extreme left-hand side of the key container is labelled "garage door" in its left-hand half-section 40a and "back door" in its right-hand half-section 40b, indicating that the left-hand key 52 will fit the garage door while the right-hand key 52' will fit the back door.

In use, keys are mounted upon the split metal loops 46, 48 of the key tags 38 in the usual manner, and the half-sections 40a and 40b of the paper slips 40 marked to provide an identification for each key. The key tag 38 is then mounted flat against the inner surface of the cover panel 20 or 22 by attaching its female snap fastener element 50 to one of the cover panel male snap fasteners 36. The lower portion of the keys 52 and 52' may then be inserted in the pocket formed by the plastic strip 32, in the manner shown in Fig. 1, to prevent the keys from moving about and to insure that the keys and key tag are maintained flat against the inner surface of the respective cover panel. In this flatly-mounted position, the container may be folded closed to the position shown in Fig. 3, in which folded position it may be placed in a cabinet, drawer, or the like.

The container may also be provided with a flexible closure flap 62 formed integrally with one of the cover panels, as for example the cover panel 22. At its free end, the closure flap 62 carries fastening means such as a snap fastener element 64 which is adapted to engage with a corresponding snap fastener element 66 on the outer surface of the opposite cover panel 20, to hold said

3

cover panels releasably in folded position. The flexible central panel 24 is made wide enough to permit the cover panels 20 and 22 to be folded parallel with each other and still provide room for the keys mounted thereon.

The key container illustrated herein is made to receive eight key tags 38 and sixteen keys carried thereby, which should be sufficient to store all of the keys used in most homes and offices. In Fig. 1, key tags are shown mounted only upon the cover panel 20, but it is to be understood that four additional key tags may be mounted on the cover panel 22, as indicated by the key tag 38' shown in phantom. For clarity of illustration, some of the keys are removed from the key tags illustrated in Fig. 1. This situation may, however, actually occur when it is desired to use a key and leave the key tag mounted in the container. In such an instance the key may be easily removed from the split metal loop 46 or 48, or the metal loop itself may be removed from the key tag 38. Normally, however, when it is desired to use a key, the cover panels 20 and 22 are opened, the key quickly identified and the particular key tag 38 removed from its snap fastener mounting 36. After use, the key tag is simply remounted on the cover panel.

The key container of the invention provides means for storing all of the keys normally used at home or office in one convenient place where they can be readily found. In addition, each key is labelled so that it can be easily identified at a glance. The key container holds a large number of keys, and yet is of small and compact size so that it can be conveniently kept in a drawer or the like, taking up a minimum of space. In a commercial embodiment, for example, the cover panels were each four inches wide by six inches high, while the central panel was $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide.

It will be appreciated that in the event that the container body portion is made of a material other than thermoplastic material, for example, leather or the like, the wall sheets will be attached together by stitching rather than heat sealing.

While a preferred embodiment of the invention has been shown and described herein, it is obvious that numerous additions, changes and omissions may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A key container comprising a pair of cover panels hingedly connected to a central panel, a plurality of fastening means extending transversely across the inner surface of each cover panel, a plurality of key tags for attachment to said cover panels with said key tags extending transversely across said cover panels in spaced relation to each other, each of said key tags having means for attaching at least one key, fastening means for cooperating with the fastening means on said cover panels for removable and replaceable individual attachment of said key tags thereto, and key-identifying means on each key tag, said key-identifying means being positioned to face outwardly from the cover panels in the mounted position of said key tags.

2. A key container comprising a pair of cover panels hingedly connected to a central panel, a row of fastening elements extending transversely across the upper inner surface of each cover panel, a plurality of key tags for removable and replaceable individual attachment to said cover panels, each of said key tags having means for mounting at least one key at the lower end thereof and a fastening element at the upper end thereof for cooperating with one of the fastening elements of said cover panels whereby the key tags may be removably and replaceably mounted flat against the inner surfaces of said cover panels, said plurality of key tags when attached to said cover panels being disposed transversely across each of said cover panels, each cover panel having at

4

its lower end a planar pocket for receiving the keys carried by the key tags mounted on said cover panel, and key-identifying means on the outer face of each key tag, said key-identifying means being exposed to view when said key tags are mounted on said cover panels.

3. A key container comprising a pair of rigid cover panels connected together by a flexible central panel and foldable at said central panel from an open, extended position to a closed position, a row of fastening elements extending across the upper inner surface of each cover panel and an upwardly-opening pocket extending across the lower inner surface of each cover panel, a plurality of flat key tags for removable attachment to said cover panels, each of said key tags having means for mounting a pair of keys with the keys depending from the lower end thereof, a fastening element at the upper end thereof sized and adapted to cooperate with a fastening element of a cover panel for mounting the key tag flat against the inner surface of said cover panel, and means for identifying the keys carried thereby, the pocket on each cover panel being sized and positioned to receive the keys carried by the key tags mounted on said cover panel.

4. A key container according to claim 3 in which the key identifying means on each key tag comprises a transparent strip covering the face of said key tag and having a top open end forming a pocket, and a paper slip insertible within said pocket and adapted to receive written indicia identifying both keys carried by said key tag.

5. A key container comprising a pair of cover panels hingedly connected to a central panel, a plurality of snap fastener elements extending transversely across the inner surface of each cover panel, a plurality of key tags for attachment to said cover panels, each of said key tags having means for attaching at least one key and a snap fastener element adapted to cooperate with one of the snap fastener elements on said cover panels for removable and replaceable individual attachment of said key tags thereto, said plurality of key tags when attached to said cover panels being disposed transversely across each of said cover panels.

6. A key container comprising a pair of cover panels hingedly connected to a central panel, a row of snap fastening elements extending transversely across the upper inner surface of each cover panel, a plurality of key tags for removable and replaceable individual attachment to said cover panels, each of said key tags having means for mounting at least one key at the lower end thereof and a snap fastening element at the upper end thereof for cooperating with one of the snap fastening elements of said cover panels whereby the key tags may be removably and replaceably mounted flat against the inner surfaces of said cover panels, said plurality of key tags when attached to said cover panels being disposed transversely across each of said cover panels, each cover panel having at its lower end a planar pocket for receiving the keys carried by the key tags mounted on said cover panel, and key-identifying means on the outer face of each key tag, said key-identifying means being exposed to view when said key tags are mounted on said cover panels.

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