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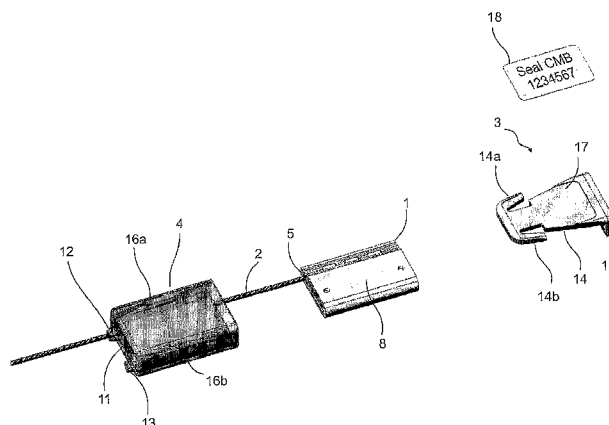


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: The invention refers to a security seal, especially of the type used in the transport of valuables or chemical/petroleum products, in drums, trucks, tankers, railway cars and the like, as well as in electrical equipment and doorways. The seal comprises a seal body (1) and a steel cord (2) fixed at one end to the body. In use, the free end is passed through the elements to be sealed and then introduced through a passage (7) through the body (1). The seal body (1) also has locking means associated with the passage (7) to prevent withdrawal of the steel cord (2). The body (1) may be personalized by the manufacturer to make the seal unique and thus with a high degree of security. So as further to increase the degree of security and to permit the user to introduce his own marking or personalisation, the invention provides for a transparent cover (4) which receives the seal body (1) as well as an identification element which is inserted and locked into body (1) and, at the same time, locks the body (1) within the cover (4). The identification element may be, for example, a label (18) or an electronic chip (20) which may be identified from the exterior when the system is in the sealed configuration.



**AMENDED CLAIMS****received by the International Bureau on 29 July 2009 (29.07.09)**

1. Security seal comprising:

a seal body (1) and an elongated member (2) having a first end (5) fixed to the body and a second free end (6), said body (1) being formed there through with a passage for the free end (6) of the elongated element (2) and locking means associated with the passage (7) to prevent withdrawal of the elongated element once introduced through the passage (7); and

an outer cover (4) that has one open end adapted to receive the seal body (1) through said open end in its interior, the opposite end of the cover (4) preventing removal of the seal body therethrough;

**characterized** by further comprising:

first locking means (16a, 16b) provided in the interior of said cover (4), said first locking means (16a, 16b) being in a region not occupied by the seal body (1) when this latter is received within the cover (4); and

a separate identification element (3; 19) adapted to be received through said open end of the cover (4) in the said region not occupied by the seal body (1), which is provided with second locking means (14a, 14b) cooperable with said first locking means (16a, 16b) so as to prevent removal of the identification element (3; 19) after locking by insertion in the cover (4), wherein:

said identification element (3; 19) is provided with an identification region (17) adapted to receive identification means (18; 20) and is configured such that, in its locked position, it prevents withdrawal of the seal body through the said open end of the cover, said identification means (18; 20) being identifiable from outside said cover when said identification element is in the locked position.

2. Security seal according to claim 1, **characterized** in that said cover (4) has at least one transparent region that permits viewing, from outside, of said identification region (17) on the identification element (3;19).

3. Security seal according to claim 1, **characterized** in that said identification element (3; 19) comprises a blade part (14) with a flange (15) at one end, said flange (5) closing the open end of said cover (4) when the identification element (3; 19) is locked in said cover (4).

### Statement under PCT Article 19

Claim 1 has been amended for the preamble to include reference to the outer cover (4) that is open at one end only to receive the seal body (1) since this feature is common to reference D1 (FR-A-2 874 115).

Contrary to the conclusion of Item V 2 of the Written Opinion, the preamble does not include the feature of the first locking means(16a, 16b) in the cover (4) since such locking means do not exist in the cover (9) of D1. In D1, the only locking means are the teeth (7) in the seal body (3). There are no locking means in the cover (9).

In Item VIII of the Written Opinion the examiner interprets claim 1 as including the subject matter of claim 3 in view of the alleged vagueness and lack of clarity of the expression "such that". Applicant is of the opinion that it is clear to anyone versed in the art that the particular configuration of the identification element (3) to ensure that it blocks withdrawal of the seal body ((1) from the cover (4) need not necessarily be the flange (15) of claim 3. Other shapes provided they impede withdrawal of the body (1), such as a downwardly directed pin or other type of protuberance. Equally, the identification element (3) need not necessarily be in the form of a blade (14). Many other configurations could be used without any need for ingenuity, merely the normal knowledge on a person versed in the art.