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(54) Title: REINFORCED LAMINATED FOLDER



REINFORCED LAMINATED FOLDER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the field of folders. More particularly, it concerns reinforced laminated file folders and hanging folders.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Folders to be used in filing cabinets, desk drawers or the like have been increasingly used in offices. Two main categories of these folders exist, namely hanging and file folders. Folders are typically made of a sheet of hard paper or cardboard with a central horizontal fold. In the particular case of hanging file folders, additional folds are further provided in the folders' top edges so as to allow passage of the hanging rods. Another characteristic of known hanging folders is the presence of uniformly spaced slots for insertions of labeling tabs, along the top of folded-over portions. These slots often tear or wear out as new tabs are inserted or removed.

15 Due to the constant in-and-out handling of the folders from drawers, for example, and to the constant insertion and removal of labeling tabs, significant wear and tear of the folders have been noted at the level of the top edges, the bottom fold and the slots for labeling tabs.

20 Furthermore, when hanging folders hold a large volume of paper or a narrow heavy object, pressure is exerted on the lateral edges and/or the bottom of these folders. Wearing or tearing can thus occur at these levels of the folders when in use.

As a solution to the wear and tear at the edges, folders have been reinforced and stiffened by use of additional layers of the folder stock applied thereon.

25 In order to further limit the wear and tear effect mainly at the edges and along the bottom fold, folders are usually laminated on at least a portion of their surface. Lamination has been done with various forms of high tensile strength films. The high tensile strength films used in the field of folders are thin. Therefore, little bulk is added to the folder thickness. Both the film application and the manufacture of the folder may be done at the same time.

For example, known in the art is US patent no. 4,749,121 which discloses a file folder, made of web stock, with a reinforcing plastic film wrapped over the lateral edges of the folder, in the direction of the web stock grain. As can be appreciated from this patent, the top edges of the folders are not reinforced.

- 5 Also known in the art is US patent no. 5,275,439 which discloses hanging folders with a reinforcing layer applied to the entire outer side surface of the folder. This layer extends over the top of the front and rear surfaces of the folder thus also covering the median fold. As can be appreciated, the reinforcing layer is wrapped over the top edges of the folders. As it was the case for the folder disclosed in US 4,749,121, the
10 reinforcing layer is in a direction parallel to the grain of the web stock. Moreover, lamination is only made on one surface of the folder.

- Another problem common to known hanging folders is that the hanging rods, usually made of metal, are glued directly onto the paper surface. The glue can thus wet the paper and lead to tearing of the top edges. Moreover, inefficient adhesion between the
15 metal hanging rod and the surface of the folder can lead to the exit of the rod from the folder's top edge.

- There is thus still a need to provide for a folder which is more durable and resistant to constant handling. More specifically, there is a need to optimize the prevention of wear and tear in folders, mainly at the lateral edges thereof where wear and tear mainly
20 occurs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide an improved reinforced folder, which satisfies the above-mentioned need. In other words, an object of the present invention is to provide a folder which provides for more durable and resistant filing.

- 25 The object of the invention is achieved by a folder, either a hanging or a file folder.

This folder comprises front and back panels made of a suitable material. Each of the front and back panels is provided with a top and a bottom edge joined by lateral edges.

The top, bottom and lateral edges delimit an inside and an outside surface for the front and the back panels. The bottom edges of the front and the back panels interconnect

at a median fold of the folder. The material forming the folder has a grain direction extending longitudinally, that is in parallel to the lateral edges.

The folder includes a reinforcing layer which covers at least one of the inside or the outside surface of the front and the back panels. This reinforcing layer wraps over the lateral edges of the panels of the folder, in a direction perpendicular to these lateral edges, and therefore perpendicular to the grain direction.

The present invention also relates to a method for making a folder, either a hanging or a file folder, reinforced along the entire length of its lateral edges. This method comprises the steps of:

- 10 a- providing a length rolled web of material of predetermined width and with lateral edges;
- b- folding said length of material to form a folder having front and back panels made of a suitable material; each of the front and back panels is provided with a top and a bottom edge joined by lateral edges; the top, bottom and lateral edges delimit an inside and an outside surface for the front and the back panels; the bottom edges of the front and the back panels interconnect at a median fold of the folder; and the material forming the folder has a grain direction extending longitudinally, that is in parallel to the lateral edges;
- 15 c- providing a reinforcing layer;
- 20 d- adhering the reinforcing layer onto the rolled web of material in a perpendicular direction thereto; and
- e- wrapping the reinforcing layer over the lateral edges of the rolled web of material.

An advantage of the present folder is that, thanks to the perpendicular arrangement of the reinforcing layer and the grain of the web of material, and thanks to the wrap over along the side edges of the folder, prevention of wear and tear is optimized.

Another advantage of the present invention is that the web of material is preferably long

grained thus increasing the stiffness of the final folder.

The present invention also presents the advantage of providing lateral reinforcement for folders with top edges of any shape.

Other features and objects of the present invention will become more apparent from the following description of preferred embodiments, having reference to the appended drawings and given as examples only as to show how the invention may be put into practice.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a perspective blown-up view of the internal face of a hanging folder having a lateral edge reinforced, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

Figure 2 is a perspective blown-up view of the bottom fold of the external face of the folder depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a perspective blown-up view of the external face of the folder depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a perspective blown-up view of the external face of a file folder having a side edge reinforced and an information tab integral with the top edge of the folder, according to another preferred embodiment of the invention.

Figure 5 is a perspective blown-up view of the internal face of the file folder depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 6 is a perspective blown-up view of the bottom fold of the internal face of the file folder depicted in Figure 5.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to Figures 1 to 3, there is shown a hanging folder according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The folder (10) of the present embodiment comprises a front panel (52) and a back panel (50) made of a material of predetermined grain direction. The material used is preferably in the initial form of a rolled web. This

material can be any paper, heavy duty paper, cardboard or the like, which can be folded.

By "predetermined grain direction", it should be understood that the material is made of grains which are relatively long and parallel to the lateral edges of the rolled web. Of note, the lateral edges of the rolled web of material preferably represent the lateral edges of the folder proper. This presents the advantage of avoiding to further cut the web of material along its lateral edges in order to obtain the desired horizontal dimension of the front and back panels (52, 50).

The back panel (50), as presented in Figure 1, has a top edge (14) and a bottom edge (not shown) joined by lateral edges (18, other lateral edge not shown). The front panel (52) is a mirror image of the back panel (50). Still referring to Figure 1, one can appreciate that the top (14), bottom (not shown) and lateral edges (18, other lateral edge not shown) delimit an inside (12) and an outside surface (not shown) of the back panel (50). The bottom edges of the front and the back panels interconnect at a bottom median fold (28) of the folder (10), as better depicted in Figure 2.

As best seen in Figure 2, the folder (10) further comprises a reinforcing layer (24) which covers the entire outside surface (26) of both the front (52) and the back (50) panels. Referring back to Figure 1, this reinforcing layer (24) is characterized in that it wraps over the lateral edges of the panels of the folder, in a direction perpendicular to the lateral edges. Alternatively, the reinforcing layer (24) can be provided on the entire inside surface (12) of the folder or on both the inside (12) and outside (26) surfaces of the folder (10).

When both the outside (26) and the inside (12) faces are covered with the reinforcing layer (24), the folder (10) is impermeable, thus protected from moisture.

The reinforcing layer (24) is preferably made of plastic, more preferably chosen among polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester or any equivalent thereof.

Adhesion of the reinforcing layer (24) can be provided by an adhesive on the entire surface of the web of material or at the level of the edges only. Alternatively, the reinforcing layer (24) may itself be self-adhesive.

The reinforcing layer (24) is wrapped over in a direction perpendicular to the defined grain direction of the material used to make the front and back panels (52, 50). This

lateral perpendicular reinforcement allows to increase the rigidity of the folder (10), both along the lateral edges and the median fold (28), as partly shown in Figure 2.

Referring again to Figure 2, one can appreciate that the folder (10) covered with the plastic film (24) is folded along a median line, thus forming the median fold (28). It should be understood that the folder (10) may include additional folding lines parallel and on one or both side(s) of the median fold (28), for use when the contents of the file folder are relatively wide. By "relatively wide", it will be understood that the contents are of a width almost equal to the distance between two (2) opposite parallel lines along the bottom of the folder (10).

As further shown in Figures 1 to 3, the hanging folder (10) is provided with hanging rods (22) along the top edges (14,16) thereof. These hanging rods (22), preferably made of metal, are bonded to the inside face (12) of the folder. As can be appreciated, when the inside face (12) is covered with the reinforcing layer (24), the hanging rod (22) is directly bonded to this reinforcing layer (24). This direct bonding between plastic and metal leads to a more solid and durable positioning of the hanging rods(22). Moreover, in the situation where the inside surface (12) of the folder (10) is covered with the reinforcing layer (24), the direct bonding between plastic and metal is present over the entire length of a hanging rod.

Although not clearly distinguishable in Figures 1 to 3, the top edge portion of the hanging folder (10) can be provided with slots which provide the appropriate space for any information tab to be used. Thanks to the reinforcing layer covering, the slots are also reinforced thus optimizing the prevention of wear and tear at this level.

Figures 4 to 6 present a file folder, according to another embodiment of the present invention. This file folder is free of hanging rods.

Figures 4 to 6 particularly show that reinforcement may be achieved for the lateral edges of folders (10) presenting any shape of top edges (14, 16).

Referring more specifically to Figure 5, it can be noted that the reinforcing layer (24) similarly wraps over the lateral edge (18) of the folder (10) to adhere to the internal face (12) of the folder (10).

Figure 6 is a view of the internal face (12) of the folder (10), at the level of the median fold (28).

Thanks to the reinforcing layer used over the entire surface of the folder, the color of the web of material can be preserved and can withstand the bleaching effects of the sun, for example. In other words, less color pigments are needed in order to preserve the folder's color.

When the web of material is drawn from a roll, there are manufacturing advantages. First, material provided in the form of rolls is less expensive than sheets of material. Then, the whole reinforcing process is faster when using rolls of material rather than other forms since the rolls can be pre-manufactured into the desired width for the folder. Finally, in a roll of material, the grain of material (paper, for example) can be long thus allowing optimization of the lamination process since the grains are uninterrupted.

While the present invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

Application number / numéro de demande: 2474403

Figures: 1-6

Pages: _____

Drawings

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