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(54) **FASTENER FOR A HANDBAG PROTECTIVE COVER**

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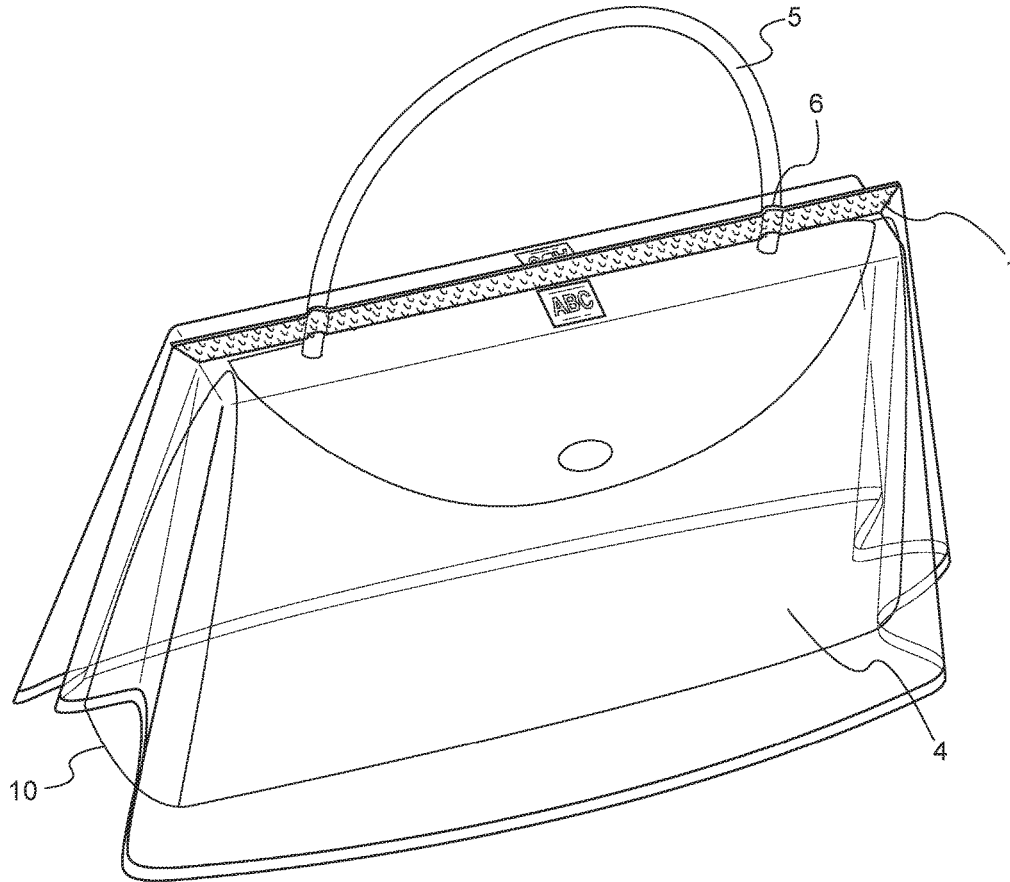
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ABSTRACT

The invention of the current application is directed to a handbag protective cover device and an attachment mechanism for a handbag protective cover uses a thin hook and loop fastener strip which are attached to a handbag protective cover. The attachment mechanism also includes pull tabs which are easily gripped by a user and allow a user to pull the hook and loop fastener strip apart by pulling on the pull tabs.



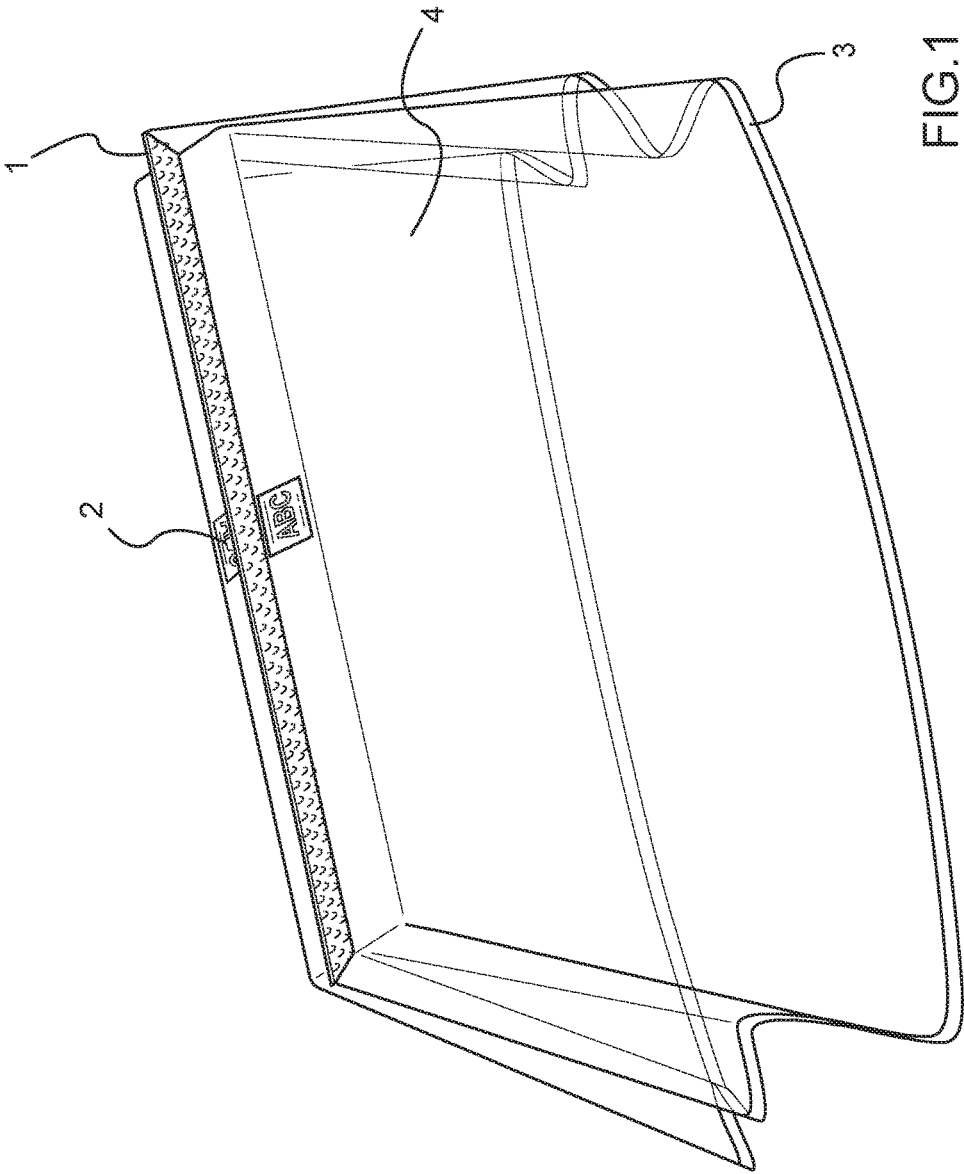


FIG. 1

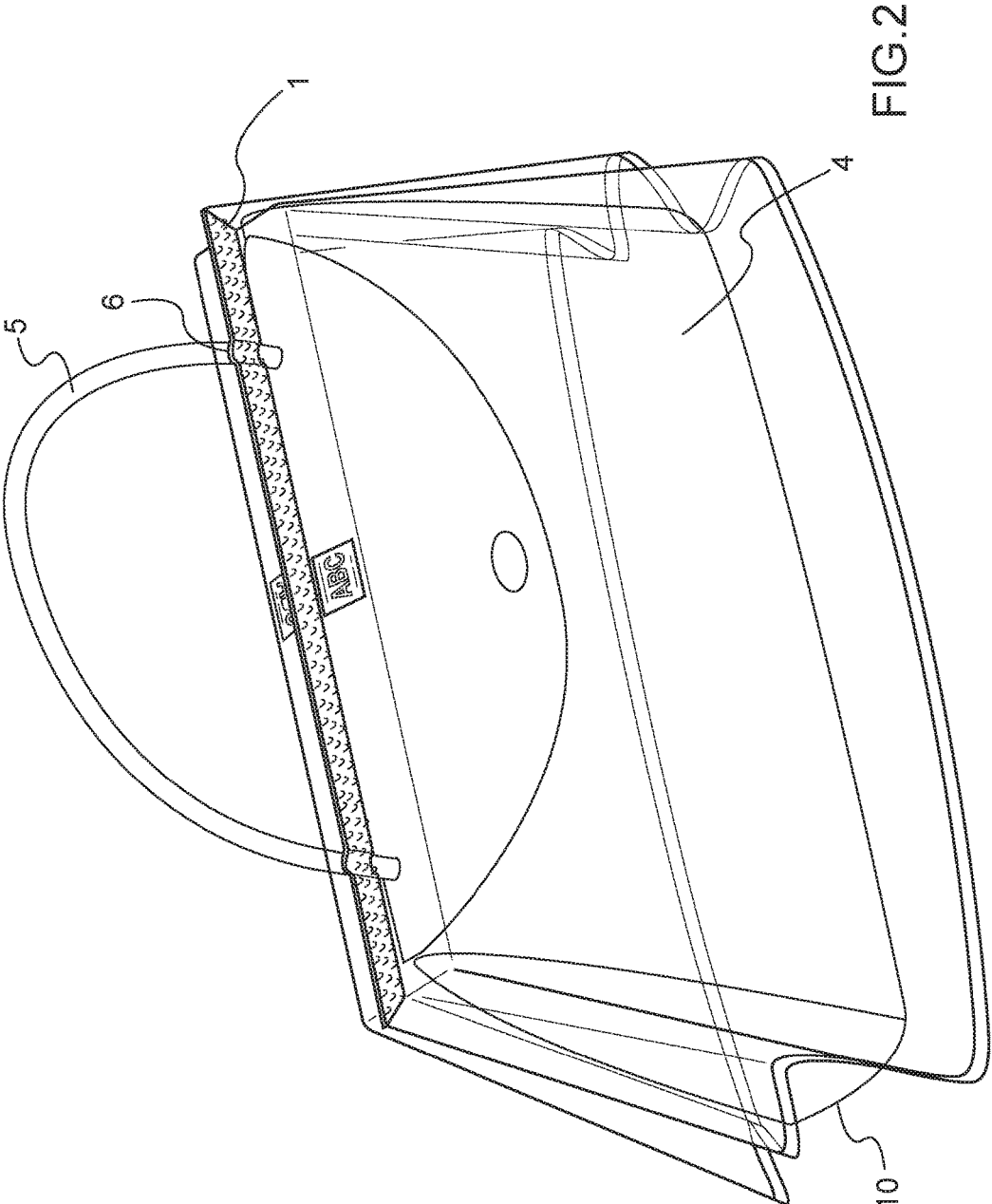
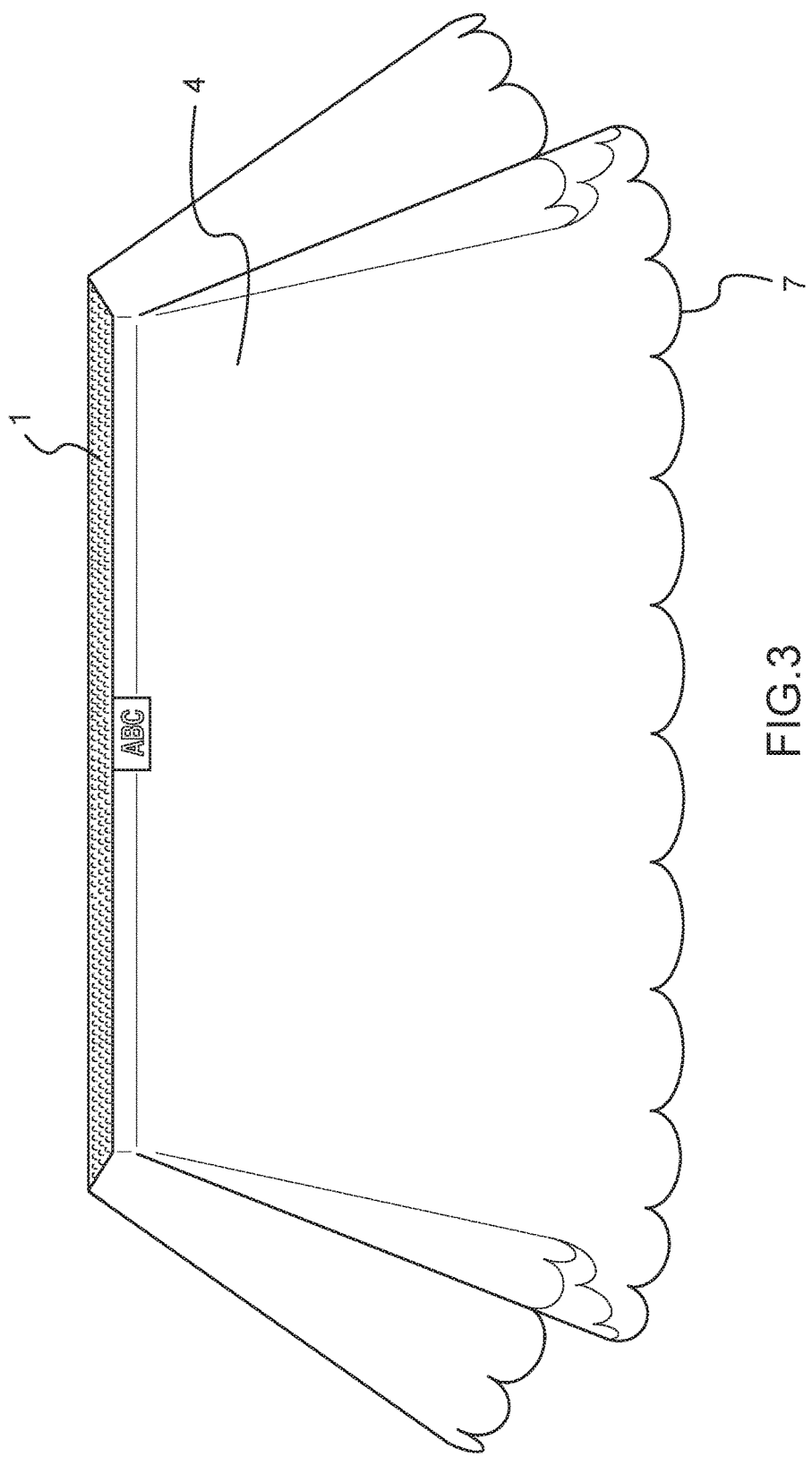
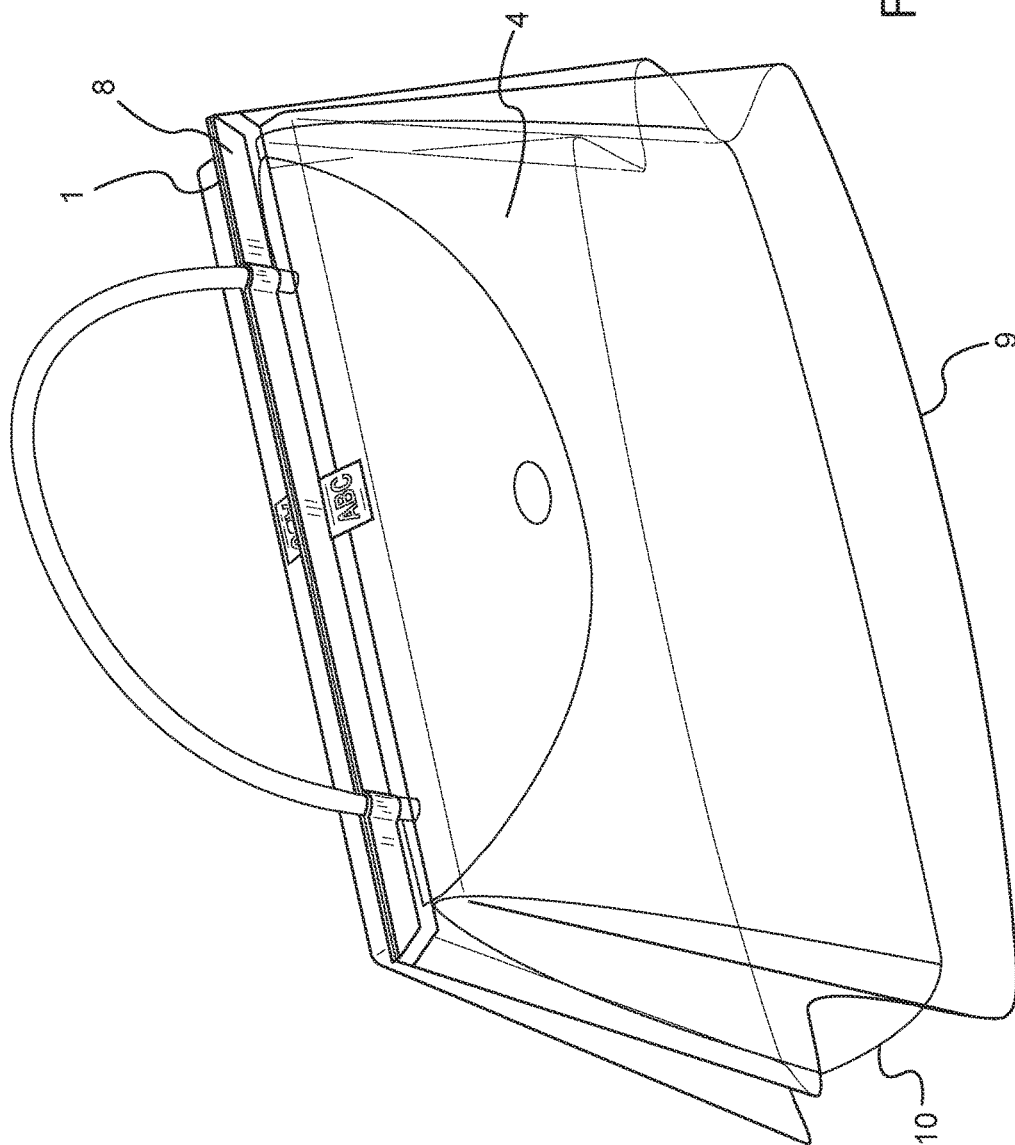


FIG. 2





FASTENER FOR A HANDBAG PROTECTIVE COVER

BACKGROUND

[0001] There exists a clear and established market for all levels of handbags from inexpensive to thousands of dollars. Some handbags are made of leather, suede, and other delicate materials, which are susceptible to damage or destruction by exposure to inclement weather, for example, rain, snow, fog, etc. Often this damage is irreversible. Additionally, the protection that the handbag itself provides can be compromised thereby leading to damage of the items within.

[0002] As recited in as U.S. Pat. No. 7,814,948, common protective articles, such as a plastic bag or duffel bag, may be used in such a way as to completely cover a handbag, including the handbag's handles. This comes with disadvantages however, such as the handbag's handles not being accessible for use in carrying the handbag. A raincoat (jacket, coat, ect.) or umbrella may also be used in an attempt to shield a handbag from the weather. However, the use of a raincoat for such a purpose has the disadvantage of requiring the person to carry the handbag in an uncomfortable manner. Using an umbrella for such purpose typically does not provide adequate protection to the handbag, since the person typically cannot position the umbrella to completely keep the rain from striking the handbag.

[0003] Some handbag covers, such as US Pub. No. 2006/0144487, fail to protect the entire handbag and focus only on the opening portions to prevent damage to the articles within.

[0004] Other handbag covers such as U.S. Pat. No. 7,814,948 are cumbersome to use and require that the handbag be completely enclosed within the cover. The elastic closure system also is most likely to fail at the upper center portion of the bag where exposure to the elements is most severe. Such handbag covers are also sensitive to the size of the handbag placed inside as the handbag must fit within all sides of the enclosure.

[0005] There is therefore a need for a handbag protective cover device that can be easily and quickly attached and detached to a handbag to prevent the entire handbag from the damaging effects of inclement weather.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The invention of the current application is directed to a handbag protective cover device and an attachment mechanism for a handbag protective cover. The mechanism uses a thin hook and loop fastener strip which are attached to a handbag protective cover and allows the handbag protective cover to be easily and quickly attached and detached to a handbag. The hook and loop fastener strip may be attached to form a mechanical connection with the handbag protective cover by a conventional attachment mechanism such as sewing, adhesive, heat seal, snaps, hook and eye, toggle, button and hole, zipper, or staples. The handbag protective cover is made of a water resistant or water proof material, preferably polyurethane or ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA).

[0007] In the preferred embodiment, the hook and loop fastener strip is more ridged than the handbag protective cover material.

[0008] In a preferred embodiment, the hook and loop fastener strip is attached directly to the inside portion of a handbag protective cover. In some embodiments, the hook and loop fastener strip have a width of less than one inch. In some embodiments, the hook and loop fastener strip have a width of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch.

[0009] In another preferred embodiment, the outer surface of the handbag protective cover includes a band which is about the same size as the hook and loop fastener strip on the handbag protective cover and is positioned along the outer surface of the handbag protective cover so as to match the positioning of the hook and loop fastener strip on the inner surface of the handbag protective cover. The material making up the band is either water resistant or water proof. In a preferred embodiment, the band is distinguishable from the handbag protective cover by color or material type including different types of polymers or plastics. The band may be attached to the handbag protective cover by conventional means such as sewing, adhesive, or staples. In the preferred embodiment, the band, handbag protective cover, and hook and loop fastener strip are all connected to each other with a single continuous fastener, for example, by thread.

[0010] In another preferred embodiment, each side of the hook and loop fastener includes a pull tab which is attached to the hook and loop fastener strip. The pull tabs are easily gripped by a user and allow a user to pull the hook and loop fastener strip apart by pulling on the pull tabs. The pull tabs also allow a user to align the handbag protective cover device on a handbag. In the preferred embodiment, the pull tab is from $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 inches in length along the hook and loop fastener strip. In some embodiments, the pull tabs are located at any point along the hook and loop fastener strip. In the preferred embodiment, the pull tabs are located at the midpoint of the hook and loop fastener strip.

[0011] In some embodiments, alignment of the pull tabs indicate proper attachment of the handbag protective cover.

[0012] In another preferred embodiment, the hook and loop fastener strip has a length that is less than the length of the handbag protective cover to which it is attached. In another preferred embodiment, the outer edge of the handbag protective has a banded edge. In a preferred embodiment, the banded edge is made of the same material as that which makes up the band of the hook and loop fastener strip and can be attached to the handbag protective cover in the same matter. In some embodiments, the banded edge is made of a different material as that which makes up the band. In some embodiments, the banded edge visually matches the band. In some embodiments, the banded edge extends no greater than one centimeter up either side surface of the handbag protective cover. In the preferred embodiment, the banded edge is also continuous.

[0013] The hook and loop fastener strip is adapted to receive and secure around any conventional handbag and form a weather tight seal around the handles of the bag. A weather tight seal refers to a seal sufficient to prevent the entrance of natural precipitation. A user needs only to lightly pinch the area of the hook and loop fastener strip around the handles of the handbag. The hook and loop fastener strip also allows the user to secure the handbag protective cover at any point along the hook and loop fastener strip. There are no special zones along the hook and loop fastener strip which the handle must be placed nor is there any special alignment needed to secure the handles or create an acceptable seal.

[0014] In a preferred embodiment, the hook and loop fastener strip is positioned in the center of the handbag protective cover. In the preferred embodiment, the handbag protective cover is adapted to fold though its middle along an axis defined by the hook and loop fastener strip. In some embodiments, the hook and loop fastener strip extends across the entire perimeter of the handbag protective cover. In the preferred embodiment, the hook and loop fastener strip extends only across the center portion of the handbag protective cover and does not extend to the perimeter of the handbag protective cover. In the preferred embodiment, the hook and loop fastener strip is centered so that there is equal amounts of handbag protective cover on each complementary side, for example, right and left or top and bottom. However, off center embodiments are also included within the invention for covering unique handbags or in a situation where a user requires greater protection on a particular side or face of a bag.

[0015] In a preferred embodiment, the handbag protective cover is oval shaped. In other embodiments, the handbag protective cover may be other shapes, for example, square, circular, triangular, or rectangular.

[0016] In the preferred embodiment, when the hook and loop fastener strip engages it does so at an angle that it perpendicular to the plane of the handbag protective cover and unengaged hook and loop fastener strip where the handbag protective cover has not been folded.

[0017] In the preferred embodiment, the handbag protective cover is left open on its bottom side. In the preferred embodiment, the handbag protective cover has scalloped bottom edge. Therefore, when attaching the handbag protective cover to a handbag, a user simply drapes the handbag protective cover over the handbag and secures the handbag protective cover using the hook and loop fastener strip. Such a handbag protective cover has the advantages of being quickly and easily attached to a handbag as well as being suitable for a large range of handbag sizes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] FIG. 1 shows a hook and loop fastener strip attached to a handbag protective cover with a banded edge according to embodiments of the invention.

[0019] FIG. 2 shows a hook and loop fastener strip attached to a handbag protective cover over a handbag according to embodiments of the invention.

[0020] FIG. 3 shows a hook and loop fastener strip attached to a handbag protective cover with a scalloped bottom edge according to embodiments of the invention.

[0021] FIG. 4 shows a hook and loop fastener strip attached to a handbag protective cover with a band according to embodiments of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] Aspects of the invention are disclosed in the accompanying description. Alternate embodiments of the present invention and their equivalents are devised without parting from the spirit or scope of the present invention. It should be noted that like elements disclosed below are indicated by like reference numbers in the drawings.

[0023] FIG. 1 shows an exposed hook and loop fastener strip 1 on a handbag protective cover 4. Pull tabs 2 are attached to the hook and loop fastener strip 1 and allows the

hook and loop fastener strip 1 to be easily pulled open. The bottom of the handbag protective cover 4 has a banded edge 3.

[0024] FIG. 2 shows the handbag protective cover 4 with hook and loop fastener strip 1 attached to a handbag 10. The handles 5 of the handbag 10 pass through a break in the hook and loop fastener strip 1 at an attachment portion 6. The hook and loop fastener strip 1 conforms around the handles 5 in a way that matches the contour of the handles 5 and provides a weather tight seal. The attachment portion 6 may be located at any point along the hook and loop fastener strip 1.

[0025] FIG. 3 shows an alternative embodiment of the handbag protective cover 4 with hook and loop fastener strip 1 attached to a handbag 10 where the handbag protective cover 4 has scalloped bottom edge 7. The scalloped bottom 7 provides a less ridge bottom edge than the banded edge 3.

[0026] FIG. 4 shows an alternative embodiment of the handbag protective cover 4 with hook and loop fastener strip 1 attached to a handbag 10 including a band 8. FIG. 4 also shows a non-banded straight bottom edge 9. The non-banded straight bottom edge 9 provides a less ridge bottom edge than the banded edge 3.

[0027] In some embodiments, the handbag protective cover device includes a handbag protective cover 4, a hook and loop fastener strip 1 which attached to an inner surface of the handbag protective cover and at least two pull tabs 2 in mechanical connection with the hook and loop fastener strip.

[0028] In some embodiments, the hook and loop fastener strip 1 is attached at the center of the handbag protective cover 4.

[0029] In some embodiments, the hook and loop fastener strip 1 and the at least two pull tabs 2 are attached to the handbag protective cover at a common point and share a common attachment mechanism.

[0030] In some embodiments, the pull tabs 2 are positioned on an outer surface of the handbag protective cover 4.

[0031] Some embodiments include a band 8 where the band 8 is about the same size as the hook and loop fastener strip 1 and is positioned along the outer surface of the handbag protective cover 4 so as to match the positioning of the hook and loop fastener strip 1 on the inner surface of the handbag protective cover 4 and where the band 8 is positioned over at least a portion of an outer surface of the at least two pull tabs 2.

[0032] In some embodiments, the handbag protective cover 4, hook and loop fastener strip 1, the at least two pull tabs 2, and the band 8, share the common attachment mechanism at the common point.

[0033] Some embodiments include a banded edge 3 wherein the banded edge 3 is positioned along an entire outer edge of the handbag protective cover 4.

[0034] In some embodiments, the pull tab is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 inches in length along the hook and loop fastener strip. In some embodiments, the hook and loop fastener strip 1 has a width of less than one inch.

[0035] In some embodiments, the hook and loop fastener strip 1 is adapted to conform around handles of a handbag 10 to match a contour of the handles and provides a weather tight seal.

[0036] In some embodiments, the handbag protective cover 4 is water proof.

[0037] In some embodiments, the handbag protective cover 4 is made from polyurethane.

[0038] In some embodiments, the handbag protective cover 4 is made from EVA.

[0039] In some embodiments, the hook and loop fastener strip 1 is more ridged than the handbag protective cover material 4.

[0040] In some embodiments, the band 8 is made of a different material than the handbag protective cover 4.

[0041] In some embodiments, the handbag protective cover device is made of only the handbag protective cover 4, a hook and loop fastener strip 1 attached to an inner surface of the handbag protective cover 4, where the hook and loop fastener strip 1 is attached at the center of the handbag protective cover 4 and where the hook and loop fastener strip 1 is adapted to conform around handles of a handbag 10 in a way that matches a contour of the handles and provides a weather tight seal. The handbag protective cover device also includes at least two pull tabs 2 in mechanical connection with the hook and loop fastener strip 1 where the at least two pull tabs 2 are positioned on an outer surface of the handbag protective cover 4, where the hook and loop fastener strip 1 and the at least two pull tabs 2 are attached to the handbag protective cover 4 at a common point and share a common attachment mechanism, and a band 8, where the band 8 is about the same size as the hook and loop fastener strip 1 and is positioned along an outer surface of the handbag protective cover 4 so as to match a positioning of the hook and loop fastener strip 1 on the inner surface of the handbag protective cover 4, wherein the band 8 is positioned over at least a portion of an outer surface of the at least two pull tabs 2. In these embodiments, the handbag protective cover 4, hook and loop fastener strip 1, the at least two pull tabs 2, and band 8, share a common attachment mechanism at a common point.

[0042] The invention also includes a method for protecting a handbag 10 from damage in inclement weather including attaching the handbag protective cover device to a handbag 10.

1. A handbag protective cover device comprising:
the handbag protective cover,
a hook and loop fastener strip attached to an inner surface of the handbag protective cover and
at least two pull tabs in mechanical connection with the hook and loop fastener strip.
2. The handbag protective cover of claim 1, wherein the hook and loop fastener strip are attached at the center of the handbag protective cover.
3. The handbag protective cover of claim 2, wherein the hook and loop fastener strip and the at least two pull tabs are attached to the handbag protective cover at a common point and share a common attachment mechanism.
4. The handbag protective cover of claim 3, wherein the pull tabs are positioned on an outer surface of the handbag protective cover.
5. The handbag protective cover of claim 4, additionally, comprising a band wherein said band is about the same size as the hook and loop fastener strip and is positioned along the outer surface of the handbag protective cover so as to match the positioning of the hook and loop fastener strip on the inner surface of the handbag protective cover and wherein the band is positioned over at least a portion of an outer surface of the at least two pull tabs.

6. The handbag protective cover of claim 5, wherein the handbag protective cover, hook and loop fastener strip, the at least two pull tabs, and band, share the common attachment mechanism at the common point.

7. The handbag protective cover of claim 6, wherein the handbag protective cover additionally comprises a banded edge wherein the banded edge is positioned along an entire outer edge of the handbag protective cover.

8. The handbag protective cover of claim 7, wherein at least one of the at least two pull tabs is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 inches in length along the hook and loop fastener strip.

9. The handbag protective cover of claim 8, wherein the hook and loop fastener strip has a width of less than one inch.

10. The handbag protective cover of claim 6, wherein the hook and loop fastener strip is adapted to conform around handles of a handbag to match a contour of the handles and provides a weather tight seal.

11. The handbag protective cover of claim 6, wherein the handbag protective cover is water proof.

12. The handbag protective cover of claim 6, wherein the handbag protective cover is made from polyurethane.

13. The handbag protective cover of claim 6, wherein the hook and loop fastener strip is more ridged than the handbag protective cover material.

14. The handbag protective cover of claim 6, wherein the band is made of a different material than the handbag protective cover.

15. A handbag protective cover consisting of:
the handbag protective cover,
a hook and loop fastener strip attached to an inner surface of the handbag protective cover, wherein the hook and loop fastener strip is attached at the center of the handbag protective cover and wherein the hook and loop fastener strip is adapted to conform around handles of a handbag in a way that matches a contour of the handles and provides a weather tight seal,
at least two pull tabs in mechanical connection with the hook and loop fastener strip wherein the at least two pull tabs are positioned on an outer surface of the handbag protective cover, wherein the hook and loop fastener strip and the at least two pull tabs are attached to the handbag protective cover at a common point and share a common attachment mechanism, and
a band, wherein said band is about the same size as the hook and loop fastener strip and is positioned along an outer surface of the handbag protective cover so as to match a positioning of the hook and loop fastener strip on the inner surface of the handbag protective cover, wherein the band is positioned over at least a portion of an outer surface of the at least two pull tabs, and
wherein the handbag protective cover, hook and loop fastener strip, the at least two pull tabs, and band, share a common attachment mechanism at a common point.
16. The handbag protective cover of claim 15, wherein at least one of the at least two pull tabs is from $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 inches in length along the hook and loop fastener strip and the hook and loop fastener strip have a width of less than one inch.
17. A method for protecting a handbag from damage in inclement weather comprising:
attaching the handbag protective cover of claim 15 to the handbag.

18. The method claim **17**, wherein alignment of the pull tabs indicate proper attachment of the handbag protective cover

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