June 30, 1970 G. FRIEDMAN 3,518,356

COVER FOR A WALL SWITCH

Filed Feb. 12, 1969

FIG.1

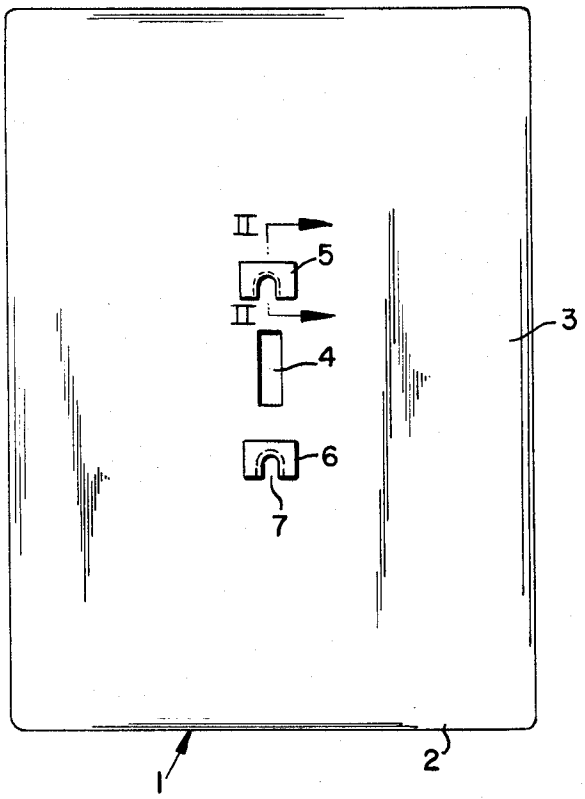
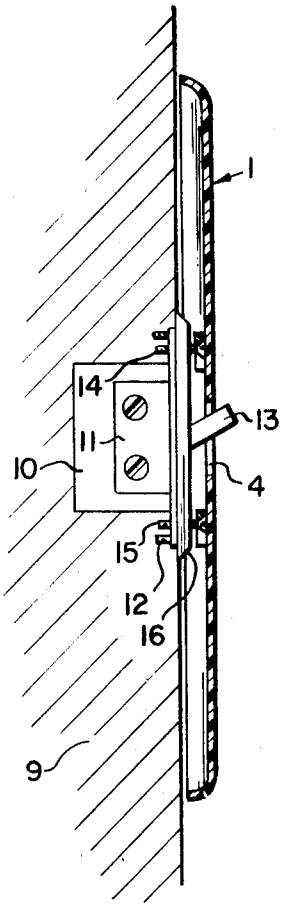


FIG.3



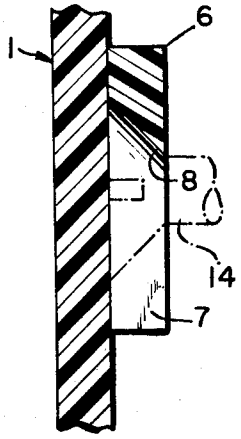


FIG.2

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COVER FOR A WALL SWITCH

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A switch plate cover is attached to the two screws provided on standard American wall switch plates on opposite sides of the switch actuating member, approximately 2½" apart. The cover has two fixed brackets on its inner face for receiving the screw heads, and the screw shanks project through U-shaped notches in the brackets which are open in a common direction. The switch actuating member projects through a slot centered in the otherwise imperforate cover between the brackets. A raised edge of the cover is contiguously adjacent the wall.

This invention relates to wall-protecting switch plate covers for use with electrical wall switches, and to a wall switch arrangement including such a cover.

Wall switches are conventionally mounted in outlet boxes which are recessed in an opening of the wall. The opening is covered by a switch plate apertured for access to the switch actuating member and attached to the portion of the switch received in the outlet box by two screws threadedly received in openings of the switch plate oppositely spaced from the switch actuating member at a distance of approximately 2½" from each other, which is standardized. The shanks of the screws pass through the plate and the screw heads are visible on the outer face of the same.

The plates normally used with single wall switches are approximately 4½" long and 2¾" wide. While they adequately cover the wall opening for the outlet box, the wall closely adjacent the switch actuating member is exposed, and this wall portion as well as the plate are soiled by contact with dirty hands. Switch plate covers of dimensions much greater than 4½" x 2¾" and capable of being attached to the switch plate have, therefore, been available as standard articles of commerce.

Some of the known, large-sized covers are attached by fasteners which are visible on the exposed face of the cover and detract from its decorative value. If the switch screws are used as fasteners on the known shield, when dusting or washing, they require complete removal and refastening for mounting the cover when it is desired to dust or wash the same. Other known shields merely cover a portion of the wall surrounding the standard cover, and are not easily removable for dusting or washing.

The primary object of the invention is the provision of a switch plate cover of the general type described which is extremely simple in its construction and free of movable parts, yet capable of being attached to an existing switch over, or instead of, an existing standard switch plate and firmly secured in place under all stresses applied in normal use, without removing the switch plate or switch plate screws.

The cover of the invention includes a plate member having outer and inner faces and a raised rim about the inner face to define therewith a shallow trough. Two like brackets fixedly attached to the inner face are entirely confined in the trough cavity below the level of the raised rim and are oppositely and longitudinally spaced from an elongated central slot in the plate member. Each bracket defines a cavity with the inner plate member face,

and has a U-shaped notch extending from a rim of the bracket. The bracket notches are open in the direction of elongation of the central slot in the plate member, and their bights face in the same direction.

In the mounted condition of such a cover, the heads of the screws projecting from the wall switch plate are received in the cavities of the switch plate cover brackets, and the screw shanks extend through the notches of the brackets.

The exact nature of this invention as well as other objects and advantages thereof will readily be apparent to those skilled in the art from consideration of the following specification relating to the annexed drawing in which:

FIG. 1 shows switch plate cover of the invention in elevational rear view;

FIG. 2 illustrates a portion of the shield of FIG. 1 in enlarged section on the line II—II, indicating a screw head received in a cover bracket, in phantom lines; and

FIG. 3 shows the same cover mounted on a wall and a switch in a sectional view analogous to that of FIG. 2.

The cover illustrated in FIG. 1 consists of a rectangular plastic plate **1** provided with a raised rim **2** about its flat inner face **3**. An elongated slot **4** is approximately centered in the bottom of the shallow trough formed by the face **3** and the rim **2**, and two plastic brackets **5**, **6** are cemented, molded or machined to the face **3** on longitudinally opposite sides of the slot **4**. The length and width of the plate **1** are approximately 8" and 6" respectively.

As is evident from joint consideration of FIGS. 1 and 2, each bracket is a rectangular block of plastic formed with a notch **7** having a bevelled, recessed rim portion **8**, designed to fit the bevelled screw heads of the switch plate screws, as shown in phantom lines in FIG. 2. The brackets **5**, **6** are attached to the plate member **1** in a position in which the bights of the notches **7** are approximately 2½" apart and open in the same downward direction, which is also the direction of elongation of the elongated shield slot **4**.

FIG. 3 shows a wall **9** having an outlet box **10** in which a toggle switch **11** is recessed. The switch is attached to the wall **9** by fasteners **12**. Its actuating bar **13** projects beyond the surface of the wall and through the switch plate **16** and slot **4** in switch plate cover **1** which is superimposed on the wall surface.

Two screws **14**, **15** project from the standard switch **11** approximately 2½" apart in the plane of pivoting movement of the actuating bar **13** to hold the switch plate **16** over the outlet box. The shanks of the screws **14**, **15** enter the notches **7** of the brackets **5**, **6** at right angles to the face **3**, and the screw heads are retained in the cavity between the rim portions **8** of the notches and the inner face **3**, thereby securing the plate **1** to the wall **9** and switch plate **16** against movement in all directions, except upward, the notches **7** being open in a downward direction.

The cover is removed from the switch **11** by sliding it upwardly, and it is attached to the switch by the opposite movement, the screws **14**, **15** being threadedly adjusted on the switch **11** to provide a small clearance between the screw heads and the switch plate **16** to permit the screw heads to be received in the cavities of brackets **5**, **6**. The screws **14**, **15** pass through corresponding openings in the switch plate **16**, and are loosened by two or three turns when it is desired to install the cover of the invention over an existing switch equipped with the plate.

Numerous modifications and variations of the illustrated cover and switch arrangement will readily suggest themselves to those skilled in the art. The plate of the cover may assume a shape different from the illustrated rectangle. It should be understood, therefore, that the fore-

going disclosure relates only to an illustrative example of the invention, and that the invention is not limited thereto.

What is claimed is:

1. A switch plate cover for a wall switch comprising, in combination:

(a) a plate member having an inner face and an outer face and formed with an elongated aperture therethrough; and

(b) two like brackets fixedly attached to said inner face and oppositely spaced from said aperture in the direction of elongation thereof,

(1) each bracket having a rim portion defining an elongated notch, said rim portion spaced from said inner face to define a cavity, and

(2) the notches extending in said direction and facing in the same direction.

2. A cover as set forth in claim 1, wherein said notches have respective bights spaced from each other approximately two and a half inches.

3. A cover as set forth in claim 2, wherein the plate member has a raised edge about said inner face, the edge projecting from said inner face beyond said brackets.

4. A cover as set forth in claim 3, wherein said aperture is approximately centered in said plate member and constitutes the sole passage through said plate member between said faces.

5. A cover as set forth in claim 1, wherein said rim portions are bevelled.

6. A switch arrangement comprising, in combination:

(a) a wall having a surface formed with an outlet box therein;

(b) an electric switch received in said outlet box, a portion of said switch projecting from said surface and including respective shank portions of two screws and the heads of said screws, and a switch actuating member, said screws and said actuating member extending in a common plane perpendicular to said surface, said screw heads being spaced from said actuating member in opposite directions;

(c) a plate member having an inner face covering said switch and directed toward the same, and an outer face, and formed with an elongated aperture aligned with said actuating member for giving access to the same; and

(d) two like brackets fixedly attached to said inner face,

(1) each bracket having a rim portion defining an elongated notch, said rim portion spaced from said inner face and defining a cavity,

(2) the notches extending in the direction of elongation of the aperture and facing in the same direction, and

(3) said screw heads respectively received in said cavity and the screw shank portions respectively received in said notches.

7. An arrangement as set forth in claim 6, wherein said plate member has a raised edge about said inner face and directed toward said wall surface.

8. An arrangement as set forth in claim 6, wherein said aperture is approximately centered in said plate memebr and constitutes the sole passage through said plate member connecting said faces.

9. An arrangement as set forth in claim 6, wherein said rim portions are bevelled whereby the screw heads snugly fit into the respective cavities.

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