Jan. 28, 1969 W. A. ANCLIFF 3,423,973

VEHICLE SAFETY KEY

Filed May 10, 1967

Fig. 1.

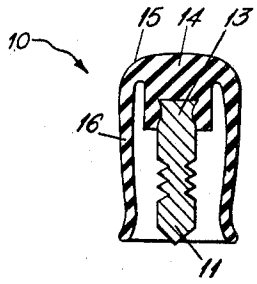


Fig. 2.

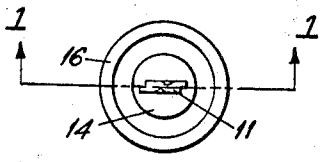
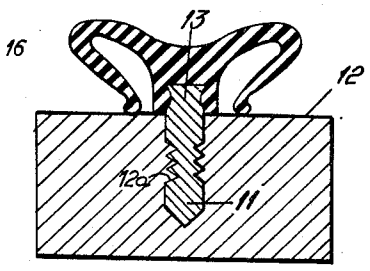


Fig. 3.



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VEHICLE SAFETY KEY

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A key having an elongated blade, one end of which is embedded in a pad of resilient material. A skirt integral with the pad surrounds the blade and is formed from resilient material having sufficient yieldability to permit a portion of the blade to be inserted in a lock.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Current vehicle design practice includes the removal of rigid projections from the vehicle dash panel. A key having its blade inserted in a panel mounted ignition switch constitutes such a projection. Also, the high incidence of unauthorized takings of motor vehicles has led to campaigns encouraging vehicle operators to remove ignition keys while vehicles are left unattended. Due to forgetfulness and lack of care, the presence of ignition keys in unattended vehicles remains a major factor contributing to vehicle theft.

This invention provides a vehicle key that, when partially inserted in an ignition switch, has a projecting portion comprising a pad of resilient material. Such a key conveniently may be carried in apparel pockets with little risk of rending the pocket material. Also, the key of this invention automatically ejects from a conventional ignition switch when the key is turned to the "off" position, thereby alerting the vehicle operator not to leave the key in the vehicle unattended.

Brief Summary of the Invention

A key constructed in accordance with this invention includes an elongated blade having a first portion adapted for insertion into a lock opening and a second portion embedded in a yieldable pad. A resiliently deformable skirt, integral with the pad, surrounds the blade and is sufficiently yieldable to permit the first portion of the blade to be received in a lock opening.

Brief description of the drawings

FIGURE 1 is a sectional elevational view of the key of this invention taken along the line 1–1 of FIGURE 2;

FIGURE 2 is an end view of the key of FIGURE 1; and

FIGURE 3 is a view similar to FIGURE 1 but illustrating the key operating a lock.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Referring now in detail to the drawings, the numeral **10** denotes a vehicle safety key having a metal blade including a first portion **11** adapted for insertion in an ignition switch lock **12** having a key blade receiving opening **12***a*. A second blade portion **13** is embedded in a pad **14** that is part of a molding may be formed from any resiliently yieldable material such as rubber.

Molding **15** includes a skirt **16** that normally surrounds the key blade as illustrated in FIGURE 1. Skirt **16** is sufficiently yieldable to permit the insertion of blade portion **11** in opening **12***a* of lock **12** (FIGURE 3).

The resilience of skirt **16** causes a force to be exerted tending to urge blade portion **11** out of the lock. Once the key has been turned in a conventional ignition lock, however, it is held by the lock and cannot be ejected by this force. When the key is turned to the "off" position, the key conveniently is ejected from the lock.

When the key **10** is carried in a pocket or handbag, the skirt **16** surrounding the blade prevents the latter from rending or causing wear to the pocket material or handbag lining.

It may thus be seen that this invention provides a motor vehicle key having a projection into the passenger compartment when in use, comprising a yieldable safety padding. This key is convenient to carry and impossible to leave in the ignition switch lock when the vehicle is inoperative. When the key is ejected from the lock, as described above, the operator is reminded to take the key with him if he is leaving the vehicle unattended.

It is to be understood that this invention is not limited to the exact construction illustrated and described above, but that various changes and modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the following claims.

I claim:

1. A safety key for a motor vehicle including an elongated blade, one end portion of said blade adapted to be inserted in a lock, a yieldable pad, the other end portion of said blade embedded in and surrounded by said pad, and a skirt extending from said pad to surround said blade along a major portion thereof, said skirt being spaced from and substantially parallel to said blade and constructed of material sufficiently yieldable to permit said one end portion to be inserted in said lock, said skirt being positionable against said lock to exert a force urging said blade away from said lock when said blade is inserted in said lock.

2. The safety key of claim **1**, wherein said pad and said skirt are integrally formed.

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