PACKAGE AND SIGNALLING DEVICE FOR FLASHLIGHT
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE
A colored plastic package for holding a flashlight during non-use is disclosed. In cooperation with the flashlight, the package can serve as a portable, wand-like warning or signalling device.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION
Signalling devices in the form of wands have long been used as aids in controlling traffic by policemen and airline ground personnel. The wands generally comprise an elongated solid cylinder of colored glass or plastic which is screwed onto a flashlight in place of the flashlight lens and lens holder. Wands of this type have not, so far as can be ascertained, attained any appreciable recognition or acceptance by the general public for use in signalling for help, warning of danger, relaying a message, or the like. The foregoing objections are objectional for a number of reasons, including the cumbersome nature of such wands, both from the standpoint of the necessity for dismantling, in part, a flashlight and then attaching the light transmitting glass or plastic cylinder to the flashlight, and for the need of a suitable storage container for the flashlight and the glass or plastic cylinder. Moreover, the wands can only be used in connection with a flashlight having a lens holder size corresponding to the size of the threaded end of the wand, and there is the additional factor of the cost of the solid glass or plastic cylinder.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION
In accordance with the present invention, there is provided an article which not only functions as a protective shipping and storage compartment for a flashlight, but also, in cooperation with a flashlight, functions as an effective warning or signalling wand or wand-like device. The article of this invention can be utilized with substantially any standard model flashlight and serves as an attractive package both for shipping the flashlight and for displaying same at the point of purchase.

Briefly, the combination flashlight package and warning or signalling device of the present invention preferably comprises elongated, tapered panels of flexible sheet material which are arranged in overlying relation to one another and are joined along three of their opposed margins to provide an open-ended, tapered, flashlight-receiving compartment therebetween. At least one of the panels is pigmented or colored and is capable of transmitting light furnished by the flashlight. The compartment formed by the joined panels is of a size readily to permit a flashlight to be essentially fully inserted therein while the base of the compartment is substantially occluded from the flashlight. The end or gripping portion of the flashlight is first introduced through the open end of the compartment, and is prevented from complete insertion into the flashlight compartment when the head or lamp carrying end of the flashlight is first introduced through the open end of the compartment. The head end of the flashlight, when it is first inserted through the open end of the compartment, passes a short distance into the tapered compartment and snugly engages the inner side walls of the panel. The base end or gripping portion of the flashlight, in this instance, extends outwardsly from the compartment to provide a handle for holding the flashlight with the article securely supported on the head end of the flashlight. The article and the flashlight thus cooperate to provide a portable wand-like warning or signalling device when light from the flashlight is transmitted by the pigmented or colored light transmitting panel of the article.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING
FIG. 1 is a view in perspective of an embodiment of the present invention;
FIG. 2 is a view in perspective of said embodiment with the flashlight removed;
FIG. 3 is a vertical sectional view taken substantially along line 3—3 of FIG. 1;
FIG. 4 is a front view in elevation showing said embodiment being used as a signalling device;
FIG. 5 is a side view in elevation corresponding to the view of FIG. 4; and
FIG. 6 is a front view in elevation of the cover portion of said embodiment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT
Referring now in detail to the drawing, the preferred embodiment of the invention illustrated comprises in combination a cover 10 and a flashlight 12. The flashlight 12 desirably is of a standard type, and includes a lamp carrying or head portion 14 and a dry cell battery containing gripping portion 16. The head portion 14 is greater in cross sectional area than the gripping portion 16, and comprises a lens cap or holder 18 which is threadably engaged on a housing 20 for a reflector and lamp or bulb (not shown). The gripping portion 16 contains dry cell batteries (not shown) which are retained therein by spring carrying end cap 22 and are engaged on the base of the portion 16. Secured to the outer wall of the gripping portion 16 is a finger actuated slide switch 24 and button switch 26 for connecting the lamp or bulb of the flashlight in series circuit relation with the batteries. It should be understood that the flashlight shown and described herein is merely for purposes of illustration and that various types of flashlights could be used in achieving the objectives of the present invention.

The cover 10, as shown, comprises elongated tapered panels 30 and 32 formed of a flexible sheet material such, for example, as plastic. The panels 30 and 32 are arranged in overlying relation with respect to one another and are joined, as by fusion, along their opposed longitudinal margins and their shortest end margins to form side seams 34—34 and an end seam 36. The thusly joined panels provide an open-ended, tapered, flashlight receiving compartment 40 which is of sufficient size to enable the flashlight 12 to be fully or essentially fully encased therein when inserted as shown in FIG. 1. The compartment may, if desired, be lengthened slightly to enable it to accommodate dry cell batteries (not shown). The taper of the compartment 40 advantageously is such that the flashlight 12 can be completely inserted into the compartment when the gripping portion 16 is first passed through the open-end 42 thereof, but will prevent complete insertion of the flashlight into the compartment when the head end 14 of the flashlight is first passed through the open-end 42.

One of the panels, namely, panel 32 of the preferred embodiment of the invention illustrated, is colored or pigmented and is capable of transmitting light provided by the flashlight. The color of the panel is, of course, variable. However, since the combination of the cover 10 and the flashlight 12 is intended to serve primarily as a warning or distress signalling device, the panel 32 advantageously is red in color. Various colored or pigmented plastic sheet materials can be employed for this purpose. Typical examples of plastic sheet materials which can be used
are polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinyl acetate, and the like. The panel 32, as illustrated, advantageously is slightly longer than the panel 30 to provide a gripping tab or extension 44 which facilitates insertion of the flashlight into the compartment 44 and its removal therefrom. An opening 46 desirably is formed in the extension 44 to enable the entire assembly to be suspended on a wall, for example, at the point of purchase or during non-use.

As shown in FIG. 1, the cover 30 provides an excellent protective and convenient storage vehicle for a flashlight which can be placed in the glove compartment of an automobile or in a suitable location in the home for ready use. In utilizing the invention as a wand-like warning or signalling device, it is merely necessary, as shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, to remove the flashlight from the cover 30 and insert the head portion 14 of the flashlight through the opening 42 into the compartment 44 until the head portion 14 is in snug engagement with the inner side walls of the panels 30 and 32. The flashlight is then gripped in the usual manner and either of the switches 24 or 26 is actuated by the finger of the user. Light furnished by the flashlight is transmitted by the panel 32 which can be faced in any direction desired. The effectiveness of the signal can, of course, be enhanced by movement of the device.

The foregoing detailed description has been given for purposes of explanation only and no unnecessary limitation should be placed on the invention based thereon, it being understood that various changes may be made in the invention without departing from the guiding principles and teachings provided herein. Thus, for example, while the cover 10 has been described herein as comprising overlying panels joined along three of their opposed margins to provide a compartment for receiving a flashlight, it should be understood that the cover can be formed from a single panel of a flexible sheet material which, when folded upon itself, can be sealed in a manner to provide an open-ended flashlight receiving compartment, or alternatively, the cover can be formed by extrusion techniques to provide a tubular tapered body which, when sealed at one end, provides a similar compartment.

What is claimed is:

1. In combination with a flashlight having a light beam transmitting head portion and a dry cell battery containing gripping portion, the head portion having a cross-sectional area greater than that of the gripping portion of the flashlight, a light transmitting cover member for use both as a carrying case for the flashlight and as a warning or signalling device in cooperation with the flashlight, said cover member having an open-ended, tapered, flashlight receiving compartment, the tapered compartment being of a size readily to permit the flashlight to be essentially fully inserted therein when the gripping portion thereof is first passed through the open end of the compartment and to prevent complete insertion of the flashlight therein when the head portion of the flashlight is first inserted through the opening of the compartment, the head portion of the flashlight, when first inserted through the opening of the compartment, snugly engaging the inner side walls of the panels of the cover member and the gripping portion of the flashlight extending outwardly from the compartment to provide a handle for holding the flashlight with the cover member supported on the head portion thereof, the cover member and the flashlight thus cooperating to provide a portable wand-like warning or signalling device when light from the flashlight is transmitted by the cover member.

2. A combination in accordance with claim 1 wherein the cover member comprises elongated, tapered panels of flexible plastic sheet material, at least one of the panels being colored and capable of transmitting light, said panels being arranged in overlying relation with respect to one another and joined along their longitudinal margins and their shortest end margins thereby to provide an open-ended, tapered flashlight receiving compartment.

3. An article for use as a package for a flashlight, and as a warning or signalling device in combination with a flashlight, comprising: elongated, tapered panels of flexible plastic sheet material, at least one of the panels being colored and capable of transmitting light provided by a flashlight, said panels being arranged in overlying relation with respect to one another and joined along their longitudinal margins and their shortest end margins thereby to provide an open-ended, tapered compartment, the tapered compartment being of a size to permit a flashlight to be essentially fully inserted therein when the base end of the flashlight is first passed through the open end of the compartment and to prevent complete insertion of the flashlight therein when the head end of a flashlight is first inserted through the open end of the compartment.

4. An article in accordance with claim 3 wherein one of the panels is transparent and is fused to the light transmitting panel.

5. A combination in accordance with claim 3 wherein one of the panels is longer than the other and is provided with means to enable the article to be suspended in a vertical position with a flashlight encased therein.

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