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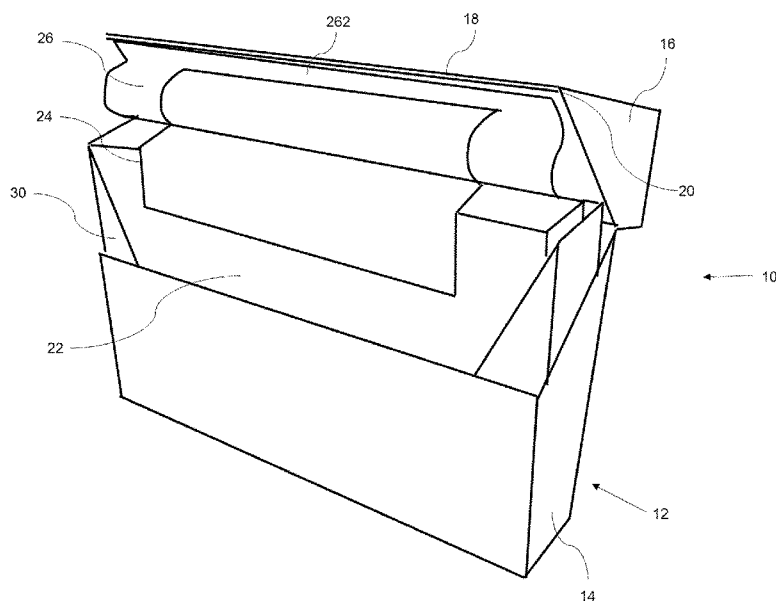


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: An 'auto-reclosable' hinge lid container (10) for consumer goods comprising an inner package (22); and an inner frame (30) comprising: a front panel (32) arranged parallel to a front wall of the package (22); side panels (34, 36) depending from the front panel (32); and at least one back panel (38, 40) depending from a respective side panel (34, 36). The at least one inner frame back panel (38, 40) is arranged parallel to a package back wall and at least a projecting portion (42) of the front panel (32) of the inner frame (30) extends above a top edge of a front wall of the box of the container. When the lid (16) is in the closed position, an inner surface of a reinforcement panel depending from the lid front wall and folded into the lid lies against an outer surface of the projecting portion (42) of the inner frame front panel (32).

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**REINFORCED RESEALABLE CONTAINER FOR CONSUMER ARTICLES**

The present invention relates to a container for consumer goods comprising a sealing  
5 reclosable cover member. Containers in accordance with the present invention find particular application as containers for elongate consumer good items, such as smoking articles.

Smoking articles are typically packaged in rigid hinge-lid containers comprising a box and  
a lid hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the container. The  
bundle of smoking articles housed in the box is commonly wrapped in an inner liner, or package,  
10 of metallised paper, metal foil or other flexible sheet material.

Containers are known, for example from international patent application WO-A-  
2008/142540, wherein the smoking articles are enclosed in an inner package with an extraction  
opening removably closed by a cover label that is releasably affixed to the inner liner. Such  
packages may be received in a hinge-lid container, the cover label being glued permanently and  
15 non-removably to an inner surface of the front wall of the lid so that opening and closing of the lid simultaneously opens and closes the cover label, thus revealing the extraction opening. One such container is at times referred to as 'auto-reclosable'. In such containers a reinforcing member is often provided as a stiffener arranged inside the inner package. Thus, the mechanical strength of the container is increased.

20 However, a need persists in improving container features and functions with a view to enhancing usability and reliability. In particular, it would be desirable to provide a reinforced resealable container for consumer goods that is easy to open, and especially one that can be conveniently opened by a user holding the container with one hand.

Thus, it would be desirable to provide a novel and improved container for consumer goods  
25 comprising a reclosable adhesive label that is adapted to satisfy such needs. Further, it would be desirable to provide one such container for consumer goods that can easily be manufactured without requiring major modifications to existing equipment.

According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a container for consumer goods comprising an outer housing comprising a box and a lid, the lid being hinged to the box  
30 along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the outer housing. The lid comprises a lid front wall and a lid reinforcement panel depending from the lid front wall along a fold line and folded into the lid. Further, the container comprises a resealable package of consumer goods within the box, the package comprising an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed and a reclosable cover member occluding the access opening of the package and extending  
35 beyond the periphery of the access opening of the package. The cover member is movable from a closed position, wherein the cover member overlies at least the access opening, and an open position, wherein the cover member is lifted at least partially off the outer surface of the package.

A front portion of the reclosable cover member is permanently affixed to the lid reinforcement panel, such that upon opening the lid the reclosable cover member is moved from the closed position towards the open position to at least partly reveal the access opening.

The container further comprises an inner frame comprising: an inner frame front panel  
5 arranged parallel to a front wall of the package; inner frame side panels depending from the inner frame front panel; and at least one inner frame back panel depending from a respective inner frame side panel. The at least one inner frame back panel is arranged parallel to a package back wall and at least a projecting portion of the inner frame front panel extends above a top edge of a front wall of the box. When the lid is in the closed position, an inner surface of the lid reinforcement  
10 panel lies against an outer surface of the projecting portion of the inner frame front wall.

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a container for consumer goods comprising an outer housing comprising a box and a lid, the lid being hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the outer housing; wherein the lid comprises a lid front wall and a lid reinforcement panel depending from the lid front wall along a  
15 fold line and folded into the lid. Further, the container comprises a resealable package of consumer goods within the box, the package comprising an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed and a reclosable cover member occluding the access opening of the package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the package. The cover member is movable from a closed position, wherein the cover member overlies at least the  
20 access opening, and an open position, wherein the cover member is at least partially lifted off the outer surface of the package. A front portion of the reclosable cover member is permanently affixed to the lid, such that upon opening the lid the reclosable cover member is moved from the closed position towards the open position to at least partly reveal the access opening. The container further comprises an inner frame comprising: an inner frame front panel arranged  
25 parallel to a package front wall; inner frame side panels depending from the inner frame front panel; and at least one inner frame back panel depending from a respective inner frame side panel; the at least one inner frame back panel arranged parallel to a package back wall. In addition, the inner frame comprises a cut out extending over the whole width of the inner frame front panel and at least part of the width of the inner frame side panels, such that the cut out is  
30 limited laterally by the at least one inner frame back panel.

It will be appreciated that any features described with reference to one aspect of the present invention are equally applicable to any other aspect of the invention.

As used herein, the terms "front", "back", "upper", "lower", "top", "bottom" and "side", refer to the relative positions of portions of containers according to the invention and components  
35 thereof when the container is in an upright position an access opening of the container at the top of the container. When describing containers according to the present invention, these terms are used irrespective of the orientation of the container being described. It will be understood that

components of the container described by a same one of such terms are substantially parallel to one another. In particular, a panel of the reinforcing member will be parallel to a corresponding package wall. By way of example a reinforcing member side panel is parallel to a package side wall. The back wall of the outer hinge-lid housing is the wall comprising the hinge line.

5       When describing a container in accordance with the present invention, the term “longitudinal” refers to a direction from bottom to top or vice versa, whereas the term “transverse” refers to a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction. For example, a “longitudinal axis of the container” is an axis extending from bottom to top or vice versa.

10       The term “width” is used to describe the dimension of an element, such as a panel of a blank or a wall of a container as measured in the transverse direction. The term “panel” is used throughout this specification to refer to a portion of the blank that is used to form a wall in the assembled container. A panel may depend along one or more fold lines from one or more other panels. The term “fold line” refers to a fold between two adjacent panels. When forming the container, adjacent panels are folded along their common fold line, which may come to define an  
15       edge of the container or of a portion of the container. In the assembled container a “wall” may be formed of one or of several overlying panels. Where there are several overlying panels, these may be attached to each other, for example by means of an adhesive. Further, a wall may be formed from two or more abutting or overlapping panels.

20       The term “height” is used to describe the dimension of one such element as measured in a direction perpendicular to the width of the element. When describing an element of the blank, reference is generally made to the element in the flat state of the blank.

25       The term “inner surface” is used throughout the specification to refer to the surface of a component of the assembled container that is facing towards the interior of the container, for example towards the consumer goods, when the container is in the closed position. The term “outer surface” is used throughout the specification to refer to the surface of a component of the container that is facing towards the exterior of the container. For example, the front wall of the container has an inner surface that is facing the inside of the container and the consumer goods, and an outer surface facing away from the consumer goods. It should be noted that the inside or outside surface is not necessarily equivalent to a certain side of a blank used in the assembly of  
30       the container. Depending on how the blank is folded around the consumer goods, areas that are on the same side of the blank can either face towards the inside or the towards the outside of the container.

35       The term “hinge line” refers to a line about which the lid may be pivoted in order to open the hinge-lid housing. A hinge line may be, for example, a fold line or a score line in the panel forming the back wall of the container.

      The term “depending” is used herein to describe a physical connection between two elements of a container in accordance with the invention. In more detail, the term “depending” is

used to indicate that there is a material continuity between two elements, such as two walls or panels of a container or blank. This encompasses both cases wherein a wall or panel depends directly from an adjacent wall or panel as well as cases wherein an intermediate wall or panel effectively connects two walls or panels. By way of example, the reinforcement member back panel lies in a plane substantially parallel to a plane defined by a back wall of the package. This is regardless of whether the reinforcement member back panel depends directly from a reinforcement member side panel or the reinforcement member comprises an intermediate panel connecting the reinforcement member back panel and the reinforcement member side panel.

By way of example, a side wall or panel may depend directly from an adjacent front wall or panel. In such case, the wall or panel typically depends along a fold line from the adjacent wall. As an alternative, especially in containers having curved or bevelled edges, a side wall or panel may depend indirectly from a front wall or panel. In such case a curved or bevelled edge wall or panel connects the side wall or panel and the front wall or panel. In the case of a bevelled edge, both side wall or panel and front wall or panel may depend from the connecting bevelled edge wall or panel along respective fold lines. This also applies to component of a container in accordance with the invention, for example to an inner frame.

The term "lines of weakness" is used herein to describe a portion of a surface of the package (or the blank from which the package is formed) wherein the structural strength of the material, from which the package (or blank) is formed has been weakened by any suitable technique, for example with respect to bending, folding or tearing along the line of weakness. For example, a line of weakness may be formed as a scoring line, a creasing line, an ablation line, or a perforation line. Lines of weakness can be created by removal of material, by displacement of material, by compression of material, by locally reducing the forces that hold the material together, such as by breaking fibres in a fibrous material, as well as by combinations of all the above. A line of weakness may be straight, curved, segmented or continuous or a combination thereof. In many instances, a line of weakness is used to assist in positioning a fold line in a blank. A line of weakness can also be used to strengthen the material in a direction perpendicular to the line of weakness, for example by compression. Further, a line of weakness can be used for decorative purpose.

The term "scoring line" is used to describe a line formed by partially cutting into the material of the blank. A scoring line may be formed by removing material from the blank (in which case the scoring line forms a groove or trough in the blank). As an alternative, a scoring line may be formed without removing any material from the blank, typically involving a partial sideways displacement and compression of material, caused by a knife with a non-zero thickness penetrating the material. The depth of the scoring line will be less than the thickness of the blank.

The term "creasing line" is used to describe a line formed by displacing a portion of the material vertical to the plane of the blank, forming a groove or trough in the blank. The

displacement may involve compression and typically involves the use of a compression tool, such as a roller. Alternatively, or in addition, the material in the creasing line may be displaced so as to at least partially protrude from the opposite side of the blank. Generally, no material is removed when a creasing line is formed.

5           The term “ablation line” is used to describe a line formed by removing material from a surface of the blank to a predetermined depth by way of ablation (for example, by way of a laser beam or a blade).

          The term “perforated line” is used to describe a line or sequence of discrete holes or slots in the blank. The holes may be formed by pushing an object through the blank. This may result  
10       in material being removed from the blank, for example by punching. Alternatively, the holes could be created without removing material, and instead simply using the object to push the material outwardly from the centre of the hole. As another alternative, the holes may be formed by way of a laser beam.

          The term “fold line” is used to describe any line of a blank about which the blank is folded.  
15       The fold line may be defined by a line of weakness to assist with the folding action. Alternatively, a fold can be formed without the presence of a weakening line, depending for example on the pliability of the blank material and other material characteristics.

          An ‘auto-reclosable’ container for consumer goods according to an aspect of the present invention comprises an outer housing and a resealable package of consumer goods received  
20       within a box of the housing. A reclosable cover member occludes an access opening of the package and is permanently affixed to the reinforcement panel of the lid, such that upon opening and closing the lid, the reclosable cover member is moved to reveal and occlude the access opening.

          In contrast to existing containers of the auto reclosable type, the container further comprises  
25       an inner frame comprising: an inner frame front panel arranged parallel to a front wall of the package; inner frame side panels depending, for example along respective longitudinal first fold lines, from the inner frame front panel; and at least an inner frame back panel depending, for example along a respective longitudinal second fold line, from a respective inner frame side panel. Thus, the inner frame is effectively adapted to embrace at least partially a parallelepiped package  
30       on all four sides.

          The at least one inner frame back panel is arranged parallel to a package back wall and a projecting portion of the inner frame front panel extends above a top edge of a box front wall. Thus, when the lid is in the closed position, an inner surface of the lid reinforcement panel lies against an outer surface of the projecting portion of the inner frame front panel.

35       In other words, the lid reinforcement panel lies in substantially the same plane as the front wall of the box, whereas the lid front wall lies in a more frontal plane. Accordingly, a lower edge of the lid projects slightly above the plane of the box front wall.

An 'auto-reclosable' container for consumer goods according to another aspect of the present invention comprises an outer housing and a resealable package of consumer goods received within a box of the housing. A reclosable cover member occludes an access opening of the package and is permanently affixed to the reinforcement panel of the lid, such that upon opening and closing the lid, the resealable adhesive label is moved to reveal and occlude the access opening.

In contrast to existing containers of the auto reclosable type, the container further comprises an inner frame comprising: an inner frame front panel arranged parallel to a front wall of the package; inner frame side panels depending, for example along respective longitudinal first fold lines, from the inner frame front panel; and at least an inner frame back panel depending, for example along a respective longitudinal second fold line, from a respective inner frame side panel. Thus, the inner frame is adapted to embrace at least partially a parallelepiped package on all four sides. In addition, the inner frame comprises a cut out extending over the whole width of the inner frame front panel and at least part of the width of the inner frame side panels, such that the cut out is limited laterally by the at least one inner frame back panel.

In order to open an existing container while holding the container with a single hand, the user typically needs to apply a compressive load directed perpendicular to the lid while applying an opening force directed longitudinally to pivot the lid about the hinge line. By contrast, in containers in accordance with the present invention, when the lid is in the closed position, it is particularly easy for the user to rely solely on the application of an opening force directed longitudinally. This is because, when the lid is in the closed position, the lid reinforcement panel rests against the outer surface of the inner frame projecting portion essentially in alignment with the box front wall, whereas the lid front wall presents to the user a surface adapted to receive an opening load applied by the same hand holding the container. In other words, the consumer can very easily open the lid by simply pushing the lower front edge of the lid upwards.

Accordingly, containers in accordance with the present invention are easier to use. Because the user may more effectively direct the opening load longitudinally, and does not need to compress the lid front wall in order to apply the necessary opening load onto the lid, the efficiency of the 'automatic' opening and re-sealing mechanism is improved, and damages or deformation of the lid are less likely to occur.

In addition, in containers according to the invention, when the lid is in the closed position the inner frame projecting portion is effectively located between the lid front wall and a resealing surface of the reclosable cover member, which is affixed to the lid by an affixing portion of the cover member. Thus, it is advantageously possible to prevent the cover member to become accidentally stuck to a surface of the lid at locations other than the affixing portion of the cover member. Further, containers according to the present invention are easy to manufacture and do not require any extensive modification of existing packaging machinery.

Containers according to a first aspect of the invention comprise an outer housing and a resealable package of consumer goods received within a box of the housing. The outer housing comprises a box and a lid, the lid being hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the outer housing. Further, the lid comprises a lid front wall and a lid reinforcement panel depending from the lid front wall along a fold line and folded into the lid.

The resealable package comprises an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed and a reclosable cover member occluding the access opening of the package. The cover member extends beyond the periphery of the access opening of the package, and is movable from a closed position, wherein the cover member overlies at least the access opening, and an open position, wherein the cover member is lifted at least partially off the outer surface of the package. In addition, a front portion of the reclosable cover member is permanently affixed to the reinforcement panel, such that upon opening the lid the reclosable cover member is moved from the closed position towards the open position to at least partly reveal the access opening.

In containers in accordance with the invention, the cover member preferably forms an S-shaped fold when opening the lid. The term "S-shaped" is used herein to refer to a shape that has the form of a curve with one inflexion point. In other words, the cover member is affixed to the lid in such a way that the cover member is substantially inwardly concave when the lid is in the closed position and becomes outwardly concave when the lid is in the open position. This is generally desirable in that it allows the cover member to be moved away from the package gradually during opening of the lid, the force applied on the cover member via the lid reinforcement panel.

As an alternative, the cover member may be affixed to the lid in such a way that the cover member is substantially inwardly concave when the lid is in the closed position and remains substantially concave as the lid is moved to the open position.

The container further comprises an inner frame, which comprises: an inner frame front panel arranged parallel to a front wall of the package; inner frame side panels depending from the inner frame front panel; and at least one inner frame back panel depending from a respective inner frame side panel. The at least one inner frame back panel is arranged parallel to a package back wall. A projecting portion of the inner frame front panel extends above a top edge of a front wall of the box. When the lid is in the closed position, an inner surface of the lid reinforcement panel lies against an outer surface of the projecting portion of the inner frame front panel.

Preferably the reclosable cover member comprises a body portion extending distal from the cover member front portion, the cover member body portion having a width greater than a width of the cover member front portion. This is advantageous in that it is easier to prevent an undesirable cooperation between the reclosable cover member and the inner frame, which may cause the reclosable cover member to become affixed to a surface of the container or inner frame other than the lid reinforcement panel, thus impairing the opening and closing mechanism of the

container. In particularly preferred embodiments, the cover member front portion is tapered relative to the longitudinal direction from a greater width at the body portion end to a smaller width at the front end.

Preferably, the inner frame comprises a cut out defining a top edge of side end portions of the inner frame front panel, such that the side end portions at least partially form the inner frame front panel projecting portion. In practice, the inner frame front panel projection portion is defined by the upper parts of the side end portions. This is advantageous in that, particularly where the cut out is substantially symmetrical relative to a longitudinal axis of the container, the inner frame provides a particularly balanced support for the lid when the lid is in the closed position.

Even more preferably, the cut out in the inner frame extends over the whole width of the inner frame front panel and at least part of the width of the inner frame side panels, such that the cut out is at least partially limited laterally by the inner frame back panels.

In preferred embodiments, a height of the top edge of the inner frame side panels increases continuously across the whole width of each inner frame side panel from a height of the top edge of a respective side end portion to a height of the top edge of a respective inner frame back panel.

Even more preferably, a highest point of the top edge of the inner frame is at a location along an inner frame back panel.

Preferably, the cut out in the inner frame defines a top edge of the inner frame front panel, and a distance between a front edge of the cover member and the top edge of the inner frame front panel in a direction orthogonal to the top edge of the inner frame front panel varies by no more than 10 millimetres along the length of the top edge of the inner frame front panel.

In other words, the front edge of the cover member is adapted such that it has a shape that substantially follows the shape of the top edge of the inner frame along at least the front of the container, within a tolerance of 10 millimetres. Within this context, the term "orthogonal" indicates that the distance between the top edge of the inner frame front panel and the front edge of the cover member is measured perpendicular to the top edge of the inner frame front panel, in the plane of the inner frame front panel. Where the top edge of the inner frame front panel is curved, the distance between said top edge and the front edge of the cover member at any point along the curved portion of the top edge is measured perpendicularly to a tangent of the curve at that point.

More preferably, the distance between the front edge of the cover member and the top edge of the inner frame front panel in a direction orthogonal to the top edge of the inner frame front panel is less than about 8 millimetres. Even more preferably, the distance between the front edge of the cover member and the top edge of the inner frame front panel in a direction orthogonal to the top edge of the inner frame front panel is less than about 5 millimetres.

In addition, or as an alternative, the distance between the front edge of the cover member and the top edge of the inner frame front panel in a direction orthogonal to the top edge of the

inner frame front panel is at least about 2 millimetres. In particularly preferred embodiments, the distance between the front edge of the cover member and the top edge of the inner frame front panel in a direction orthogonal to the top edge of the inner frame front panel is from about 2 millimetres to about 5 millimetres.

5 Preferably, the cut out defines top edges of an inner frame central front panel portion and inner frame lateral front panel portions extending transversely from the inner frame central front panel portion, the top edge of the inner frame central front panel portion being above the top edges of the inner frame lateral front panel portions. Thus, the inner frame central front panel portion defines a tab by which it is easier for the inner frame to be handled during packaging.  
10 This applies not only to the inner frame in its folded state, but also to the corresponding blank and during all phases of the packing process.

Even more preferably, the top edge of the inner frame central front panel portion is below the top edge of the side end portions of the inner frame front panel.

In some embodiments, the top edge of the inner frame central front panel portion is below  
15 the top edge of the front wall of the box. This will generally facilitate the gluing operation by which the reclosable cover member is affixed to a surface of the lid during manufacturing. Further, because the inner frame front panel covers less of the surface of the resealable package front wall, this may be used to increase the size of the access opening for easier removal of the consumer goods or the available consumer communication space.

20 Additionally, for embodiments of the container that comprise an insert located between the resealable package and the inner frame at the front of the container, the visible surface of the insert can be advantageously increased. This can facilitate removal of the insert by the consumer. Further, it can facilitate the handling and placement of the insert during production of the pack.

In alternative embodiments, the top edge of the inner frame central front panel portion is  
25 about as high as the top edge of the front wall of the box or less.

Containers in accordance to another aspect of the present invention comprise an outer housing and a resealable package of consumer goods received within a box of the housing. The outer housing comprises a box and a lid, the lid being hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the outer housing. Further, the lid comprises a lid front wall and  
30 a lid reinforcement panel depending from the lid front wall along a fold line and folded into the lid.

The resealable package comprises an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed and a reclosable cover member occluding the access opening of the package. The cover member extends beyond the periphery of the access opening of the package, and is movable from a closed position, wherein the cover member overlies at least the access opening,  
35 and an open position, wherein the cover member is lifted at least partially off the outer surface of the package. In addition, a front portion of the reclosable cover member is permanently affixed

to the lid, such that upon opening the lid the reclosable cover member is moved from the closed position towards the open position to at least partly reveal the access opening.

The container further comprises an inner frame, which comprises: an inner frame front panel arranged parallel to a front wall of the package; inner frame side panels depending, for example  
5 along respective longitudinal first fold lines, from the inner frame front panel; and at least one inner frame back panel depending, for example along a respective longitudinal second fold line, from a respective inner frame side panel; the at least one inner frame back panel arranged parallel to a package back wall. At least a projecting portion of the inner frame front panel extends above a top edge of a front wall of the box. When the lid is in the closed position, an inner surface of  
10 the lid reinforcement panel lies against an outer surface of the projecting portion of the inner frame front panel.

Preferably, a height of the top edge of the inner frame side panels increases substantially across the whole width of each inner frame side panel from a height of the top edge of a respective side end portion to a height of the top edge of a respective inner frame back panel.

15 More preferably, a highest point of the top edge of the inner frame is at a location along an inner frame back panel. Even more preferably, an end point of the top edge of the back panel is less high than the highest point of the inner frame top edge.

In containers according to the present invention, the resealable package may be formed by folding a blank of a web material around of group of consumer articles and sealing, for example  
20 heat sealing, overlapping portions of the folded blank. The resealable package is preferably a rectangular parallelepiped comprising two wider walls spaced apart by two narrower walls. Preferably, the web material of the resealable package comprises metal foil or metallised paper. The web material may be formed as a laminate of a metallised polyethylene film, and a liner material. In a preferred embodiment, the web material is a laminate comprising a layer of  
25 aluminium sandwiched between two layers comprising oriented polypropylene. The aluminium layer provides desirable barrier properties to the resealable package and, as such, helps maintain the required moisture content within the resealable package. In this respect, it has been found that one such three-layer laminate web material displays improved barrier properties than conventional metallised films. The web material may also be a super-calendered glassine paper.  
30 In addition, the web material may be provided with a print-receptive top coating.

In some embodiments, the sealing cover member may be provided as a reclosable adhesive label extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the package. In more detail, the reclosable adhesive label is permanently affixed to the resealable package by a permanent adhesive provided on a back hinge area of the inner surface of the reclosable adhesive  
35 label. Further, the reclosable adhesive label is at least partly releasably affixed to the package by a resealable adhesive provided on a second area of the inner surface of the reclosable adhesive label extending at least about a front edge of the access opening. The access opening

in the package may be defined by a cut-out. As an alternative, lines of weakness – such as creased, scored, ablated, perforated, pre-cut lines – may be formed in the package to delimit a package portion of the sealing cover member such that the package portion of the sealing cover member is partly separable from the remainder of the package to effectively form the access opening. In such case, the reclosable adhesive label is permanently affixed to the package portion of the sealing cover member by permanent adhesive provided on a first area of the inner surface of the reclosable adhesive label extending over at least part of the package portion of the sealing cover member.

In other embodiments, the sealing cover member may comprise a reclosable adhesive label comprising at least a bottom layer and a top layer of label material. The bottom layer comprises a cut-out portion at least partly aligned with the access opening of the package, and is affixed to the package by means of a first, permanent adhesive provided on a first area of the inner surface of the bottom layer extending about the periphery of the access opening. The top layer is partly permanently affixed to the bottom layer by means of a permanent adhesive provided on a back hinge area of the inner surface of the top layer. Further, the top layer is at least partly releasably affixed to the bottom layer by means of a second adhesive provided on a peeling area of the inner surface of the top layer extending distal from the hinge area, such that the top layer is movable from a closed position, wherein the top layer overlies at least the access opening, and an open position, wherein the top layer is lifted off the bottom layer to reveal the cut-out portion.

In alternative embodiments, the package may be formed from a multi-layer laminate material and the sealing cover member may be formed in the outermost layer of the laminate material. In more detail, one such laminate comprises at least an outer layer and an inner layer. In order for the cover member to be separable from the remainder of the package upon opening the lid for the first time, weakened lines are formed in all the layers of the laminate structure. The weakened lines in the outer layer delimit an outer panel of the cover flap and the weakened lines in the inner layer delimit an inner panel of the cover flap, the outer panel of the cover flap directly overlying and being affixed to the inner panel of the cover flap. The weakened lines in the outer layer and the inner layer are arranged such that the outer panel of the cover flap extends beyond a periphery of the inner panel of the cover flap. Accordingly, an access opening defined in the inner layer when the cover flap is moved into the open position has a smaller surface area than an access opening defined in the outer layer when the cover flap is moved into the open position. In addition, a peripheral portion of the outer panel of the cover flap extends around the access opening defined in the inner layer when the cover flap is moved into the open position. This is advantageous in that it helps provide a better closure of the package, such that it is easier to prevent the ingress of dust or other material into the package, as well as to prevent the loss of any content from the package. In addition, such embodiments have the advantage that there is

no need for a further adhesive element overlying the package, which may simplify the manufacturing process.

The outer housing is preferably a rectangular parallelepiped comprising two wider walls spaced apart by two narrower walls, and may be formed from a laminar blank of any suitable material or combination of materials, including, but not limited to, cardboard, paperboard, plastic, metal, or combinations thereof. Preferably, the blank is a laminar cardboard blank having a weight of between about 100 grams per square metre and about 350 grams per square metre.

The container may optionally comprise an outer wrapper, which is preferably a transparent polymeric film of, for example, high or low density polyethylene, polypropylene, oriented polypropylene, polyvinylidene chloride, cellulose film, or combinations thereof and the outer wrapper is applied in a conventional manner. The outer wrapper may include a tear tape. In addition, the outer wrapper may be printed with images, consumer information or other data.

Containers according to the invention find particular application as containers for elongate smoking articles such as, for example, cigarettes, cigars, or cigarillos or other aerosol generators that rely on heating rather than burning tobacco, for example through an electrical heat source or carbon heat source. It will be appreciated that through appropriate choices of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed for different numbers of conventional size, king size, super-king size, slim or super-slim cigarettes. Alternatively, other consumer goods may be housed inside the container.

Through an appropriate choice of the dimensions, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold different total numbers of smoking articles, or different arrangements of smoking articles. For example, through an appropriate choice of the dimensions, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold a total of between ten and thirty smoking articles. The smoking articles may be arranged in different collations, depending on the total number of smoking articles.

The invention will now be further described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic top view of a container in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 is a schematic top view of a reclosable cover member of a container in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 3 is a schematic top view of a blank for forming the inner frame of a container in accordance with the present invention; and

Figure 4 is a schematic top view of the blank of Figure 3 showing the position of the inner frame blank relative to a portion of a blank for forming the outer housing of a container in the accordance with the present invention.

Figure 1 shows a container 10 in accordance with the present invention. The container 10 comprises an outer housing 12 which is a rectangular parallelepiped and includes a box 14 and

a lid 16. The lid 16 is hinged about a hinge line extending across a back wall of the outer housing 12 and is pivotable between an open position (shown in Figure 1) and a closed position. The lid 16 comprises a lid front wall 18 and a reinforcement panel 20 depending from the lid front wall 18 folded into the lid. In more detail, in the embodiment of Figure 1, the reinforcement panel 20 is substantially folded against the inner surface of the lid front wall 18 and secured to the lid front wall by means of adhesive. Further, the container 10 comprises a resealable package 22 of smoking articles housed in the box 14. The package 22 comprises an access opening 24 extending across the top wall and the front wall of the inner package. The smoking articles contained in the inner package 22 can be removed through the access opening when the lid 16 is in the open position.

The package 22 further comprises a reclosable cover member 26 occluding the access opening 24 of the package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening 26. In more detail, the cover member 26 is movable from a closed position, wherein the cover member overlies at least the access opening 24, and an open position, wherein the cover member 26 is lifted at least partially off the outer surface of the package.

A front portion 262 of the reclosable cover member 26 is permanently affixed to the reinforcement panel 20. Thus, when the lid 16 is opened, the reclosable cover member 26 is moved from the closed position towards the open position, so as to at least partly reveal the access opening 24. In the embodiment of Figure 1, the reclosable cover member 26 is provided as an adhesive label extending beyond the periphery of the access opening 24 of the package 22.

As illustrated in greater detail in Figure 2, the reclosable cover member 26 comprises a body portion 264 extending distal from the cover member front portion 262. The cover member body portion 264 has a width greater than a width of the cover member front portion 262. In more detail, the cover member front portion 262 is tapered.

The container 10 further comprises an inner frame 30. This may be formed by folding the blank shown in Figure 3. The inner frame 30 comprises an inner frame front panel 32 arranged parallel to a front wall of the package 22; inner frame side panels 34, 36 depending from the inner frame front panel 32; and a pair of inner frame back panels 38, 40, each depending from a respective inner frame side panel 34, 36. The inner frame back panels 38, 40 are arranged parallel to a package back wall. As more clearly illustrated in Figures 1 and 4, a projecting portion 42 of the inner frame front panel 32 extends above a top edge of a front wall of the box. When the lid 16 is in the closed position, an inner surface of the lid reinforcement panel 20 lies against an outer surface of the projecting portion 42 of the inner frame front panel 32.

The inner frame 30 comprises a cut out defining a top edge 44 of side end portions 46, 48 of the inner frame front panel 32, such that the side end portions 46, 48 at least partially define the front panel projecting portion 42. In more detail, in the embodiment of Figure 3, the cut out in

the inner frame 30 extends over the whole width of the inner frame front panel 32 and at least part of the width of the inner frame side panels 34, 36, such that the cut out is at least partially limited laterally by the inner frame back panels 38, 40. A height of the top edge of the inner frame side panels 34, 36 increases continuously across the whole width of each inner frame side panel 34, 36 from a height of the top edge of a respective side end portion 46, 48 to a height of the top edge of a respective inner frame back panel 38, 40. More particularly, a highest point of the top edge of the inner frame 30 is at a location along an inner frame back panel 38, 40.

In addition, a distance between a front edge of the reclosable cover member 24 and the top edge of the inner frame front panel 32 in a direction orthogonal to the top edge of the inner frame front panel 32 varies by less than about 5 millimetres along the length of the top edge of the inner frame front panel 32.

Further, the cut out in the inner frame front panel 32 defines top edges of an inner frame central front panel portion 50 and inner frame lateral front panel portions 52, 54 extending transversely from the inner frame central front panel portion 50. As illustrated in Figure 3, the top edge of the inner frame central front panel portion 50 is above the top edges of the inner frame lateral front panel portions 52, 54.

Figure 4 shows the position of the inner frame 30 relative to the blank for forming the outer housing 12. In particular, Figure 4 illustrates how the top edge of the side end portions 46, 48 of the inner frame front panel 32 is higher than a top edge of the box front wall, such as to define the inner frame front panel projecting portion 42. Further, the top edge of an inner frame central front panel portion is below the top edge of the side end portions of the inner frame front wall and below or about as high as the top edge of the box front wall.

**CLAIMS**

1. A container for consumer goods comprising:  
an outer housing comprising a box and a lid, the lid being hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the outer housing; wherein the lid comprises a lid front wall and a reinforcement panel depending from the lid front wall along a fold line and folded into the lid;  
  
a resealable package of consumer goods within the box, the package comprising an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed and a reclosable cover member occluding the access opening of the package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the package, the cover member being movable from a closed position, wherein the cover member overlies at least the access opening, and an open position, wherein the cover member is lifted at least partially off the outer surface of the package;  
  
wherein a front portion of the reclosable cover member is permanently affixed to the reinforcement panel, such that upon opening the lid the reclosable cover member is moved from the closed position towards the open position to at least partly reveal the access opening;  
  
wherein the container further comprises an inner frame comprising: an inner frame front panel arranged parallel to a front wall of the package; inner frame side panels depending from the inner frame front panel; and at least one inner frame back panel depending from a respective inner frame side panel; the at least one inner frame back panel arranged parallel to a package back wall; at least a projecting portion of the inner frame front panel extending above a top edge of a box front wall; and  
  
wherein, when the lid is in the closed position, an inner surface of the lid reinforcement panel lies against an outer surface of the projecting portion of the inner frame front panel.
2. A container according to claim 1, wherein the reclosable cover member comprises a body portion extending distal from the cover member front portion, the cover member body portion having a width greater than a width of the cover member front portion.
3. A container according to claim 2, wherein the cover member front portion is tapered.

4. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the inner frame comprises a cut out defining a top edge of side end portions of the inner frame front panel, such that the side end portions at least partially define the inner frame front panel projecting portion.
5. A container according to claim 4, wherein the cut out in the inner frame extends over the whole width of the inner frame front panel and at least part of the width of the inner frame side panels, such that the cut out is at least partially limited laterally by the inner frame back panels.
6. A container according to claim 5, wherein a height of the top edge of the inner frame side panels increases continuously across the whole width of each side wall from a height of the top edge of a respective side end portion to a height of the top edge of a respective inner frame back panel.
7. A container according to claim 5 or 6, wherein a highest point of the top edge of the inner frame is at a location along an inner frame back panel.
8. A container according to any one of claims 4 to 7, wherein the cut out defines a top edge of the inner frame front panel and a distance between a front edge of the cover member and the top edge of the inner frame front panel in a direction orthogonal to the top edge of the inner frame front panel varies by no more than 10 millimetres along the length of the top edge of the inner frame front panel.
9. A container according to claim 8, wherein the distance between the front edge of the cover member and the top edge of the inner frame front panel in a direction orthogonal to the top edge of the inner frame front panel is from about 2 millimetres to about 5 millimetres.
10. A container according to any one of claims 4 to 9, wherein the cut out defines top edges of an inner frame central front panel portion and inner frame lateral front panel portions extending transversely from the inner frame central front panel portion, the top edge of the inner frame central front panel portion being above the top edges of the inner frame lateral front panel portions.
11. A container according to claim 10, wherein the top edge of the inner frame central front panel portion is below the top edge of the side end portions of the inner frame front wall.
12. A container according to any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein the top edge of the inner frame central front panel portion is below or about as high as the top edge of the front wall of the box.

13. A container for consumer goods comprising:

an outer housing comprising a box and a lid, the lid being hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the outer housing; wherein the lid comprises a lid front wall and a reinforcement panel depending from the lid front wall along a fold line and folded into the lid;

a resealable package of consumer goods within the box, the package comprising an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed and a reclosable cover member occluding the access opening of the package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the package, the cover member being movable from a closed position, wherein the cover member overlies at least the access opening, and an open position, wherein the cover member is at least partially lifted off the outer surface of the package;

wherein a front portion of the reclosable cover member is permanently affixed to the lid, such that upon opening the lid the reclosable cover member is moved from the closed position towards the open position to at least partly reveal the access opening;

wherein the container further comprises an inner frame comprising: an inner frame front panel arranged parallel to a package front wall; side walls depending from the inner frame front panel; and at least one inner frame back panel depending from a respective inner frame side panel; the at least one inner frame back panel arranged parallel to a package back wall; and

wherein the inner frame comprises a cut out extending over the whole width of the inner frame front panel and at least part of the width of the inner frame side panels, such that the cut out is limited laterally by the at least one inner frame back panel.

14. A container according to claim 13, wherein a height of the top edge of the inner frame side panels increases substantially across the whole width of each inner frame side panel from a height of the top edge of a respective side end portion to a height of the top edge of a respective inner frame back panel.

15. A container according to claim 14, wherein a highest point of the top edge of the inner frame is at a location along an inner frame back wall.

16. A container according to claim 15, wherein an end point of the top edge of the inner frame back panel is less high than the highest point of the inner frame top edge.

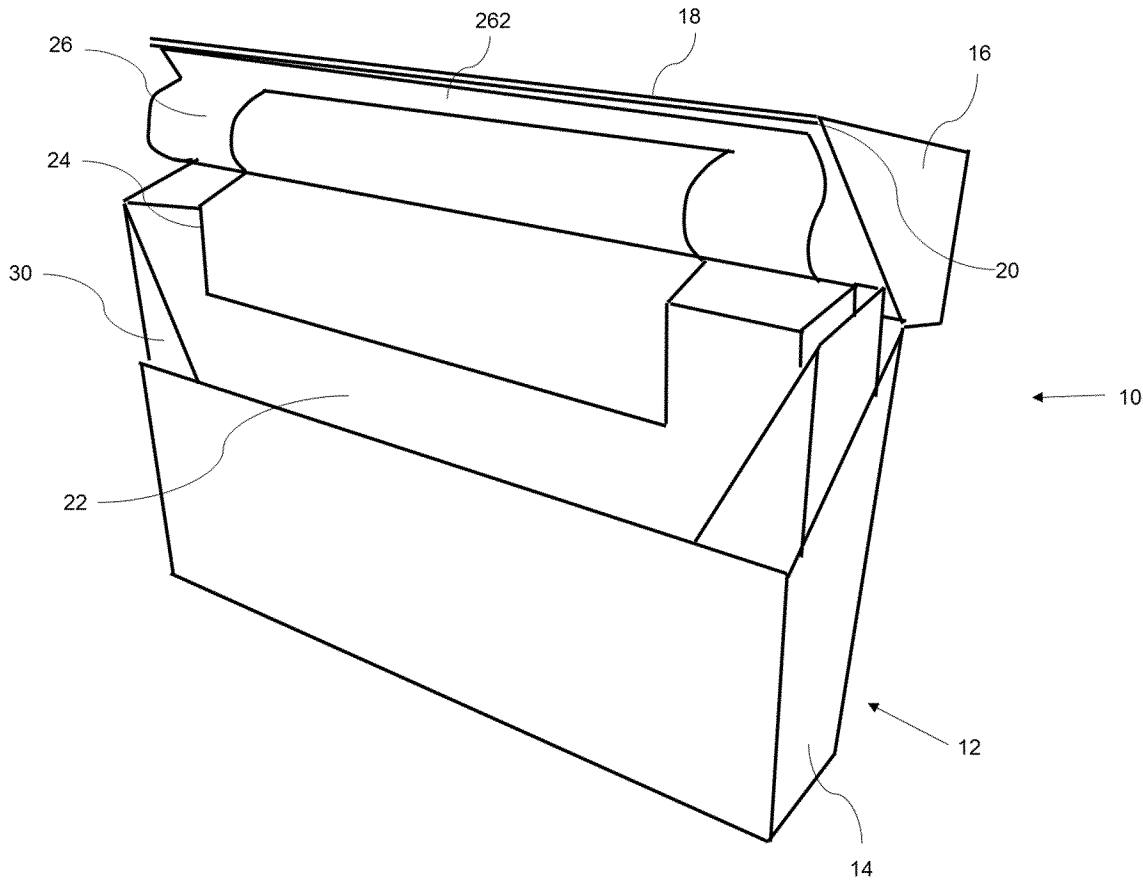


Fig. 1

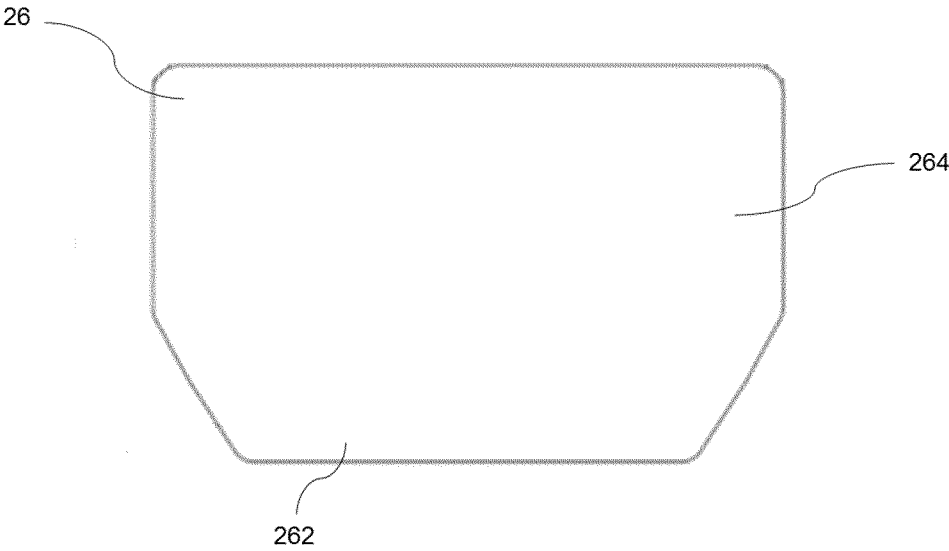


Fig. 2

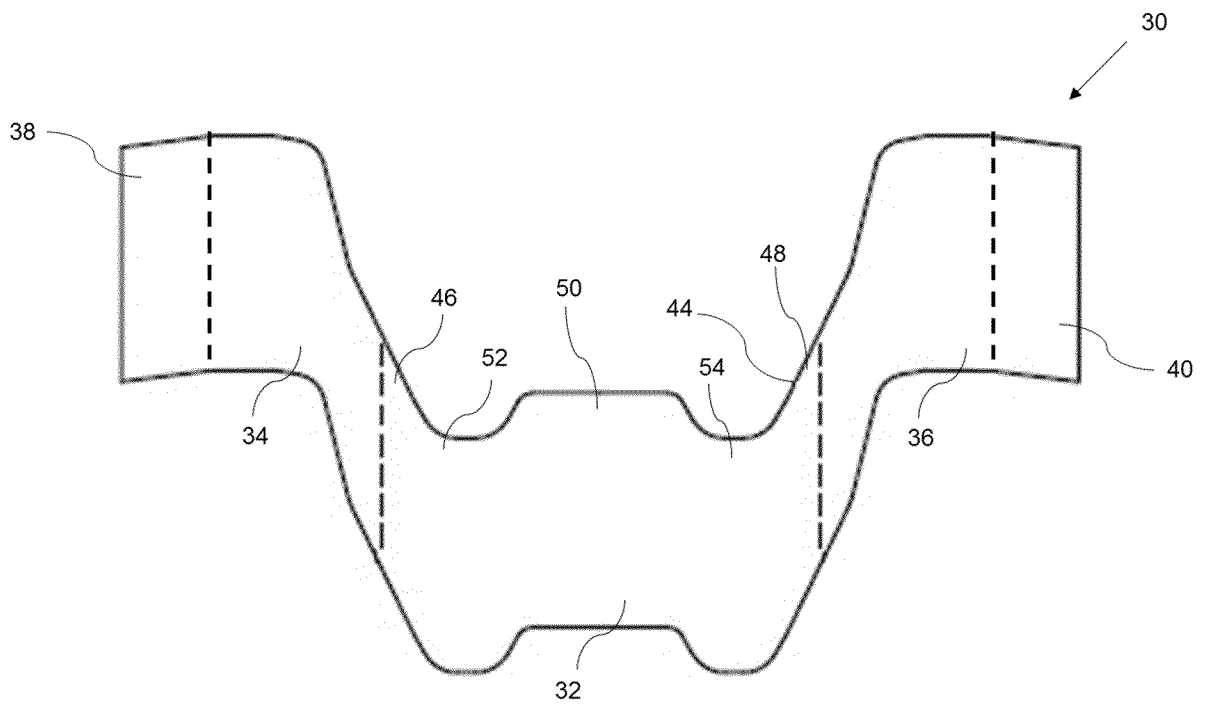


Fig. 3

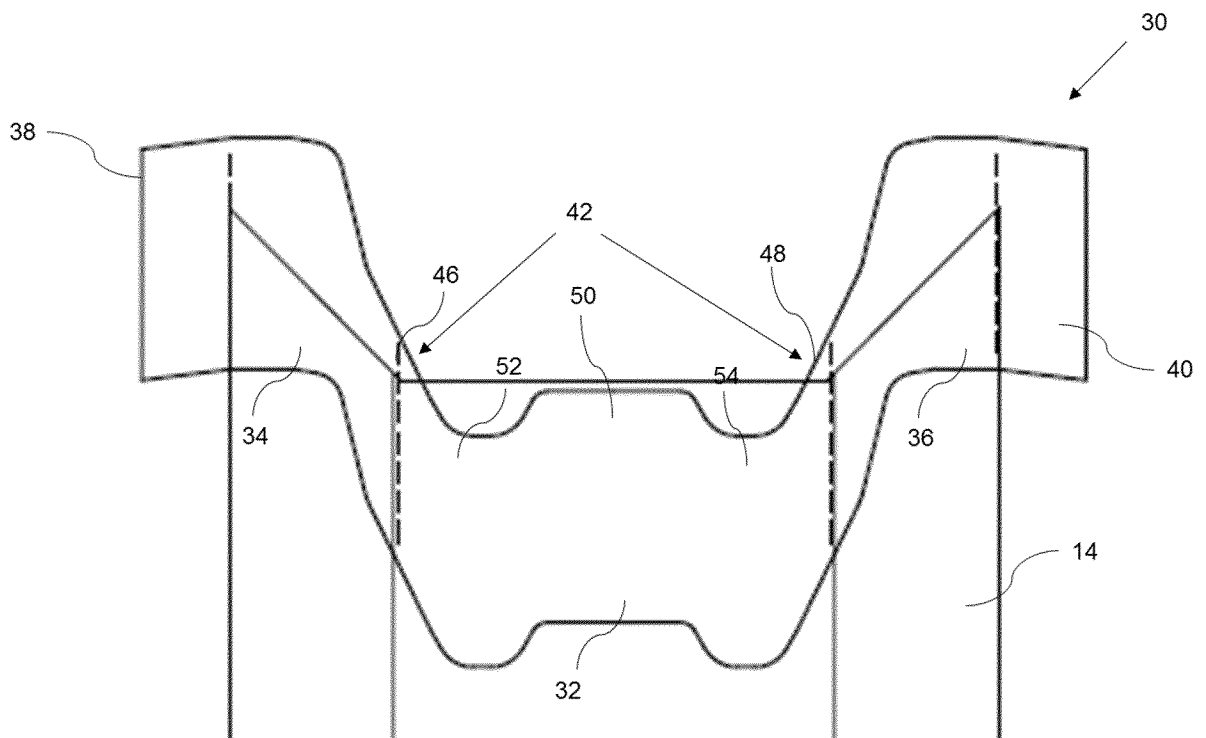


Fig. 4

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No  
PCT/EP2017/078960

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
INV. B65D85/10  
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  
B65D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EP0-Internal

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages                                                       | Relevant to claim No. |
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| A         | -----<br>DE 10 2009 034705 A1 (FOCKE & CO [DE])<br>27 January 2011 (2011-01-27)<br>paragraph [0030] - paragraph [0050];<br>figures 11,16 | 1-16                  |
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|           | -----                                                                                                                                    |                       |

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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☒

See patent family annex.

\* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

27 February 2018

Date of mailing of the international search report

07/03/2018

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

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Authorized officer

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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.  
PCT/EP2017/078960

### Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
  
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
  
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:  
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

### Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. ☒ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

#### Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- ☒ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

**FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210**

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. claims: 1-12

A container for consumer goods comprising at least a projecting portion of the inner frame front panel extending above a top edge of a box front wall; and wherein, when the lid is in the closed position, an inner surface of the lid reinforcement panel lies against an outer surface of the projecting portion of the inner frame front panel.

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2. claims: 13-16

A container for consumer goods comprising an inner frame, wherein the inner frame comprises a cut out extending over the whole width of the inner frame front panel and at least part of the width of the inner frame side panels, such that the cut out is limited laterally by the at least one inner frame back panel.

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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2017/078960

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