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Begemann

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[54] **CIGARETTE PACKAGING**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **206/264,** 206/459

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B65d 85/10**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 206/48.5, 56 AB, 45.33

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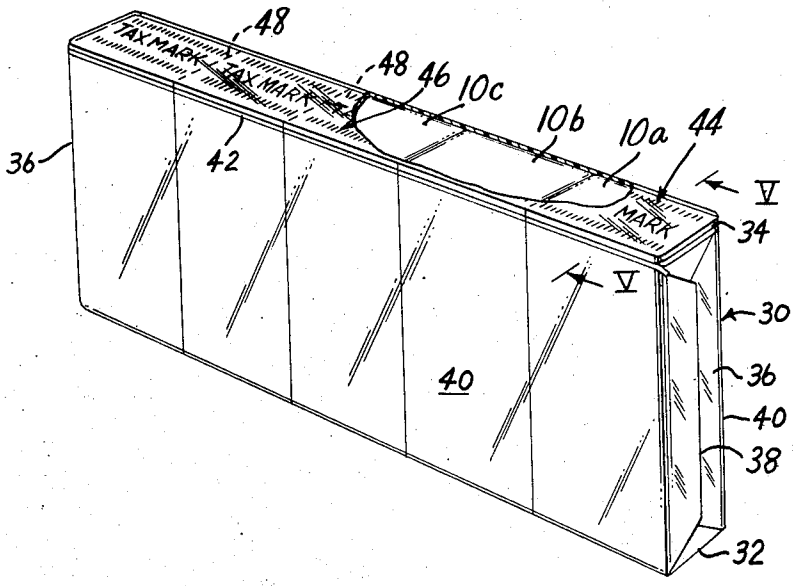
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Primary Examiner—Leonard Summer

[57] **ABSTRACT**

Cigarette packages are wrapped in an aligned single row or assembly of five such packages, so that two such wrapped assemblies can be placed side-by-side in a conventional carton making a unit sale of five prepackaged packages possible if desired. The cigarette packages in each assembly are connected in linked together assembly by means of a component superposed on and secured to one end surface of each package, the component being provided as an elongated strip which has frangible segments therein extending transversely of the strip in regions where the strip overlies the location of abutment of each package with an adjacent package. If unit sales of less than five packages are desired, a selected package or packages can be removed from the assembly by severing the strip along appropriate frangible segments, with the associated strip portion remaining secured to the package or packages which have been removed, the strip portion associated with the removed packages bearing the tax marking indicia required by most localities remaining affixed to such packages at the time of retail sales of the same.

8 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures



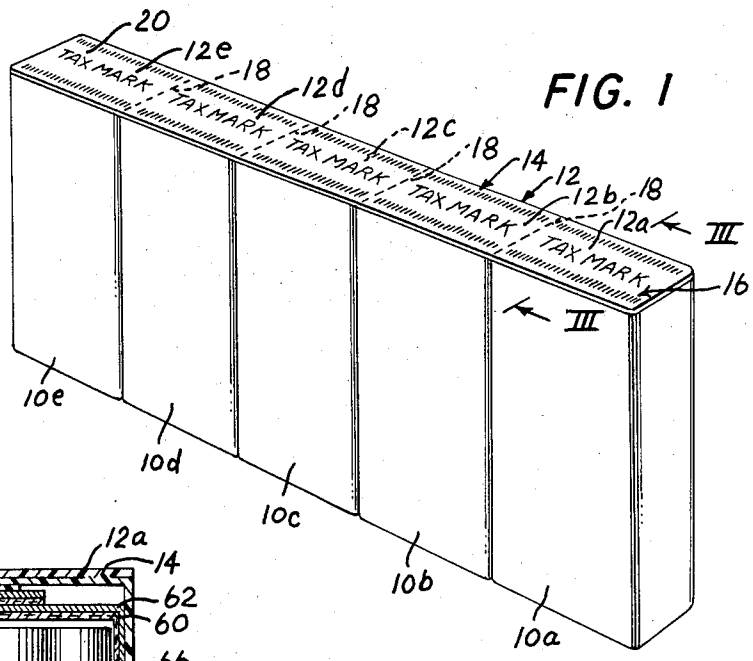


FIG. 1

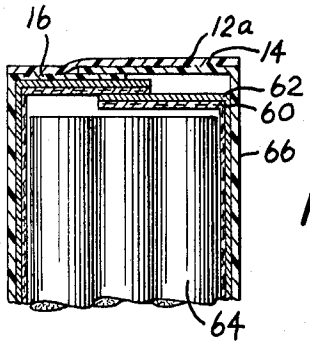


FIG. 3

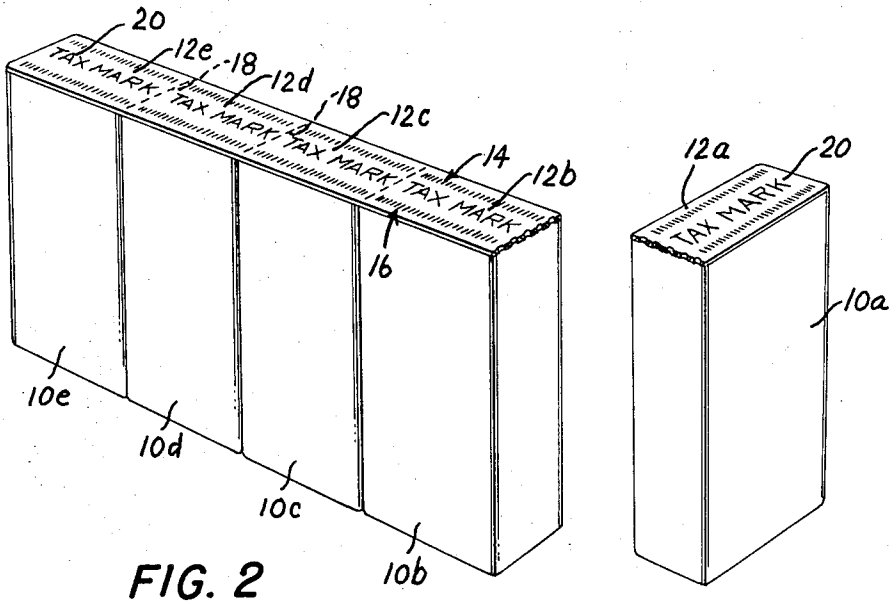


FIG. 2

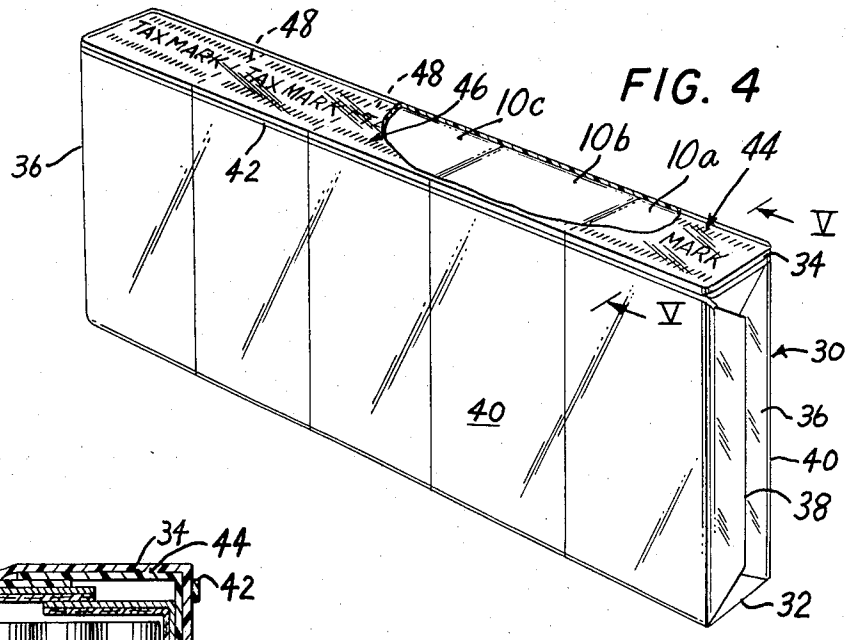


FIG. 4

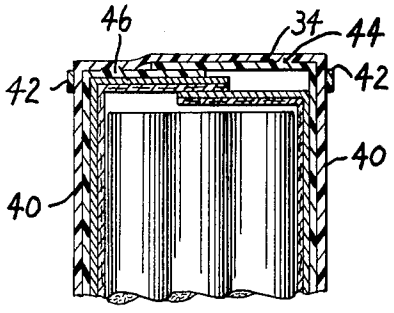


FIG. 5

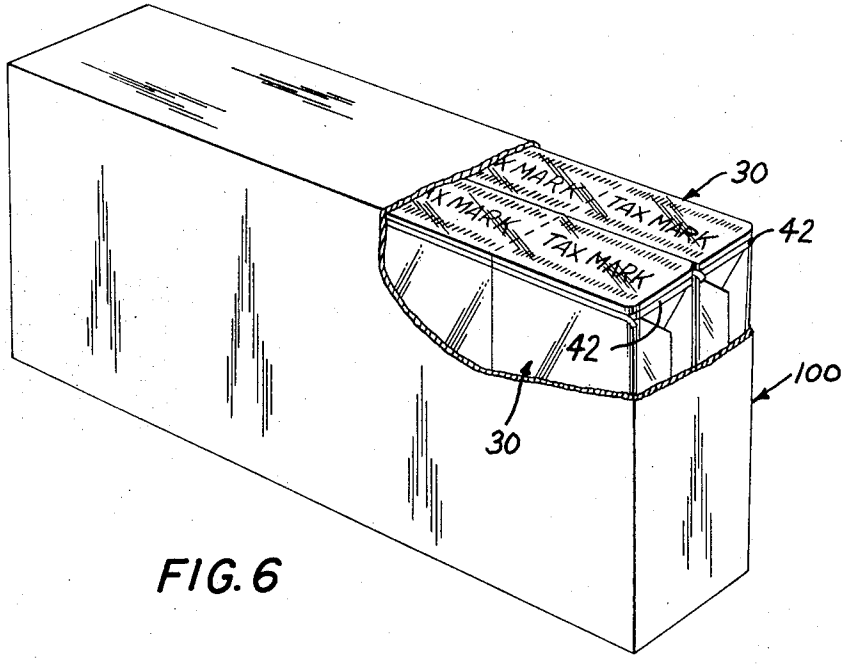


FIG. 6

CIGARETTE PACKAGING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Cigarette packages commonly are packed in cardboard or paper cartons in two side-by-side rows of five individual packages each. In such packaged form, the cigarettes are shipped to a wholesaler in a given locality and the wholesaler prior to shipping the cigarettes to a retailer affixes, as may be required by local authority, tax markings to each cigarette package in the carton using for this purpose known procedures and tax marking machines. While it is commonplace for retail sales to be on a whole carton basis, there has come into existence a growing practice by certain retailers of selling cigarettes in unit quantity sales of five packages. For such purpose, many such retailers have instituted the practice of removing cigarette packages from a conventional carton as received from the wholesaler and placing five of the packages in a suitable container, e.g., a bag, or of securing together the five packages in a stack thereof with an encircling band of tape. Accordingly, it is desirable that there be provided a more convenient way of prepackaging cigarettes to facilitate making unit sales of five packages of cigarettes. However, the provision of a prepackaged assembly of five packages of cigarettes should be done in such manner that if a quantity of less than five packages are to be sold in a unit sale either, i.e., in single package quantity or in quantities of two, three or four packages, the five package assembly would embody features which insure that following opening of the same, the tax marking affixed to each package remains on the packages when such packages are sold to the retail purchaser.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention has for an important purpose an improved form of prepackaging of cigarette packages in a manner which facilitates unit retail sales of such packages in quantities of five packages or less.

In accordance with the present invention a plurality of cigarette packages, e.g., five such packages arranged in side-by-side positioning and defining an aligned row of such packages in which the surfaces of at least one of each of the respective packages and the front and rear package surfaces are disposed in planar alignment, are provided with a packaging component in the form of an elongated strip superposed on and secured to the said one end surface of each of the packages holding them in linked together assembly. The strip, preferably provided as a film of a material which is heat sealable to the said one end surface of each package, is further provided with transversely directed frangible segments therein in the regions which the strip overlies the location of abutment of each package with an adjacent package, such frangible segments conveniently being provided by a line of perforations through the strip in said regions. In this manner five packages of cigarettes are readily available for sale in that unit quantity as a prepackaged assembly. If a lesser quantity are to be sold the same is easily removed from the assembly. To effect removal of a lesser quantity of packages from the assembly, the strip portion associated with each package or any particular package can be severed along corresponding or appropriate frangible segments to remove the package or packages from those remaining in the assembly. The strip which is heat sealed to the said one end surface of each package thus can be severed into strip portions which are associated with each package and upon which the tax marking required in most jurisdictions remains affixed to the package at time of the retail sale.

In a particularly advantageous form of the invention, the aligned row of cigarette packages are enclosed in an envelope of suitable material which fully enclose the outer surfaces of the row of packages with the strip that connects the packages in the row in linked together assembly being comprised of the top panel of such envelope. Further, the envelope can include a readily removable tear member fixedly secured thereto in an encircling course about the row of packages at the point of juncture of the top panel comprising the connector strip and the remainder portion of the envelope. When it is desired to remove a lesser number than five packages from the carton, the removable tear member is removed from the envelope structure by digitally applied pulling force which tears the envelope to permit removal or separation of the envelope remainder portion from the said top panel thereof leaving the strip panel secured to the said on end of the cigarette package. Thereafter a given package may be removed by applying a slight pulling force to the package while holding the remaining packages in the assembly to tear the strip along the appropriate frangible segment therein and separate the package from the assembly.

The invention, accordingly, comprises the features of construction, combination of elements and arrangement of parts which will be exemplified in the construction hereinafter set forth and the scope of the invention will be indicated in the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

A fuller understanding of the nature and objects of the present invention will be had from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing showing by way of example a preferred embodiment of the inventive concept and in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an aligned row of cigarette packages prepackaged in a five package assembly with a packaging component in accordance with the principles of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is the same as FIG. 1 except it shows the cigarette packages after one package has been removed from the linked together assembly.

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary sectional view on enlarged scale as taken along the line III—III in FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a linked together assembly of cigarette packages showing a further form of the invention in which the aligned row of cigarette packages are fully enclosed in an envelope or transparent outer wrapping.

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary perspective view on enlarged scale as taken along the line V—V in FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view with portions broken away of a conventional cigarette carton in which can be received two linked together assemblies of five cigarette packages each.

Throughout the following description, like reference numerals are used to denote like parts in the drawing.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention is concerned generally with the packaging of cigarettes. It is particularly concerned with the packaging of five packages of cigarettes in a linked together assembly so that two such assemblies can be packed in a conventional carton without interfering with the normal manner of tax marking the individual packages while at the same time providing for the convenient and ready removal of quantities ot five or less packages at any given time in connection with retail sales of the same.

Referring now to FIGS. 1–3 wherein the packaging provided by the present invention is depicted in its broader aspects, there is shown a plurality, i.e., five, packages of cigarettes **10***a*–**10***e* arranged in side-by-side positioning defining an aligned row of such packages in which the surfaces of at least one end (preferably the end to which the tax marking normally is applied) of each of the respective packages **10***a*–**10***e* and the front and rear package surfaces are disposed in generally planar alignment. In accordance with the invention, a packaging component in the form of an elongated strip **12** is superposed on and secured to the said one end surface of each of the packages **10***a*–**10***e*, the strip having corresponding portions **12***a*–**12***e* associated with each package. The strip **12** preferably is provided in the form of a material which is heat sealable to a heat-sealably compatible material on the said one end of each of the packages, the latter conventionally being enclosed in a heat-sealable material, viz., cellophane. In this manner, the strip **12** can be secured to the said one end of each package by a generally continuously heat seal course extending longitudinally of the strip in one or more locations therealong as at **14** and **16.** Thus, the strip **12** is secured firmly to the end of each package with the strip further being provided with a number of transversely directed frangible segments **18** in the regions where the strip overlies the location of abutment of one package with an adjacent package. As an alternative, it is possible to secure the strip to the end surface of each cigarette package with a suitable adhesive. The frangible segments **18** are provided preferably by a line of transversely directed perforations which permit the strip portion of any given package to be severed along the corresponding frangible segments from an adjacent package by slight pulling force applied to the package associated with the particular strip portion. Other ways of providing a weakened segment also can be employed, e.g., a segment of reduced thickness and the like.

The strip **12** in addition to serving as a component for connecting in linked-together assembly the five packages, provides a surface on which the tax indicia **20** required in most localities can be marked on the packages since when a package is removed from the assembly the indicia will remain thereon as the strip portion associated with the package is also removed but being heat sealed thereto remains part of the package.

The strip **12** may be made, as indicated, of any material which is compatible for heat sealing to the end surface of the cigarette packages. In one form the strip can be provided as a strip of a cellulosic material, such as, cellophane, which is compatible for heat sealing to the cellophane outer wrapping employed on packages of cigarettes. Additionally, thermoplastic materials, such as, Mylar, acrylics, polyethylene, etc., also may be employed for this purpose.

As shown in FIG. **2,** if it is desired to remove a package from the assembly, for example, package **10***a*, the user or retailer in this instance need only apply a pulling force to the package **10***a* while holding the remaining packages **10***b*–**10***e* in the assembly firmly with the other hand to cause the frangible segment **18** overlying the abutment location of package **10***a* with package **10***b* to sever, thereby separating the strip portion **12***a* from the remaining length of the strip and accordingly effecting removal of the package **10***a* from the assembly.

The fragmentary depiction in FIG. **3** shows the manner in which the heat seal courses **14** and **16** extend along the strip **12,** the depicted package **10***a* having the customary paper **60** and foil coated wrapping **62** for cigarettes **64** and a cellophane outer wrap **66.**

FIGS. **4–6** show a further and particularly advantageous form of the present invention in which the aligned row of cigarette packages **10***a*–**10***e* are fully enclosed on all outer surfaces thereof in an envelope **30** of suitable transparent material, such as a cellulosic material and particularly cellophane. The envelope **30** which is conformable to the overall contour of the row of cigarettes is provided with a number of panels, including one **32** on the bottom of the row, a panel **34** at the top serving as the connector strip and made integral with the remainder of the envelope, panels **36** at the ends, the latter being folded over and overlapped members adhesively secured together as shown at **38,** and broad surfaced front and rear panel parts **40.** Further, the envelope **30** which closely engages all of the said outer surfaces of the aligned row of cigarette packages is provided with a readily removable tear member **42** which is fixedly secured to the envelope material at the juncture of the upper or top panel **34** (the package connector component) and the remainder portion of the envelope. The readily removable tear member **42** is similar in type and construction to that well known in the art for use on individual cigarette packages to facilitate removal of the upper part of the cellophane outer wrap on the cigarette package as a preliminary to opening the same. The top panel **34** of the envelope **30** is secured to the end surfaces of the individual cigarette packages in a number of heat seal courses as at **44** and **46** and the same is also provided with transversely directed frangible segments as at **48.** When it is desired to remove one of the packages from the wrapping, the removable tear member **42** is grasped between two fingers by the user or retailer who by applying digital pulling force will break the seal or connection of the tear member to the envelope **30,** and by pulling the tear member off the envelope in the full encircling course in which it is applied separates the lower or remainder portion of the envelope from the upper panel **34** thereof and the remainder portion can be discarded, leaving the upper panel member **34** secured to the end surfaces of the packages. The individual packages thereafter are removable in the same manner described in connection with the FIGS. **1–3** construction. The particular advantage of the FIGS. **4–6** construction is that the same rigidizes the row of packages to facilitate handling of the same in the instance where a retail purchaser, for example, wants to make a five package unit purchase. The linked together assembly will remain as an integral package unit until such time as the user

wishes to open the package and remove the individual packages.

FIG. 5 shows in a fragmentary sectional view the details of the connection of the readily removable tear member 34 to the envelope 30, and FIG. 6 depicts the manner in which two such assemblies can be received in a conventional carton 100.

It will be seen then that the present invention provides an important contribution to the cigarette packaging art. In particular it provides that packages of cigarettes can be connected together in a linked assembly in a quantity of five packages for sale in a retail sales unit of that number of packages or less if desired. It will be apparent that certain modifications can be made in the packaging construction. For example, the FIG. 1 assembly could provided further with a like elongated strip connected to the bottom ends of each package and have weakened or frangible segments in the manner described in respect of strip 12.

While there is above disclosed but several embodiments of the cigarette packaging of the present invention, it is possible to produce still other embodiments without departing from the scope of the inventive concept herein disclosed and accordingly, it should be understood that all matter contained in the above description and the accompanying drawings should be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limited sense.

What is claimed is:

1. In cigarette packaging,

a plurality of cigarette packages arranged in side-by-side positioning presenting an aligned row of such packages in which the surfaces of at least one end of each of the respective packages and the front and rear package surfaces are disposed in generally planar alignment,

an envelope enclosing said aligned row of packages and tightly engaging the outer surfaces of same, said envelope including a main enclosure portion and an integral panel coextensively superposed over and secured to the said one end surface of each of said packages, said superposed panel being provided with transversely directed frangible segments therein in the regions where said superposed panel overlies the location of abutment of each package with an adjacent package whereby the panel portion associated with each package can be severed along appropriate ones of said frangible segments from the panel portion associated with an adjacent package and the respective packages removed from the row, and

a readily removable tear member fixedly secured to said envelope at the juncture of said main enclosure portion and said superposed panel in an encircling course about said row of packages for readily separating said main enclosure portion from said superposed panel by digitally applied pulling force applied to said tear member.

2. The packaging component of claim 1 in which said envelope and the integrated panel thereof is of a material which is heat-sealable for securement thereof to a heat-sealably compatible material on the said one end surface of each of said packages.

3. The packaging component of claim 2 in which said panel is heat sealed to the said one end surface of each of said packages in at least one heat seal course extending longitudinally of said panel.

4. The packaging component of claim 3 in which said panel is heat sealed to the said one end surface of each of said packages in a plurality of separate seal courses extending longitudinally of said panel.

5. The packaging component of claim 2 in which said envelope and the integral panel thereof is a film of a cellulosic material.

6. The packaging component of claim 2 in which said envelope and the integral panel thereof is a film of a thermoplastic material.

7. The packaging component of claim 2 in which said envelope and the integral panel thereof is a transparent material.

8. The packaging component of claim 1 in which the transversely directed frangible segments in said panel are provided by a line of perforations through said panel in said regions.

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