A mobile apparatus includes a storage unit on a movable base and includes a seat for supporting the user. The user has access to desired articles contained in the storage unit.
FIG. 5
FIG. 7
TOOL CHEST CREEPER SEAT WITH TRAYS

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS


[0002] This patent application is also related to commonly owned U.S. Design patent application Ser. No. ______, entitled: Tool Chest Creeper Seat With Trays, Attorney Docket No. 485943, filed on even date herewith, and the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0003] The disclosed subject matter relates to tool storage units such as tool chests, and in particular, to tool storage units that are movable along a surface and include seats for accommodating an individual.

BACKGROUND

[0004] Tool storage units, such as tool chests, have long been used by mechanics and the like, to allow them to store their tools in an organized manner. However, present tool chests are stationary and require mechanics and the like to have to leave their present position, to obtain the necessary tool, or move the tool chest close to the work site. Moreover, many, if not all of the storage drawers are typically at elevations that do not allow a lying or sitting mechanic access to the tools without getting up and out of their present position. By moving between positions, time is lost, as well as the time it takes to resume the previous position for operating on the requisite structure.

SUMMARY

[0005] The disclosed subject matter is directed to a seat for a mechanic that is movable, and includes a tool storage unit. The tool storage unit is under the seat, which allows a seated mechanic access to their tools without having to get up, and leave their operative position, and ultimately return to the operative position with the tool. Moreover, the disclosed subject matter better accommodates mechanics and the like, whose normal position for operation is in a sitting position. Accordingly, the disclosed subject matter provides all of the advantages of a tool chest in the work area as well as a seat, to accommodate the mechanic in a normal operating position.

[0006] An embodiment of the disclosed subject matter is directed to a movable storage apparatus. The apparatus is formed of a frame that includes a base, a plurality of wheels in communication with the base, for facilitating movement of the apparatus along a surface, such as the ground surface, a storage unit supported by the frame, and a seat supported by either the frame or the storage unit. The storage unit includes one or more drawers that open in multiple directions, such as forward, rearward or laterally, with respect to the apparatus.

[0007] Another embodiment of the disclosed subject matter is directed to a method for transporting articles, such as tools, to a worksite. The method includes providing a movable storage apparatus that includes a frame, the frame including a base, a plurality of wheels in communication with the base, a storage unit supported by the frame, and, a seat supported by at least one of the frame or the storage unit. At least one article is held in the storage unit, and the storage unit is moved to a location that is at least proximate the worksite.

[0008] Another embodiment is directed to a storage apparatus that is mobile and can be rolled over a surface. The storage apparatus includes a moveable base, a storage unit supported by the base, and a seat supported by the storage unit. The base includes a base unit or frame, to which wheels are attached, allowing the apparatus to be mobile.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] Attention is now directed to the drawings, where like reference numerals or characters indicate corresponding or like components. In the drawings:

[0010] FIG. 1 is a rear perspective view of an apparatus in accordance with the disclosed subject matter;

[0011] FIG. 2 is a bottom view of the apparatus of FIG. 1;

[0012] FIG. 3 is a front perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. 1, with the drawers open;

[0013] FIG. 4 is a rear perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. 1 with the drawers open;

[0014] FIG. 5 is a side perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. 1 with additional features;

[0015] FIG. 6 is a side perspective view of an alternate apparatus similar to that of the apparatus of FIG. 1;

[0016] FIG. 7 is a rear side perspective view of another alternate apparatus similar to that of the apparatus of FIGS. 1 and 6;

[0017] FIG. 8 is an exploded view of the apparatus of FIG. 7;

[0018] FIG. 9 is a rear view of the apparatus of FIG. 7;

[0019] FIG. 10 is a front view of the apparatus of FIG. 7;

[0020] FIG. 11 is a top view of the apparatus of FIG. 7;

[0021] FIG. 12 is a bottom view of the apparatus of FIG. 7;

[0022] FIGS. 13A and 13B side views of the lateral sides of the apparatus of FIG. 7.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0023] In this document, references are made to directions, such as upper, lower, top, bottom, up, down, upward, downward, front, rear, etc. These directional references are exemplary, to show the disclosed subject matter in a typical orientation, and are in no way limiting.

[0024] FIGS. 1-4, to which attention is initially directed, show the apparatus 20 of the disclosed subject matter. The apparatus 20 is formed of a frame 22, for example, a unitary member of metal or the like. The frame 22, is, for example, formed of a U-shaped base 24, with oppositely disposed L-shaped members 26 extending from the base 24 at the open end, over a portion of the base 24.

[0025] The frame 22, at the base 24, includes wheels, 28a-28d, such as castor-type wheels, for facilitating movement of the apparatus 20 along a surface. A tool chest 40 attaches to the frame 22 at the base 24, along its bottom (lower) side 41 (by screws 42, adhesives or other suitable fasteners extending through openings in the base 24), and is positioned between the base 24 and the L-shaped members 26. The tool chest 40 may also attach to the L-shaped members 26 for additional securement. The tool chest 40 may be positioned anywhere along the base 24 of the frame 22, provided it can be properly supported.
A seat or platform 46 is attached to the L-shaped members 26. The seat 46 is sized to accommodate a human in a sitting position. The seat 46 is also typically supported by the tool chest 40. The seat 46 may be positioned on the L-shaped members 26 with some forward space, allowing for the mechanic's legs to move into this space, as well as providing a gripping area of the frame 22.

As shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, the tool chest 40 includes drawers 51, 52, 53, oriented on the rear side 56, that open rearward. While three drawers are shown, any number of drawers is permissible. The drawers 51, 52, 53, may also open in a cascaded manner, to different lengths, or in a standard manner, where the drawers extend to approximately equal lengths. Access to the one or more of the drawers may be controlled by a lock, for example, a key lock 57.

Alternately, the drawers 51, 52, 53, may be oriented to the front side 58 of the tool chest 40, so as to open forward. This opening may be in a cascaded or non-cascaded manner. Also, the drawers 51, 52, 53, may be oriented to either or both of the lateral sides 60, 62 of the tool chest 40, so as to open laterally. This opening may be in a cascaded or non-cascaded manner.

As shown in FIG. 5, the apparatus 20 may support, for example, trays 70, cup holders, racks and the like. For example, the tray 70 may be attached to either or both of the L-shaped members 26 or the front side 58 of the tool chest 40.

In another alternate apparatus 20 similar to the apparatus 20, shown in FIG. 6, to which attention is directed, the seat 46 may serve as a cover for the tool chest 40. In this apparatus 20' identical or similar components have the same numbers as detailed for the apparatus 20, and are in accordance with the descriptions above. Differences are discussed below.

In this apparatus 20', the seat 46 may be hinged, by hinges 80 on the L-shaped members 26 or the tool chest 40, so as to open upward. This upward opening seat 46 may be such that the cavity of the tool chest 40 may be accessed, or alternately, a tray 82 in another compartment 84 may be accessed, as shown in this drawing figure. The apparatus 20' may also include a rack 86 mounted thereon.

In other alternates, the tool chest 40 may be accessible through its bottom (lower) side 41, opposite from the seat 46.

FIGS. 7-13B detail another alternate apparatus 120. In this apparatus 120 identical or similar components have the same numbers as detailed for the apparatus 20, 20', and are in accordance with the descriptions above for the apparatus 20, 20'. Differences are discussed below.

Apparatus 120 includes a tray 190 at its rear side. The tray 190 is formed of a lip 191, that rests on the base 24, and a compartment portion 192. Although shown as a single portion, the compartment portion may be separated into multiple compartments. The tray 190 attaches to the base 24, for example, by screws or other fasteners 193a that extend through aligned openings in the tray 193b and the base 193c.

There may also be a tray 194 at the front side 58. The tray 194 is formed of a lip 195, at opposite lateral sides, that rests on the base 24, and a compartment portion 196. Although shown as multiple compartments, compartment portion may be a single compartment. The tray 194 attaches to the base 24, for example, by screws or other fasteners 197a that extend through aligned openings in the tray 197b and the base 197c.

While preferred embodiments of the disclosed subject matter have been described, so as to enable one of skill in the art to practice the disclosed subject matter, the preceding description is intended to be exemplary only. It should not be used to limit the scope of the disclosure, which should be determined by reference to the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A movable storage apparatus comprising:
   a frame, the frame including a base;
   a plurality of wheels in communication with the base;
   a storage unit supported by the frame; and
   a seat supported by at least one of the frame or the storage unit.

2. The movable storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the frame additionally includes oppositely disposed members that extend at least partially over the base and the seat is supported on the oppositely disposed members of the frame.

3. The movable storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the storage unit includes at least one drawer, oriented to open in at least one direction with respect to the apparatus.

5. The movable storage apparatus of claim 2, additionally including at least one tray supported by the oppositely disposed members of the frame.

6. A method for transporting articles to a worksite comprising:
   providing a movable storage apparatus comprising:
   a frame, the frame including a base;
   a plurality of wheels in communication with the base;
   a storage unit supported by the frame; and
   a seat supported by at least one of the frame or the storage unit;
   holding at least one article into the storage unit; and,
   moving the movable storage to at least proximate the worksite.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one article includes at least one tool.

8. The method of claim 7, additionally comprising:
   accessing the storage unit and removing the at least one tool.

9. A storage apparatus comprising:
   a moveable base;
   a storage unit supported by the base; and
   a seat supported by the storage unit.

10. The storage apparatus of claim 9, wherein the moveable base includes a base member and a plurality of wheels for supporting the base member.

11. The storage apparatus of claim 9, wherein the storage unit includes at least one drawer, oriented to open in at least one direction with respect to the apparatus.

12. The storage unit of claim 11, wherein the at least one direction is selected from the group consisting of a forward, rearward or lateral direction.

13. The storage unit of claim 10, additionally comprising, at least one tray supported by the base.

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