

AUSTRALIA

Patents Act 1990

CONVENTION
679328

REQUEST FOR A STANDARD PATENT

AND NOTICE OF ENTITLEMENT

The Applicant identified below requests the grant of a patent to the nominated person identified below for an invention described in the accompanying standard complete patent specification.

[70,71]Applicant and Nominated Person:

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[54]Invention Title:

PACKAGE COMPRISING CONTAINERS, CARRIER AND HANDLE

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[31,33,32]

Details of basic application(s):-

238,423

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA US 5 May 1994

Applicant states the following:

1. The nominated person is the assignee of the actual inventor(s)

2. The nominated person is

- the applicant

- the assignee of the applicant

~~—authorised to make this application by the applicant~~

of the basic application.

3. The basic application(s) was/were the first made in a convention country in respect of the invention.

The nominated person is not an opponent or eligible person described in Section 33-36 of the Act.

26 April 1995

Illinois Tool Works Inc.

By PHILLIPS ORMONDE & FITZPATRICK

Patent Attorneys

By

David Fitzpatrick

Our Ref : 408547

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- (56) Prior Art Documents
US 4564106
US 3016136
AU 228508 44982/59 57.8 57.4
- (57) Claim

1. A package comprising:

a plurality of substantially identical containers arranged in a substantially rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of containers disposed upon each side of a plane dividing said package longitudinally;

a carrier comprising a single sheet of resilient polymeric material and having container-receiving apertures arranged in a substantially rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of container-receiving apertures disposed upon each side of said plane for respectively receiving said containers when said carrier is applied to said containers;

a handle comprising a separate sheet and having at least one longitudinal row of tabs extending downwardly for respectively extending through a longitudinal row of slots defined within said carrier at positions interposed between adjacent pairs of said container-receiving apertures and along said plane, and extending upwardly above said carrier so as to define substantially vertical, expansive planar surfaces suitable for labelling said package and to permit said package to be carried by said handle, and

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hole means defined within said carrier at a position located between a set of four of said container-receiving apertures for permitting a user to insert at least one finger therein in order to permit said package to be carried by said carrier.

AUSTRALIA

Patents Act

**COMPLETE SPECIFICATION
(ORIGINAL)**

Application Number: Class Int. Class
Lodged:

Complete Specification Lodged:
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Published:

Priority

Related Art:

Name of Applicant:

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Invention Title:

PACKAGE COMPRISING CONTAINERS, CARRIER AND HANDLE

Our Ref : 408547
POF Code: 77887/1431

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method of performing it known to applicant(s):

PACKAGE COMPRISING CONTAINERS, CARRIER, AND HANDLE
Background of the Invention

5 This invention pertains to an improved package including substantially identical containers, such as bottles for soft drinks or other beverages, together with a carrier and a handle. The handle provides generally vertical, laterally facing, expansive surfaces for pricing, barcoding, or other labelling of the improved package.

10 *Background of the invention*

15 Commonly, cans, bottles, or other containers for soft drinks or other beverages are marketed in packages comprising four, six, eight, or twelve containers in machine-applied carriers made from single sheets of resilient polymeric material, such as low density polyethylene. The carriers are made, as by die-cutting, so as to have band segments defining container-receiving apertures.

20 Although such polymeric carriers have many advantages, particularly as compared to predominantly paperboard carriers, such polymeric carriers have some shortcomings. A major shortcoming is that such polymeric carriers do not provide expansive surfaces for pricing, barcoding, or other labelling of the packages.

25 As exemplified in Poupitch U.S. Patent No. 2,874,835 and Poupitch U.S. Patent No. 3,016,136, it has been known to employ separate wire or other handles with such polymeric carriers. Although handles as known heretofore are useful with such polymeric carriers, such known handles do not provide suitable labelling surfaces.

30 This invention has resulted from efforts to provide an improved package for cans, bottles, or other containers for soft drinks or other beverages.

35 *Summary of the Invention*

This invention provides an improved package

including substantially identical containers, a carrier made from a single sheet of polymeric material, and a handle made from a separate sheet, such as a sheet of paperboard material. The containers may be bottles, each having a side wall and a neck extending upwardly from the side wall. The bottles or other containers are arranged in a generally rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of containers on each side of an imaginary plane dividing the package longitudinally.

5 The carrier is made from a single sheet of resilient polymeric material so as to have container-receiving apertures arranged in a generally similar array including at least one longitudinal row of container-receiving apertures on each side of the imaginary plane. The carrier is applied to the containers so that the container-receiving apertures receive the respective containers. If the containers are bottles, it is convenient to refer to the container-receiving apertures as bottle-receiving apertures, and the carrier is applied to the bottles so that the bottle-receiving apertures receive the respective bottles at the side walls.

10 The handle is made from the separate sheet so as to have at least one longitudinal row of tabs. Each tab extends downwardly through one of a longitudinal row of slots in the carrier. The slots extend along an imaginary line in the imaginary plane. The handle extends upwardly from the carrier except that the tabs extend below the carrier. If the containers are bottles, the handle extends upwardly from the carrier, between the neck of the bottles, except that the tabs extend below the carrier. The handle defines generally vertical, expansive surfaces suitable for pricing, barcoding, or other labelling of the package.

15 Preferably, the handle is folded from a sheet of paperboard material so as to define two handle portions extending downwardly from a folded, upper edge of the

handle. Each handle portion has a longitudinal row of tabs. Each tab is one of a pair of tabs extending through one of the longitudinal row of slots in the carrier.

Preferably, each tab has a lower portion that is longer than the slot through which such tab extends and a neck portion that is shorter than the slot through
5 which such tab extends, the carrier being stretchable so as to permit the lower portions of the tabs to pass through the slots.

Preferably, also, hole means is defined within the carrier at a position located between a set of four of the container-receiving apertures for permitting a user to insert at least one finger therein in order to permit the package to be
10 carried by the carrier.

Throughout the description and claims of this specification the word "comprise" and variations of that word, such as "comprises" and "comprising", are not intended to exclude other additives or components or integers.

The above and other features, and advantages of this invention are evident
15 from the following description of a preferred embodiment of this invention with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a package embodying this invention and comprising six substantially identical bottles, a polymeric carrier, and a
20 paperboard handle.

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the carrier and the handle, as assembled, apart from the bottles.

Figure 3 is a plan view of the handle in an unfolded condition.

Figure 4 is an enlarged, fragmentary detail, as taken from Figure 2.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiment

As shown, a package 10 comprising six substantially identical bottles 12, a polymeric carrier 14, and a paperboard handle 16 constitutes a preferred embodiment of this invention. The bottles 12 are arranged in a generally rectangular array including two longitudinal rows on each side of an imaginary plane dividing the package 10 longitudinally. As shown, each row includes three
30 bottles 12. This invention contemplates that the generally rectangular array may include more than two rows, a different number of bottles 12 in each row, or



extending downwardly from a lower edge 56 of such handle portion 50. The handle 50 is folded so that each tab 54 is one of a pair of tabs 54 adjacent to each other. After the handle 16 has been folded along the edge 52, the handle portions 50 may be but do not have to be adhesively secured to each other. The handle 16 has three pairs of tabs 54. The tabs 54 of each pair extend downwardly through a respective one of the three slots 40. The handle 16 extends upwardly from the carrier 14, between the necks 22 of the bottles 12, except that the tabs 54 extend below the carrier 14.

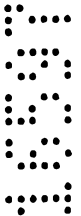
Each tab 54 has a shape resembling a blunt arrowhead. Thus, each tab 54 has a lower portion 60 that is longer than the slot 40 through which the tabs 54 of the pair, including such tab 54 extend. Also, each tab 54 has a neck portion 62 that is shorter than the same slot 40. Being made from a resilient, polymeric material, such as low density polyethylene, the carrier 14 is stretchable so as to permit the lower portions 60 of the tabs 54 to pass through the slots 40.

The handle 16 is made so as to have a long, wide, generally trapezoidal slot 70 in each handle portion 50 and so as to have a flap 72, which can be folded along a folded, upper edge 74 of the slot 70 in one of the handle portions 50. When the handle 16 is folded along the edge 52 and the flap 72 is folded along the edge 74 so as to extend through the slots 70 of the handle portions 50, the handle 16 defines a hand grip 80 above the slots 70, which are sufficiently long and sufficiently wide to accommodate four fingers of one hand of a user. The flap 72 enables the hand grip 80 to be comfortably gripped.

Advantageously, the handle 16 provides generally vertical, laterally facing, expansive surfaces 90 for pricing, barcoding, or other labelling of the package 10. Such labelling may be imprinted on the paperboard material of the handle 16, drawn thereon by a marker, or

applied via an adhesive label or otherwise. .

Various modifications may be made in the preferred embodiment described above without departing from the scope and spirit of this invention.



THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A package comprising:

a plurality of substantially identical containers arranged in a substantially rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of containers disposed upon each side of a plane dividing said package longitudinally;

a carrier comprising a single sheet of resilient polymeric material and having container-receiving apertures arranged in a substantially rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of container-receiving apertures disposed upon each side of said plane for respectively receiving said containers when said carrier is applied to said containers;

a handle comprising a separate sheet and having at least one longitudinal row of tabs extending downwardly for respectively extending through a longitudinal row of slots defined within said carrier at positions interposed between adjacent pairs of said container-receiving apertures and along said plane, and extending upwardly above said carrier so as to define substantially vertical, expansive planar surfaces suitable for labelling said package and to permit said package to be carried by said handle, and

hole means defined within said carrier at a position located between a set of four of said container-receiving apertures for permitting a user to insert at least one finger therein in order to permit said package to be carried by said carrier.

2. A package as claimed in claim 1 wherein each tab has a lower portion that is longer than the slot through which said tab extends downwardly and a neck portion that is shorter than the slot through which said tab extends and wherein the carrier is stretchable so as to permit the lower portions of the tabs to pass through the slots.

3. A package as claimed in claim 1 wherein the handle is folded from a sheet of paperboard material so as to define two handle portions extending downwardly from a folded, upper edge of the handle, wherein each handle portion has a longitudinal row of tabs, and wherein each tab of each handle portion is one of a pair of tabs extending through one of the longitudinal row of slots in the carrier.



4. A package as claimed in claim 3 wherein each tab has a lower portion that is longer than the slot through which said tab extends and a neck portion that is shorter than the slot through which said tab extends and wherein the carrier is stretchable so as to permit the lower portions of the tabs to pass
5 through the slots.

5. A package comprising
a plurality of substantially identical bottles arranged in a substantially rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of bottles disposed upon each side of a plane dividing said package longitudinally, each bottle having a
10 side wall and a neck extending upwardly from said side wall;

a carrier comprising a sheet of resilient polymeric material and having bottle-receiving apertures arranged in a substantially rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of bottle-receiving apertures disposed upon each side of said plane for respectively receiving said bottles around said side walls of said
15 bottles when said carrier is applied to said bottles;

a handle folded from a sheet of paperboard material so as to have two handle portions extending downwardly from a folded, upper edge of said handle, each handle portion having a longitudinal row of tabs extending downwardly for respectively extending through a longitudinal row of slots defined within said
20 carrier at positions interposed between adjacent pairs of said bottle-receiving apertures and along said plane, said handle extending upwardly above said carrier and between said necks of said respective bottles so as to define substantially vertical, expansive planar surfaces suitable for labelling said package and to permit said package to be carried by said handle; and

25 hole means defined within said carrier at a position located between a set of four of said bottle-receiving apertures for permitting a user to insert at least one finger therein in order to permit said package to be carried by said carrier.

6. A package, comprising:

a plurality of substantially identical containers arranged in a substantially rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of containers disposed
30 upon each side of a plane dividing said package longitudinally;



a carrier comprising a single sheet of resilient polymeric material and having container-receiving apertures arranged in a substantially rectangular array including at least one longitudinal row of containers-receiving apertures disposed upon each side of said plane for respectively receiving said containers when said
5 carrier is applied to said containers;

a longitudinal row of slots defined within said carrier along said plane and interposed between adjacent pairs of said container-receiving apertures disposed upon opposite sides of said plane so as to be substantially aligned with centers of said container-receiving apertures;

10 a handle comprising a separate sheet and having at least one longitudinal row of tabs extending downwardly for respectively extending through said longitudinal row of slots defined within said carrier, and extending upwardly above said carrier so as to define substantially vertical planar surfaces suitable for labelling said package and to permit said package to be carried by said handle;
15 and

hole means defined within said carrier at a position located between a set of four of said container-receiving apertures for permitting a user to insert at least one finger therein in order to permit said package to be carried by said carrier.

7. A package as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein
20 said handle is slotted so as to define a hand grip in order to facilitate carrying said package by said handle.

8. A package as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said carrier is fabricated from polyethylene.

9. A package as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 or claim 6, wherein
25 said handle is fabricated from paperboard.

10. A package as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said substantially rectangular array of containers comprises two longitudinal rows of containers with each row of containers comprising three containers.

11. A package as claimed in claim 5 or claim 9, wherein said handle
30 comprises said sheet of paperboard which is folded in half upon itself so as to define two handle portions extending downwardly from a folded, upper edge of



said handle, and wherein each handle portion is provided with a longitudinal row of said tabs.

12. A package substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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DATED: 18 February, 1997

PHILLIPS ORMONDE & FITZPATRICK

Attorneys for:

ILLINOIS TOOL WORKS INC.

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ABSTRACT

A package (10) for substantially identical bottles (12) arranged in two longitudinal rows is divided longitudinally by an imaginary plane. A carrier (14) made from a sheet of resilient polymeric material so as to have two longitudinal rows of bottle-receiving apertures (30), and so as to have a longitudinal row of slots (40) between the aperture rows, is applied to the side walls (24) of the bottles (12). A handle (16) is folded from a sheet of paperboard material so as to define two handle portions (50). Each handle portion has a longitudinal row of tabs (54), each being one of a pair of tabs extending downwardly through one of the slots (40) in the carrier. Each tab (54) has a lower portion (60), which is longer than the slot for such tab, and a neck portion (62), which is shorter. The carrier (14) is stretchable so as to permit the lower portions (60) of the tabs (54) to pass through the slots (40). The handle (16) extends upwardly from the carrier, between neck portions (22) of the respective bottles (12), and is slotted (70) so as to provide a hand grip. The handle (16) defines generally vertical, expansive surfaces suitable for pricing, barcoding, or other labelling of the package.

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FIG. 1

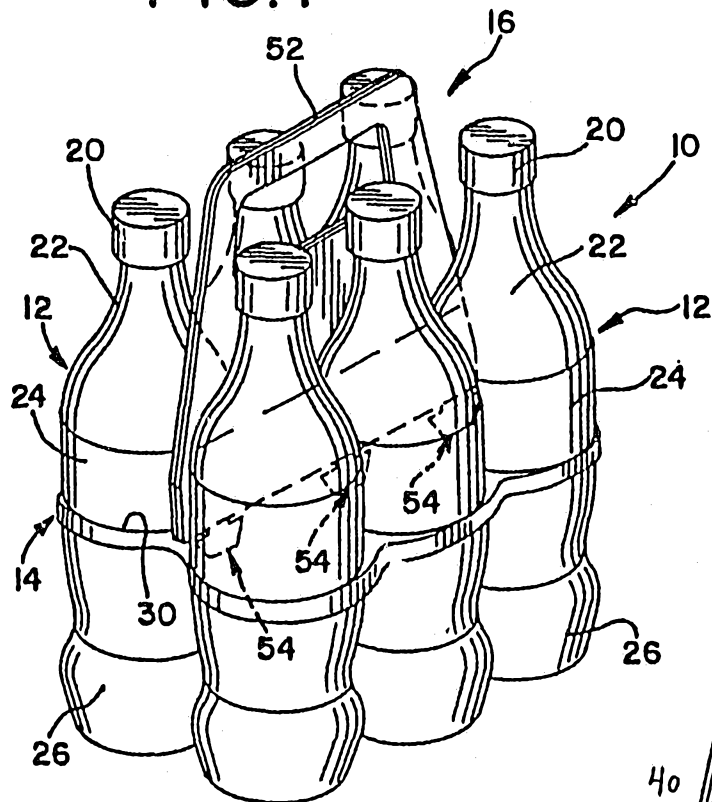


FIG. 2

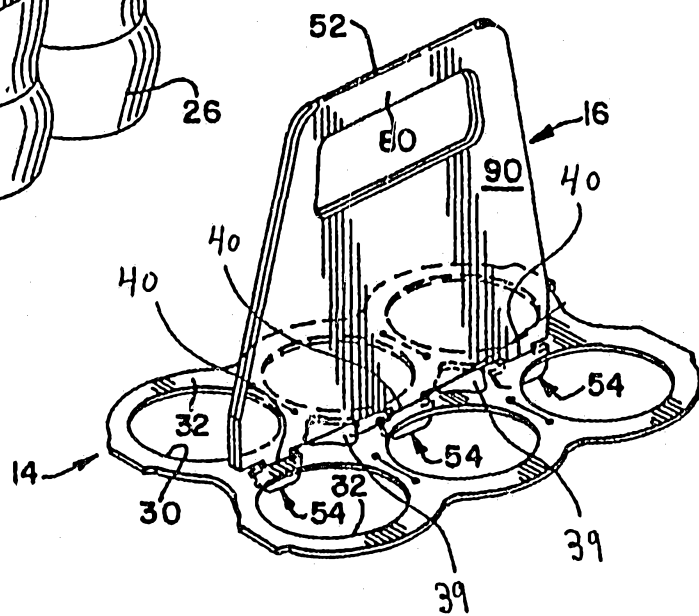


FIG. 4

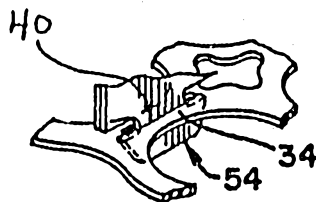


FIG. 3

