REMOVABLE SOAP CADDY FOR WATER COOLER

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ABSTRACT
The present invention provides a soap caddy removable, attachable to a water cooler having a mounting bracket. The soap caddy includes a body, with the body defining a mating structure. The mating structure may include two projecting portions extending from the body, where the two projecting portions may each include an end cap extending from the projecting portion at a substantially perpendicular angle. In addition, the body provides a base extending from the planar body, and the base may define an aperture. The soap caddy can further include at securing element extending from the body.
REMOVABLE SOAP CADDY FOR WATER COOLER

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] n/a

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] n/a

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The present invention relates to an attachment apparatus for a fluid container.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] There are often situations when someone would like to wash their hands. Outdoor enthusiasts may find themselves in remote locations and would like to wash-up after a day of activities. Agricultural workers may want to wash-up after a day’s work. At sporting events, athletes may want to wash-up after a competition. While there are water-less hand sanitizers and such available, there’s really no substitute for having an available water supply and hand soap for washing purposes.

[0005] Typically, water reservoirs are provided in the form of large drums, jugs, or coolers, and may be provided where there is no access to a flowing water supply. For example, large water jugs are commonplace at construction sites, in agricultural fields, at sporting events, etc. Such water jugs may be mounted to the side of a truck or other type of motor vehicle, and transported to and from wherever needed.

[0006] However, these water supplies often have a single chamber for water, and lack the ability to house or include a portion where cleansing products, such as liquid soap or detergent, may be stored and dispensed. Furthermore, even if a water jug were secured to a vehicle or otherwise, any soap container would likely be loosely placed in the vehicle. As such, a soap container may be lost, damaged, or begin to leak as it is moved about. Moreover, the soap container may be neglected from use, whereby water alone is used to wash up, resulting in unsanitary conditions.

[0007] It would be desirable to provide a soap caddy which could be removably attached to an existing water cooler, allowing a soap container to be secured to the water cooler and easily dispensed without the risk of losing or damaging the soap container when the water cooler is transported from place to place.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention advantageously provides a soap caddy which can be removably attached to an existing water cooler, allowing a soap container to be secured to the water cooler and easily dispensed without the risk of losing or damaging the soap container when the water cooler is transported from place to place. In an exemplary embodiment, the soap caddy includes a body defining a mating structure. The mating structure may define two projecting portions extending at an angle from the body, and the two projecting portions may each include an end cap extending from the projecting portion at a substantially perpendicular angle. The mating structure is suitable for slideably engaging a mounting bracket on a water cooler.

[0009] In addition, the body of the soap caddy can define a base extending from the body, thereby providing a surface for receiving a soap container, and the base may further define an aperture. Moreover, the soap caddy can provide a securing element in the form of securing arms coupled to the planar body, as well as a knob coupled to the body or securing arms, which can be used to hang additional items from the soap caddy.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] A more complete understanding of the present invention, and the attendant advantages and features thereof, will be more readily understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

[0011] FIG. 1 shows a water cooler known in the prior art;

[0012] FIG. 2 illustrates a front perspective view of an embodiment of a soap caddy in accordance with the present invention;

[0013] FIG. 3 shows a rear perspective view of an embodiment of a soap caddy in accordance with the present invention;

[0014] FIG. 4 shows a front perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a soap caddy in accordance with the present invention; and

[0015] FIG. 5 shows a rear perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a soap caddy in accordance with the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 6 illustrates an exemplary use of a soap caddy in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0017] The present invention advantageously provides a removable soap caddy for a water cooler. As shown in FIG. 1, a water cooler 10 is generally known in the prior art and typically includes a large container having a reservoir for housing water or other fluid. The water cooler 10 includes a removable lid 12 for filling the cooler, as well as a spigot or valve 14 for dispensing the contents of the water cooler 10. In addition, the water cooler 10 may contain a mounting bracket 16 on a side surface of the cooler. The mounting bracket 16 may typically be provided for supporting the attachment of an accompanying device, most often being a cup holder and/or a cup dispenser (not shown). A conventional mounting bracket 16 includes two non-parallel, protruding surfaces 18, 18' converging at an angle toward each other, with the spacing between the protruding surfaces 18, 18' being largest at a top end of the bracket, and a smaller spacing at a lower end of the bracket. The mounting bracket 16 thus forms a converging track which can slideably receive an accompanying device.

[0018] Now referring to FIGS. 2 and 3, an embodiment of the present invention provides a soap caddy 20 including a body 22 that defines a mating structure 24 adapted to be received by the mounting bracket 16 of the water cooler 10. The soap caddy 20 is slideably engageable with the mount-
ing bracket 16 through the use of the mating structure 24, and provides support and the ability to secure the soap caddy 20 to the water cooler 10. In one embodiment, the mating structure 24 includes two projecting portions 26, 26' positionable into the tracks formed by the protruding surfaces 18, 18' of the mounting bracket 16. The projecting portions 26, 26' may be oriented at a converging angle as to substantially match the angular orientation of the mounting bracket 16 in order to provide a secure fit between the mating structure 24 and the mounting bracket 16. Although shown as two projecting portions 26, 26', the mating structure 24 can have numerous suitable shapes and orientations, including a singular wedge-shaped body, a square shaped body, or the like, which can also provide for the sliding engagement of the soap caddy 20 to the water cooler 10. In addition, the body 22 may include one or more mounting apertures 27 which allow the soap caddy to be more securely fastened or mounted to a surface by nails, screws, or the like. As such, in addition to the ability to being coupled to a water cooler, the soap caddy could further be mounted on virtually any surface.

[0019] In addition, the mating structure 24 can include components to secure the mating structure 24 to the mounting bracket 16. Although the converging angles of the mounting bracket 16 and mating structure 24 may provide sufficient friction to prevent the mating structure 24 from passing completely through the mounting bracket 16, the projecting portions 26, 26' may include end caps 28, 28' affixed substantially perpendicular to the projecting portions 26, 26' as to extend outward from an end of the projecting portions 26, 26'. The end caps 28, 28' prevent the soap caddy 20 from passing completely through the mounting bracket 16, instead providing a surface that can be supported by the mounting bracket 16 in a stationary position. As a result, the mating structure 24 of the soap caddy 20 may be slideably positioned along the protruding surfaces 18, 18' of the mounting bracket 16 of the water cooler 10 to a position where the end caps 28, 28' of the soap caddy 20 abut the protruding surfaces 18, 18' of the mounting bracket 16. At this position, the soap caddy 20 is removable secured to the mounting bracket 16, and thus, the water cooler 10.

[0020] The soap caddy 20 also provides a surface to support a soap container. Such a support element may include a flat surface having a lip to minimize movement of a soap container, a concave bowl-like surface adapted to receive and hold a soap container, a bar of soap, or the like. Further, in one embodiment, the support element is in the form of a base 30 having a lip 31, where the base 30 extends from the body 22 of the soap caddy 20 to form a substantially horizontal surface capable of supporting a soap container. The support base 30 may further include a dispensing aperture 32, thereby allowing a soap container to be inverted, with a portion of a soap container extending through the dispensing aperture 32. With a soap container being inverted and positioned in the soap caddy 20, the soap in the soap container is easily dispensed and is not hindered by being affixed to the water cooler 10. In addition, if the base 30 is used to support a bar of soap, the dispensing aperture can allow excess fluid on the soap to drain, helping to keep the bar of soap dry when not in use.

[0021] In addition, the soap caddy 20 can include securing elements which further secure a soap container to the soap caddy 20 as to prevent the soap container from moving around, falling out of the soap caddy 20, etc. In one embodiment, the securing element includes two flexible arms 34, 34' which can wrap around a portion of the soap container in order to further secure the soap container to the soap caddy 20, and thus the water cooler 10. The securing arms 34, 34' project from the body 22 of the soap caddy 20, and may be removably attachable to each other through the use of an attachment means 35, which may include Velcro®, adhesive, hooks, or the like. In addition, the securing element may include a snap-lock mechanism, a plurality of straps, a contoured tab extending across a portion of the soap container, or other known retention mechanisms.

[0022] The soap caddy 20 also may provide for the attachment and support of additional items, such as a towel, a chuck for keeping the spigot of the water cooler 10 open, or a scrub brush. In one embodiment, a knob 36 is provided affixed to a portion of the soap caddy 20, allowing an attachment point for additional items. Furthermore, an attachment aperture 38 may be included on the body 22 of the soap caddy 20 for hanging a towel, brush, etc.

[0023] Now referring to FIGS. 4 and 5, the present invention provides a soap caddy 42 having a mating structure 44 generally defining a protrusion on a back surface of the soap caddy. The mating structure 44 extends out of the body of the soap caddy, wherein a top portion 46 of the mating structure has a length longer than that of a bottom portion 48 of the mating structure as to form a generally trapezoidal shape. As such, the soap caddy can be positioned in a mounting bracket of a water cooler and securely held in place due to the complementary shape of the mating structure. As described above, the soap caddy can further include mounting apertures 50, an attachment aperture 52, and a securing element 54 in order to hold a soap container or the like.

[0024] Now referring to FIG. 6, in an exemplary use, the soap caddy 20 is removably attached to the mounting bracket 16 of the water cooler 10. A soap container 40 is positioned on the base 30 of the soap caddy 20, either upright or inverted, and is secured in place by the securing element, here being the flexible arms 34, 34'. As such, the soap container is easily accessible and may be transported with the water cooler 10 without any risk of loss or damage to the soap container. The soap caddy 20, when combined with a water cooler 10 and soap container, provide an easily accessible, secure, and portable wash station.

[0025] While many materials are available and suitable for the construction of the soap caddy 20, in an exemplary embodiment, the soap caddy 20 is formed from a single piece of material or is molded as a singular piece from an appropriate plastic as to negate any required assembly or the possibility of losing parts or components of the soap caddy 20.

[0026] It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that the present invention is not limited to what has been particularly shown and described herein above. In addition, unless mention was made above to the contrary, it should be noted that all of the accompanying drawings are not to scale. A variety of modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teachings without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention, which is limited only by the following claims.
What is claimed is:

1. A soap caddy removeably attachable to a water cooler having a mounting bracket, wherein the mounting bracket defines two protruding surfaces angularly oriented towards each other, the soap caddy comprising:
   a body defining a mating structure, wherein the mating structure is slidable engageable with the mounting bracket; and
   a base extending from the body.

2. The soap caddy according to claim 1, further comprising a securing element coupled to the body.

3. The soap caddy according to claim 2, wherein the securing element includes a flexible arm.

4. The soap caddy according to claim 2, wherein the securing element includes a pair of flexible arms, wherein the pair of flexible arms are engageable with each other.

5. The soap caddy according to claim 1, further comprising a securing element coupled to the base.

6. The soap caddy according to claim 5, wherein the securing element includes a flexible arm.

7. The soap caddy according to claim 1, wherein the base includes an aperture.

8. The soap caddy according to claim 1, wherein the base includes a lip.

9. The soap caddy according to claim 1, further comprising a knob coupled to the body.

10. The soap caddy according to claim 1, wherein the mating structure defines two projecting portions extending from the body.

11. The soap caddy according to claim 10, wherein the two projecting portions are angularly oriented substantially similar to the angular orientation of the two protruding surfaces of the mounting bracket.

12. The soap caddy according to claim 10, wherein the two projecting portions each include an end cap extending from the projecting portion at a substantially perpendicular angle.

13. The soap caddy according to claim 1, wherein the mating structure defines a singular protrusion extending from the body.

14. The soap caddy according to claim 13, wherein the singular protrusion defines an upper portion and a lower portion, the upper portion having a length larger than that of the lower portion.

15. The soap caddy according to claim 13, wherein the singular protrusion has a substantially trapezoidal shape.

16. The soap caddy according to claim 1, further comprising at least one mounting aperture.

17. A soap caddy removeably attachable to a water cooler having a mounting bracket, wherein the mounting bracket defines two protruding surfaces converging at an angle towards each other, the soap caddy comprising:
   a body defining a mating structure slidable engageable with the mounting bracket, the mating structure including two projecting portions extending from the body, wherein the two projecting portions each include an end cap extending from the projecting portion at a substantially perpendicular angle;
   a base extending from the body, the base defining an aperture and a lip; and
   a pair of flexible arms, wherein the flexible arms are engageable with each other.

18. The soap caddy according to claim 13, further comprising a knob coupled to one of the pair of flexible arms.

19. The soap caddy according to claim 13, wherein the two projecting portions are angularly oriented substantially similar to the angular orientation of the two protruding surfaces of the mounting bracket.

20. A soap caddy removeably attachable to a water cooler having a mounting bracket, wherein the mounting bracket defines two protruding surfaces converging at an angle towards each other, the soap caddy comprising:
   a body defining a mating structure slidable engageable with the mounting bracket, the mating structure defining a singular protrusion extending from the body, wherein the singular protrusion has an upper portion and a lower portion, the upper portion having a length greater than the lower portion, wherein the body further defines at least one mounting aperture;
   a base extending from the body, the base defining an aperture and a lip; and
   a securing element coupled to the body.

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