A refuse compactor drawer having interchangeable front panel means permitting a customized installation. Different front panel elements for use therein include wraparound panels and flat panel inserts bordered by a picture frame type edging means. The different panel structures are replaceable by the user as with common household tools to permit a customized installation. The drawer includes a front mounting panel and means for mounting the different decorative panel configurations selectively thereto.

15 Claims, 8 Drawing Figures
FRONT PANEL CONSTRUCTION FOR REFUSE COMPACTOR DRAWER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention
This invention relates to receptacles and in particular to a front construction for providing interchangeable decorative front panel mountings on receptacles such as drawers.

2. Description of the Prior Art
In the U.S. Pat. to Barnard et al. No. 3,294,461 for a Door Construction, owned by the assignee hereof, an improved door construction permitting the user to substitute different decorative surface panels is disclosed. In this prior construction, improved fastener means are provided for holding the trim about the door wherein the fasteners are hidden from view. The door construction permits utilization of different flat panels in the slot means defining the frame of the door construction.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION
The present invention comprehends an improved front construction for a receptacle, such as a drawer, permitting the selective mounting therein of any one of a plurality of different decorative panel elements, including a one-piece wraparound panel, and flat panels received in a picture frame type edge means. The front construction includes a removable handle which cooperates with the panel mounting means for retaining the interchangeable panels in the front construction.

The front construction may also include a toe plate element cooperating with the panel mounting means for ready removable mounting of the toe plate therein.

More specifically, the invention comprehends the provision of such a front construction in a receptacle, such as a refuse compactor drawer, including a vertical front mounting panel fixedly carried on the receptacle and having turned edge portions each defining a forwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion and a forwardly extending bottom edge portion, and a decorative panel having turned edges each defining a rearwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion, and securing means removably securing the decorative panel to the mounting panel with the turned edges embracing the mounting panel turned edge portions with the decorative panel forwardly overlying the mounting panel.

Further more specifically, the decorative panel and mounting means may comprise a pair of trim strips extending one each vertically along the mounting panel edge portions, each trim strip defining a side portion facially abutting the adjacent mounting panel edge side portion and a turned front distal portion spaced forwardly of the adjacent mounting panel edge distal portion to define therebetween a slot, a finish panel extending across the front of the mounting panel and having side edges received in the slots, retaining means removably securing the trim strips to the mounting panel edge portions, a picture frame trim having a bottom portion embracing the mounting panel bottom edge portion, and side portions embracing the mounting panel edge portions and trim strips secured thereto, and securing means for securing the picture frame trim to the mounting panel.

The drawer panel construction of the present invention is extremely simple and economical of manufacture while yet providing highly desirable facility in the mounting of decorative panels thereon.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING
Other features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawing wherein:
FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an appliance, such as a refuse compactor, having a drawer type container provided with a front panel construction embodying the invention;
FIG. 2 is an exploded perspective view illustrating one form of the panel construction;
FIG. 3 is a fragmentary front elevation thereof;
FIG. 4 is a fragmentary enlarged vertical section taken substantially along the line 4—4 of FIG. 3;
FIG. 5 is a fragmentary enlarged horizontal section taken substantially along the line 5—5 of FIG. 3;
FIG. 6 is a fragmentary exploded perspective view of another form of front panel construction embodying the invention;
FIG. 7 is a fragmentary enlarged vertical section similar to that of FIG. 4 but of the modified form of panel construction shown in FIG. 6;
and
FIG. 8 is a fragmentary enlarged horizontal section similar to that of FIG. 5 but of the modified form of panel construction shown in FIG. 6.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS
In the exemplary embodiment of the invention as disclosed in the drawing, an appliance, such as a refuse compactor, generally designated 10 having a drawer receptacle generally designated 11 is provided with a front panel construction generally designated 12 arranged to permit the selective use of different decorative panels such as a slip-in flat panel 13, as shown in FIGS. 1–5, and a wraparound type panel 113, as shown in FIGS. 6–8.

As shown in FIGS. 2 and 4, the receptacle 11 may include a front mounting panel 14 having side edges 15 and 16 defining turned flanges 17 and 18, respectively, spaced forwardly of the flat mid-portion 19 of the mounting panel. The mounting panel further includes a bottom edge 20 turned to define a flange 21 spaced forwardly of the panel mid-portion 19 at the bottom thereof.

The panel construction 12 further includes in the form of FIGS. 1–5, a pair of trim strips 22 and 23 each having a side portion 24 and an inturmed flange 25. The side portions 24 are provided with suitable holes 26 aligned with corresponding holes 27 in the turned portions 15 and 16 of the mounting panel for receiving suitable screws 28 to secure the trim strips to the edge portions 15 and 16, as best seen in FIG. 5. Thus, the trim strip flanges 24 are spaced forwardly of the mounting panel flanges 17 and 18 to define therebeneath inwardly opening slots 29 adapted to receive the side edges 30 of the decorative panel 13.

Panel construction 12 further includes a frame trim generally designated 31 having side portions 32 and 33 and a bottom portion 34. Each of side portions 32 and 33 includes an inturmed rear edge 35 having a forwardly turned distal flange 36, and a turned front edge 37 having a rearwardly turned distal flange 38. Bottom portion 34 includes a forward turned edge 39 having a rearwardly turned distal flange 40.
As shown in FIG. 5, turned edges 35 and distal flange 36 embrace the rear edge 41 of the trim strip and front edge 37 and distal flange 38 embrace the turned flange 25 of the trim strip overlying the screws 28 and defining a decorative picture frame type molding edge means covering the edges of the panel 13. Similarly, the bottom edge portion 34 covers the bottom of the panel 13 to define a horizontal bottom portion of the picture frame molding.

As shown in FIG. 4, the bottom 42 of the panel 13 overlies the bottom edge 34 of the frame trim 31. A toe plate 43 may be mounted subjacent the front panel construction and may include a horizontal portion 44 sandwiched between the bottom edge 20 of the mounting panel 14 and the bottom portion 34 of the frame trim 31 for releasably mounting the toe plate on the drawer construction. As shown, the bottom edge 34 of the frame trim may be secured to the bottom edge of the mounting panel by suitable screws 45 extending upwardly through the frame trim bottom edge 34, the toe plate portion 44, and the mounting panel edge portion 20 (FIG. 4). The toe plate may include an upwardly projecting rear portion 46 abutting the rear surface of the lower end of the mounting panel 14 to provide improved rigidity to the toe plate.

The top of the door construction 12 comprises a handle 47 which may include an upper gripping portion 48, a horizontal cover portion 49, a forward depending flange 50, a middle depending flange 51, and a rear depending flange 52. The handle is secured to the upper end 53 of the mounting panel mid-portion 19 having a plurality of holes 54 therein by means of screws 55 extended through holes 54 and threaded through rear flange 52. As seen in FIG. 4, the front flange 50 is disposed in the plane of the turned edge 37, 38 of the frame trim 31. The cover portion 49 effectively covers the upper end of portions 15-18 of the front mounting panel 14, the trim strips 22 and 23, and the side portions 32 and 33 of frame trim 31 to complete the peripheral enclosure of the panel 13.

As indicated briefly above, the front panel construction 12 is further arranged to permit the use of a wrap-around type panel 113, as shown in FIGS. 6-8. Thus, a suitable wraparound panel 113, which may be formed of sheet metal or the like, may include rearwardly turned side portions 56 and 57 having distal turned flanges 58 and 59, respectively, spaced rearwardly of the front flat panel portion 60. The panel 14 may further include a rearwardly turned bottom portion 61 provided with suitable holes 62 for passing screws 45 for securing the portion 44 of the toe plate 43. The panel portion 60 may further carry a rearwardly turned flange 63 at the upper end which engages the depending flange 51 of handle 47 in the assembled relationship of the door construction, as shown in FIG. 7. As further shown in FIG. 7, the depending flange 50 of the handle 47 overlies the upper portion of front panel 113 to cooperate with flange 51 in retaining the upper portion of the panel security therewith. The lower end of the panel is effectively secured in the door construction by the screws 45 threaded to the bottom edge 20 of the front mounting panel 14.

Handle 47 effectively closes the top of the panel 113 to complete the mounting of the panel in the door construction. The handle is secured to the mounting panel 14 by the screws 55. As shown in FIG. 8, when the wraparound panel 113 is utilized, screws 28 are not utilized. In lieu thereof, screws 64 may be passed through suitable openings 65 in the flanges 58 and 59 to be threaded to suitable openings 66 in the mounting panel 14 to secure the panel 113 to the mounting panel 14 along the side edges thereof. Screws 45, 55 and 64 are effectively hidden so that the wraparound panel 113 presents an unbroken, finished appearance at the front of the drawer.

Installation of the different panels, as discussed above, may be readily effected by the user as by use of conventional household tools. Thus, to substitute a different panel 13, the user need merely open the drawer 11, and by using a conventional screwdriver, he may then remove the screws 55 whereupon the handle 47 may be removed from the assembly. Removal of handle 47 permits sliding withdrawal of the panel edge portions 30 in the side slots 29. The new panel may then be slid into place whereupon the handle 47 may be re-mounted with screws 55 to secure the new panel in position, as shown in FIG. 4.

Where the replacement panel comprises a wrap-around panel 60, it may be installed by removing the drawer 11 from the apparatus 10 and turning it upside down. By using a conventional screwdriver, the user may then remove the screws 45 whereupon the frame trim 31 may be slid upwardly to remove it from the assembly. The trim strip screws 28 may then be removed to remove them from the assembly. The panel 60 may then be installed by sliding the panel downwardly onto the side edges 15 and 16 of the mounting panel 14 with the wraparound panel being secured to the mounting panel by the screws 64 cooperating with the holes 66 as discussed above. The toe plate 43 is reinstalled by means of screws 45 as shown in FIG. 7 to complete the installation of the panel 60.

Thus, the present invention permits interchangeably mounting different types of panels to the receptacle front by facilitated means permitting the user to effect such changing with common household tools, such as a screwdriver. The front construction includes a mounting panel portion mounted integrally with the drawer and arranged to permit the facilitated installation of the outer decorative panel means thereon. The front construction also permits facilitated installation and removal of the toe plate and the overlying handle. The handle further defines means for closing the top of the front construction with any of the different panel elements used therein. The handle further defines means for supporting the upper end of the decorative panel. The trim strips provide means for slidable mounting the edges of the flat panel 13 and adapt the drawer construction for use with the decorative picture frame means 31. The panels 13 may be formed of any desirable material, such as plastics, steel, veneers, fabric, paper, or plastic covered sheet, etc.

The foregoing disclosure of specific embodiments is illustrative of the broad inventive concepts comprehended by the invention.

Having described the invention, the embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. In a receptacle, a front construction comprising: a vertical front mounting panel fixedly carried on the receptacle and defining a U-shaped edge structure having turned edge portions each defining a forwardly extending side portion and a returned distal flange portion, and a forwardly extending bottom edge portion; a pair
of trim strips extending one each vertically along said mounting panel edge portion, each said trim strip defining a side portion facially abutting the adjacent said mounting panel edge side portion and a turned front distal portion spaced forwardly of the adjacent said mounting panel edge distal portion to define therebetween a slot; a finish panel extending across the front of said mounting panel and having side edges received in said slots; retaining means removably securing said trim strips to said mounting panel edge portions; a U-shaped frame trim having a bottom portion embracing said mounting panel bottom edge portion, and side portions embracing said mounting panel edge portions and trim strips secured thereto; and securing means for securing said frame trim to said mounting panel.

2. The receptacle front construction of claim 1 wherein said securing means secures said bottom portion of the frame trim to said mounting panel bottom edge portion.

3. The receptacle front construction of claim 1 wherein said frame trim side portions define channels slidably receiving said trim strips.

4. The receptacle front construction of claim 1 wherein said frame trim side portions cover said retaining means.

5. The receptacle front construction of claim 1 wherein said retaining means comprises a plurality of screws, and said mounting panel side portions define holes into which said screws are threaded.

6. The receptacle front construction of claim 1 further including a handle structure, and means removably securing the handle structure to the top of said mounting panel, said handle structure overlying the upper ends of said trim strips and frame trim side portions.

7. In a receptacle, a front construction comprising: a vertical front mounting panel fixedly carried in the receptacle and defining a U-shaped edge structure having turned edge portions each defining a forwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion, and a forwardly extending bottom edge portion; a decorator panel having turned edges each defining a rearwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion; and securing means removably securing said decorator panel to said mounting panel with said turned edges embracing said mounting panel turned edge portions with said decorator panel forwardly overlying said mounting panel.

8. In a receptacle, a front construction comprising: a vertical front mounting panel fixedly carried in the receptacle and having turned edge portions each defining a forwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion, and a forwardly extending bottom edge portion; a decorator panel having turned edges each defining a rearwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion, and a rearwardly turned bottom edge underlying said mounting panel bottom edge portion; and securing means removably securing said decorator panel to said mounting panel with said turned edges embracing said mounting panel turned edge portions with said decorator panel forwardly overlying said mounting panel.

9. The receptacle front construction of claim 7 wherein said securing means comprises a plurality of screws extending forwardly through said decorator panel returned distal portion and threaded to said mounting panel.

10. In a receptacle, a front construction comprising: a vertical front mounting panel fixedly carried in the receptacle and having turned edge portions each defining a forwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion, and a forwardly extending bottom edge portion; a decorator panel having turned edges each defining a rearwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion, and a rearwardly turned bottom edge underlying said mounting panel bottom edge portion; and a depending toe plate having a turned flange secured between said mounting panel bottom edge portion and said decorator panel bottom edge; and securing means removably securing said decorator panel to said mounting panel with said turned edges embracing said mounting panel turned edge portions with said decorator panel forwardly overlying said mounting panel.

11. The receptacle front construction of claim 7 further including a handle structure, and means removably securing the handle structure to the top of said mounting panel, said handle structure overlying the upper ends of said panels.

12. In a receptacle, a front construction comprising: a vertical front mounting panel fixedly carried on the receptacle and having turned edge portions each defining a forwardly extending side portion and a returned distal portion and a forwardly extending bottom portion, said panel having a first plurality of screw threading holes spaced vertically adjacent said turned edge portions and a second plurality of screw threading holes spaced vertically in said forwardly extending side portions; and means cooperating selectively with said first and second plurality of holes for selectively mounting different constructed first and second decorative front panels to said mounting panel.

13. The receptacle front construction of claim 12 wherein said means for selectively mounting said panels includes means adapted to define with said mounting panel slot means for holding the edges of a flat decorative front panel.

14. The receptacle front construction of claim 12 wherein said mounting panel is formed of sheet metal and said means for selectively mounting said panels includes a plurality of screws selectively threaded to said sheet metal mounting panel.

15. The receptacle front construction of claim 12 wherein said mounting panel further includes a top portion provided with a plurality of horizontally spaced screw threading holes and said front construction further includes a horizontally elongated handle and screw means for threaded association with said holes for securing said handle to said mounting panel.

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