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3,368,518

COLLAPSIBLE FLEXIBLE AUTOMATIC SIGNAL DEVICE

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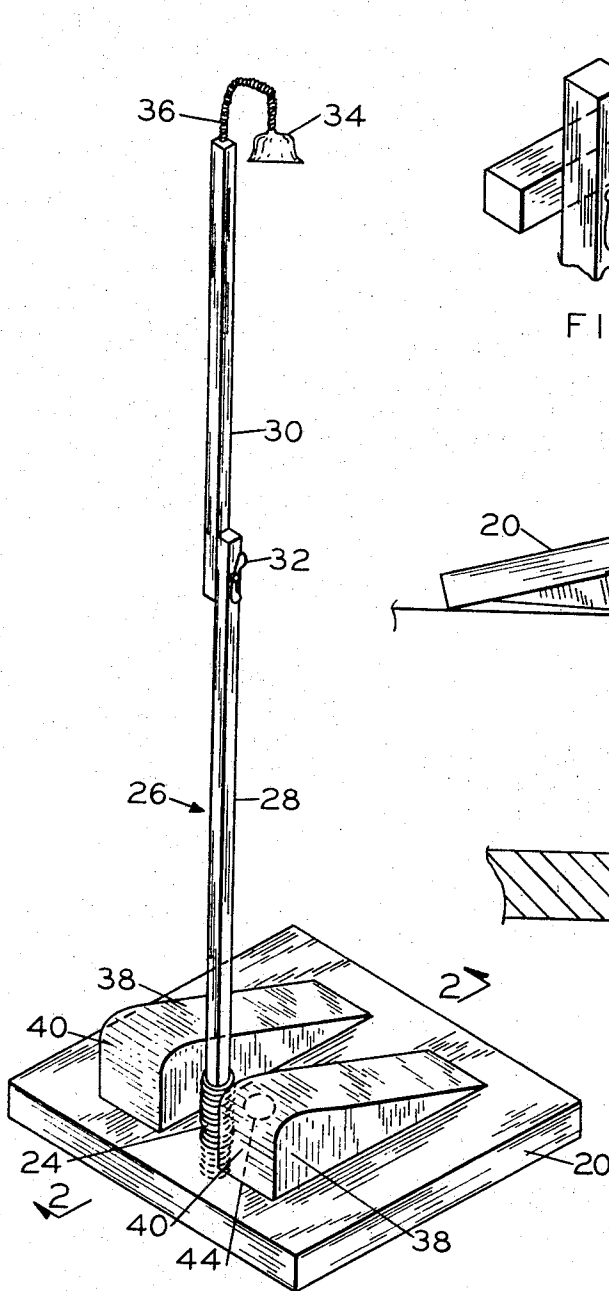


FIG. 1

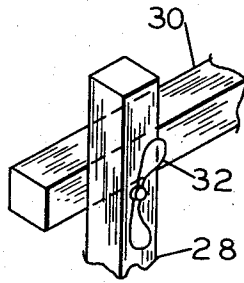


FIG. 3

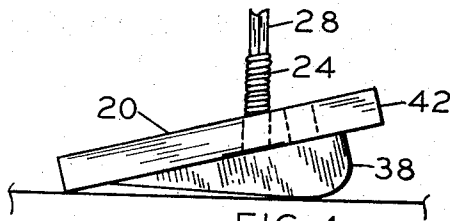


FIG. 4

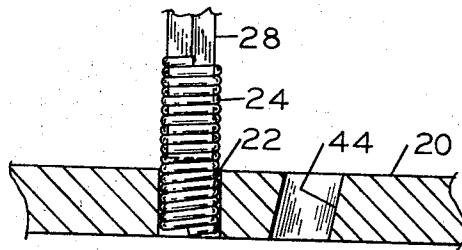


FIG. 2

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COLLAPSIBLE FLEXIBLE AUTOMATIC SIGNAL DEVICE

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1 Claim. (Cl. 116—63)

The present invention relates generally to signal apparatus and particularly to a novel improved signaling apparatus adapted for aiding persons learning to park a vehicle.

In general, the present invention comprises a base, a resiliently mounted rod extending upwardly from said base in a normal vertical position, a warning signal connected to said rod, and a pair of guard members to protect the rod from possible damage.

In most States, to obtain a license to drive a vehicle, the applicant must demonstrate his ability at parallel parking of the vehicle.

The usual practice consists of spacing two standards at a measured distance to represent the front of one parked vehicle and the rear of another. The distance between the standards represents the space allowed to park a third vehicle.

The person learning to drive generally has had little opportunity to practice this maneuver and as a result in attempting to park the vehicle, one or both of the standards are bumped out of position or completely knocked down. This necessitates returning the vehicle to the starting position, replacing the standards and trying the maneuver again.

The lack of practice for new drivers can be attributed to the general lack of standards as presently used by the law enforcement officers who supervise such tests. Even if available, very few persons if any, would use them because of the cumbersome, time-consuming procedure necessary with their use. This explains why such standards are not readily made available as a public service.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an apparatus of the type described which greatly increases the convenience of learning to park a vehicle.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an apparatus of the type described which emits a warning signal when the rod is disturbed from its normal vertical position, the rod being resiliently mounted to return to its normal position.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an apparatus of the type described wherein the novel construction provides adequate protection for the rod member as the unskilled novice driver may many times drive the vehicle into the standards.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an apparatus of the type described which provides alternate methods of mounting the rod in a protected position.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide an apparatus of the type described which is inexpensive to manufacture and fabricate.

Further objects and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following description, reference being had to the accompanying drawings wherein a preferred form of embodiment of the invention is clearly shown.

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a signaling apparatus in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view in section of a portion of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1, illustrating the base and the mounting means for the rod, the section being taken along line 2—2 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a portion of the ap-

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paratus shown in FIG. 1 illustrating the pivotably connected upper and lower portions of the rod member.

FIG. 4 is a side elevational view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1 illustrating an alternate method of mounting the rod.

Referring in retail to the drawings a signaling apparatus constructed in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 1 and includes a substantially flat base 20.

As best seen in FIGS. 1 and 2, base 20 may be provided with a recess or bore 22 which receives the lower portion of a resilient mounting means which may take the form of a coiled spring 24.

The upper portion of spring 24 extends upwardly from base 20 and receives the lower portion of a rod or staff indicated generally at 26.

Rod 26 is then resiliently mounted in a normal substantially vertical position and is biased to return to that position if disturbed.

Preferably, rod 26 comprises a lower portion 28 and an upper portion 30 of substantially equal length which are pivotably connected as at 32 by a bolt and wing nut.

This is desirable as rod 26 may then be folded or collapsed to approximately half its total length when not in use to facilitate handling and storage.

The upper portion 30 is provided with a warning device which may take the form of a bell 34 resiliently mounted on rod 26 by a spring 36. Spring 36 may be fastened to upper portion 30 in any conventional manner.

It is important to point out that other forms of warning devices may be used such as an electrically operated warning system without departing from the spirit of the present invention.

Referring specifically to FIG. 1, a pair of arcuately shaped guard members 38 are fixedly mounted to base 20 on opposite sides of recess 22 and are spaced such that the smallest standard automobile tire will not fit in between them. Further, the highest portion of each member 38 is disposed approximately opposite the position of rod 26 and spring 24 when rod 26 is disposed in the normal vertical position.

Guard members 38 serve to protect rod 26 and spring 24 from damage should the novice driver inadvertently run into the apparatus at such a speed as to overrun base 20. If this occurs, the apparatus as a whole will be forced backward or the vehicle tire may run up and over one or both guard members 38. However, the possibility of damage to rod 26 and spring 24 is substantially reduced.

It is important to point out that the vehicle bumper will contact rod 26 before the tire contacts base 20 or guard members 38.

And further, unless the speed is much greater than the normal speed encountered while attempting to park a vehicle, it is likely that the vehicle tire will at most climb only part of the way up the forward faces 40 of guard members 38. Therefore under the usual conditions, the driver would have sufficient notice from the sound of the bell 34 at the first contact with rod 26 to warn the driver to stop the vehicle. The danger of completely overrunning the base 20 however, is always present as a novice driver might become excited and press the accelerator instead of the brake which may cause the vehicle to attain sufficient speed to overrun guard members 38. Without guard members 38 the danger of damaging spring 34 and rod 26 would be great and the frequency of such damage would make the use of the apparatus approach an impractical limit with respect to cost and inconvenience.

Now referring to FIG. 4, an alternate method of mounting rod 26 is illustrated.

Base 20 is turned over such that guard members 38 touch the ground surface. Base 20 then is disposed in an inclined position.

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The higher leading edge 42 of base 20 would be disposed in a direction from which the vehicle to be parked would approach.

An angularly disposed recess or bore 44 is provided in base 20 at such an angle that spring 34 when mounted in the angular recess 44 would be disposed in a substantially vertical position, as best seen in FIG. 4.

Rod 26 is mounted in spring 24 in the identical manner as previously described.

Recess 44 is disposed such that an approaching vehicle's bumper would first strike rod 26 before striking leading edge 42 thereby giving the driver warning through bell 34 which is also attached in the same manner as previously described.

However, should the vehicle continue, the vehicle tire will contact leading edge 42 of base 20. The tendency of base 20, when so struck, would be to slide away from the vehicle due to the angle of inclination of base 20. This tendency would prevent the vehicle tire from running over rod 26 and spring 24 thereby offering protection to those members in this manner.

It is important to point out that the major source of danger to rod 26 and spring 24 would be encountered only when the vehicle tire comes into contact with base 20. The apparatus would normally be positioned intermediate the vehicle tires when the vehicle is parked in a properly aligned position. When so aligned the vehicle tires would not contact base 20 even if the vehicle is moved too far forward or backward. However, due to the inexperience of the drivers involved, the vehicle will often not be aligned properly and a tire may come into contact with base 20.

If the vehicle tires pass by base 20, resiliently mounted rod 26 is simply bent to almost a horizontal position as the vehicle passes over and then will return to the normal vertical position after the vehicle completely clears rod 26.

While the form of embodiment of the present invention

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as herein disclosed constitutes a preferred form, it is to be understood that other forms might be adopted, all coming within the scope of the claim which follows.

I claim:

1. A signaling device for use when learning to park a vehicle comprising, in combination, a base member, an opening formed therein adjacent one edge thereof, two guard members coextensive with a length of said base, each guard member being located on a respective side of said opening; resilient mounting means positioned in said opening; and a vertically extending rod supported by said resilient mounting means, each of said guard members including an inclined surface coextensive with the length of said base, the highest point of incline of said surface being located adjacent to and approximating the height of said resilient mounting means whereby a vehicle riding said inclined surface would depress said rod from the vertical without damaging said resilient mounting means and audible warning means supported by said rod.

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