June 15, 1965 R. J. NELSON 3,189,678

SAFETY SHIELD FOR ELECTRICAL OUTLET BOXES

Filed April 16, 1963

FIG. 1

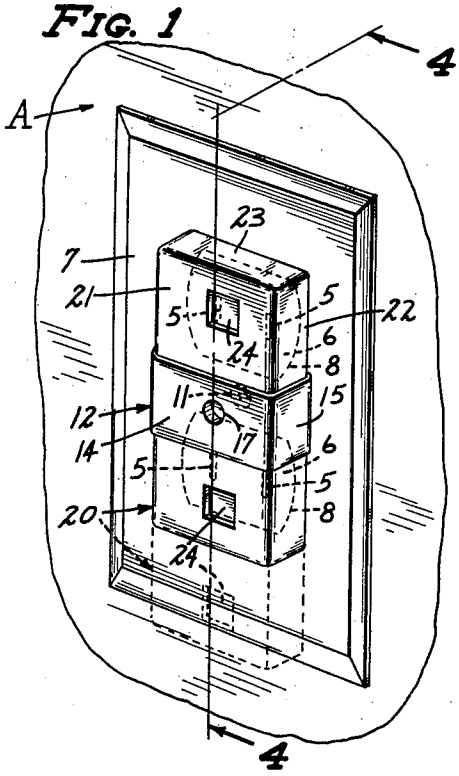



FIG. 2

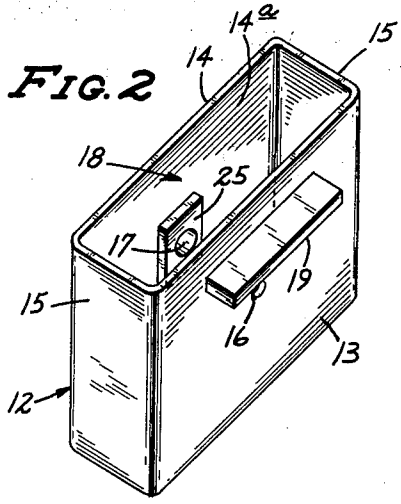



FIG. 3

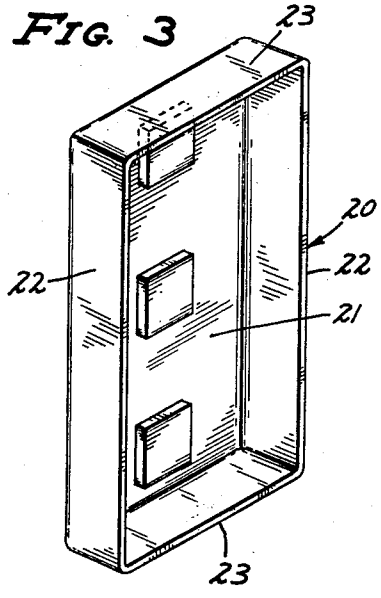
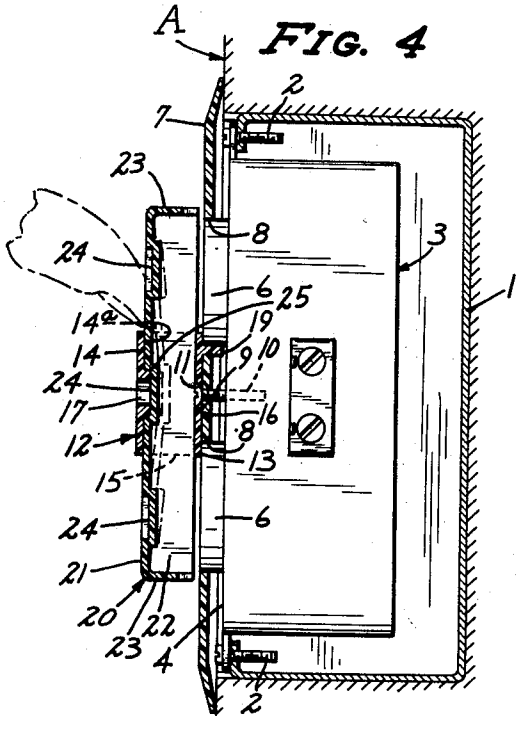



FIG. 4




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# SAFETY SHIELD FOR ELECTRICAL OUTLET BOXES

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My invention relates to protection devices for electrical outlet boxes and more particularly to protection devices for outlet boxes of the female type which are conventionally used in residences.

Still more specifically, my invention provides a device of the class described which is particularly adaptable to faceplate-equipped electrical wall receptacles having a pair of female type outlets therein; and the primary object of my invention is the provision of novel means whereby both or either one of said outlets may be selectively covered so as to make same inaccessible to tots and infants.

A further object of my invention is the provision of novel means whereby my novel protective device may be held in operative position by the same means which holds the faceplate to the receptacle.

A further object of my invention is the provision of a device of the class above described which is provided with a longitudinally slidable barrier-acting hood and means for automatically locking same in a selected position covering both or either one of the female receptacle which open through the faceplate.

A further object of my invention is the provision of a device of the class above described wherein novel means is provided whereby an adult, with knowledge of its construction, may readily move the hood to a desired selected position, or alternatively, remove same entirely from the faceplate when it is desired to use both of the outlets, but which means makes it practically impossible for an infant to move the hood from its barrier-forming position.

A still further and highly important object of my invention is the provision of a device of the class above described which is extremely inexpensive to produce, which has a minimum of working parts, and which is foolproof in its operation.

A still further object of my invention is the provision of a device of the class described which is not unattractive in appearance.

The above and still further important objects of my invention will become apparent from the following detailed specification, appended claims, and attached drawings.

Referring to the drawings wherein like characters indicate like parts throughout the several views:

FIG. 1 is a view in perspective of a portion of a wall having recessed therein a conventional faceplate-equipped electrical outlet box and showing my novel device mounted therein;

FIG. 2 is a view in perspective of a portion of the structure shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a view in perspective as seen from the rear of the barrier-acting hood of my invention; and

FIG. 4 is a view in vertical section as seen from the line 4—4 of FIG. 1.

Referring with greater particularity to the drawings, the numeral 1 indicates a conventional junction box which is recessed in the wall A. Detachably anchored in position by means of screws 2 is a conventional electrical outlet unit 3, the outer face 4 of which is substantially flush with the plane of the wall A. Electrical outlet unit 3 is formed to define laterally spaced female receptacles 5 which terminate at their outer limits in molded bosses 6.

In view of the fact that structure heretofore described



is entirely conventional in nature, no detailed explanation of its internal construction is thought to be necessary. It suffices to state that in a conventional character the junction box 1 and outlet unit 3 are covered by a faceplate 7 having laterally spaced openings 8 which have configurations similar to the bosses 6 and receive said bosses 6 to provide access to the receptacles 5 which open outwardly therethrough. Faceplate 7 is retained in position by a screw 9, the shank of which is identified by 10 and the head by 11.

My invention utilizes a generally rectangular band 12, the inner wall of which is identified by 13, the outer wall by 14 the opposite side walls by 15. Inner wall 13 is provided with an aperture opening 16, whereas the outer wall 14 is provided with an axially aligned opening 17. The diameter of the opening 17 is such as to permit free passage therethrough of not only the shank 10 of the screw 9, but also the head 11. However, the opening 16 is somewhat restricted in diameter and while permitting passage of the shank 10 of the screw 9 therethrough, prohibits passage therethrough of the head 11. In this maner the band 12 may be retained in position on the faceplate 7 by removing of the screw 9 and subsequently replacing it in a manner wherein the head 11 forces the inner wall 13 against the outer surface 7*a* of the faceplate 7.

As shown, the axis of the passage 18 defined by the band 12 intercepts the axis of the openings 8 in the faceplate 7. Securely retaining the band 12 in this operative position is a transversely enlongated lip 19 which is receivable in one of the openings 8 in the faceplate 7 in close proximity to the peripheral wall of said opening.

An elongated barrier-acting hood 20, preferably formed from such deformable resilient material as molded rubber or polyethylene, is snugly slidably received within the passage 18 defined by the band 12. The outer wall of the hood 20 is identified by 21, the opposite side walls by 22, and the end walls by 23. As shown, the hood 20 has a longitudinal dimension enabling it to overlie both the openings 8 in the faceplate 7; and one of the longitudinally extended walls, preferably and as shown the outer wall 21, is formed to define axially spaced outwardly opening recesses 24 which are axially aligned with and of a size to snugly receive an inwardly projecting lug 25 formed on the inner face 14*a* of the outer wall 14, about the opening 17 in said wall.

With the arrangement immediately above described, it is possible to slidably shift the barrier-acting hood 20 from the full line position of FIG. 1, wherein it completely covers both of the openings 8 in the faceplate 7, to a position wherein it covers either one of said openings 8, as indicated by dotted lines therein. Obviously, this is accomplished by merely deforming the top wall 21 by exerting inward pressure thereon so as to cause disengagement of the lug 25 from a given recess 24. After initial sliding movements, the lug 25 rides upon the inner surface of the wall 21, only to drop into the next recess 24 depending on the direction of movement imparted to the hood 20.

When neither of the female receptacles 5 is being used, the barrier-acting hood 20 is positioned as shown by full lines in FIG. 1. When only one of said female receptacles 5 is in use, the other thereof is covered, as indicated by dotted lines. In both cases, however, it will be noted that the top wall 21 of the hood 20 underlies the opening 17 in the outer wall 14 of the band 12 thereby making it possible to get a screwdriver into access with the head 11 of the screw 9. Of course, when it is desired to use both of the female receptacles 5, the hood 20 may be removed from the band 12. It may here be stated that because of the end walls 23 more distortion force is re-

quired in order to entirely remove the hood 20 from the band 12.

My invention has been thoroughly tested and found to be completely satisfactory for the accomplishment of the above objects, and while I have shown a preferred embodiment thereof, I wish it to be understood that same may be capable of modification without departure from the scope and spirit of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. In combination with an electrical outlet box having a pair of laterally spaced female receptacle elements therein,

(a) a covering face plate for said outlet box having openings therein providing access to said receptacle elements,

(b) a generally rectangular band having aligned central openings in its inner and outer walls permitting passage therethrough of the shank portion of a headed anchoring screw,

(c) the opening in said outer wall permitting passage therethrough of the head of said screw, whereas the opening in said inner wall prohibits such passage,

(d) cooperating means on said band and face plate member for retaining said band in a position on said face plate intermediate the openings therein wherein the projected axis of the passage defined by said band intersects the projected axes of the openings in said face plate member,

(e) a barrier-acting hood frictionally snugly slidably received within the passage defined by said band and having longitudinal dimensions enabling it to overlie both of the openings in said face plate,

(f) the outer wall of said hood being resilient and being formed to define spaced stop means along its longitudinal axis,

(g) the resilience of the outer wall of said hood normally biasing the stop means associated therewith toward a position to selectively engage cooperating stop means defined by said band upon sliding movements of said hood within said band,

(h) deformation of said outer wall causing temporary disengagement of said stop means whereby to permit sliding movements of said hood and selective engagement of said axially spaced stop means with the stop means defined by said band whereby to cover both of the openings in said face plate or, alternatively, to expose either one of siad openings.

2. The structure defined in claim 1 in which the means called for in portion (d) thereof comprises an inwardly projecting lip formed on the inner wall of said band and receivable within an aperture defined by said face plate.



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