

[54] **TELEVISION TIMER TO REGULATE TELEVISION VIEWING TIME**

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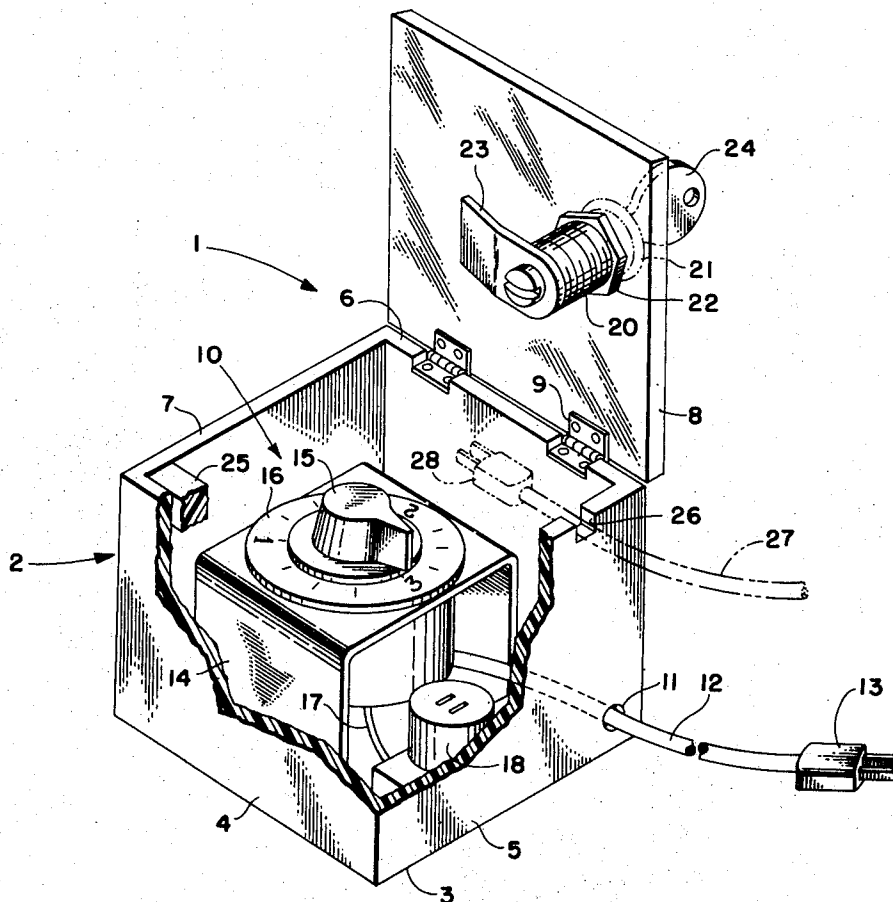
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[57]

ABSTRACT

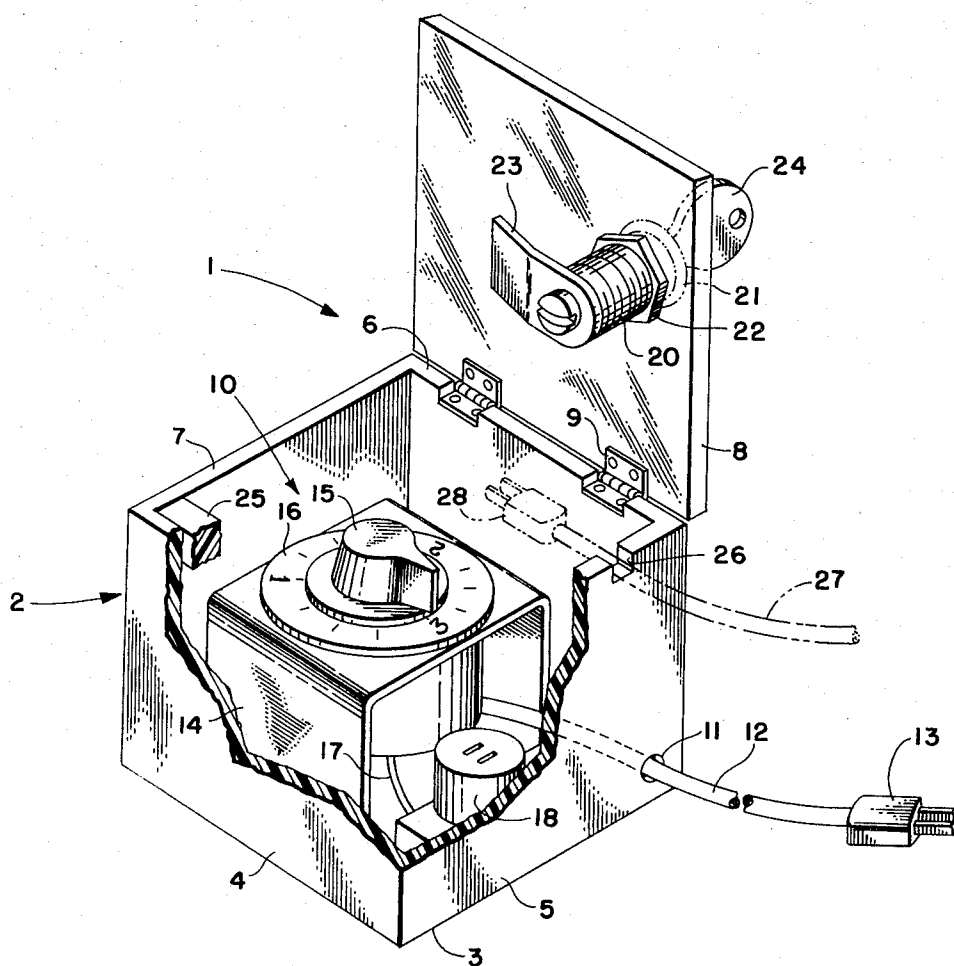
A timer and electrical receptacle controlled thereby are positioned within a container having a top which can be locked in a closed position to prevent access to the interior of the container. An electrical cord extends through an opening in the container and is adapted for connection to a source of electrical energy to provide power to the electrical receptacle as controlled by the timer, and a notch formed in one of the walls of the container is adapted for receipt of the power cord from an electrical appliance for connection in the electrical receptacle, the notch and the movable top of the container cooperating to prevent removal of the power cord.

10 Claims, 1 Drawing Figure



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3,833,779



TELEVISION TIMER TO REGULATE TELEVISION VIEWING TIME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to an apparatus for effectively 5
controlling operational time of an electrical appliance.

Electrical appliances, such as, for example, televi-
sions, radios, and the like, while often providing a
source of entertainment and educational information, 10
tend to become addictive, especially to children. Thus,
a television viewer may spend inordinate amounts of
time gazing at the television to the detriment of other
more important chores. Moreover, the television and
radio have become a source of many arguments be-
tween parents and children, the children desiring to ex-
tend their viewing or listening time while the parents
would prefer that the time be spent in more construc-
tive fashion, such as, for example, doing homework,
completing chores, or sleeping.

Applicant has provided in the instant invention an
apparatus for absolute control of operational time of an
electrical appliance, such as a television, radio or the
like, whereby the power cord of the appliance is con-
nected to an electrical receptacle located in a con- 25
tainer. An electrical cord leading from the container is
connected to a conventional electrical outlet, and a
timer within the container is adjusted to control the du-
ration for which the electrical receptacle is energized
from the electrical cord. The power cord of the electri- 30
cal appliance fits in a notch formed in one of the walls
of the container, and the top wall thereof may be
locked closed to prevent access to the interior of the
container while securing the power cord in the notch
to prevent removal thereof from the container. Thus, 35
once the power cord is plugged into the electrical re-
ceptacle and the timer is set to provide power to the
television for the duration of a particular television
show, then the top may be locked closed and the key
removed and retained, for example, by the parent. At 40
the expiration of the time set on the timer, the televi-
sion will be de-energized and cannot again be operated
until the container is opened and the timer re-set or the
power cord plug is removed and connected to a con-
ventional electrical outlet.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is a primary object of the invention to
provide for absolute control of operating time of an
electrical appliance.

Another object of the invention is to provide a timer
and locking mechanism therefor to provide absolute
control of operational time of an electrical apparatus.

A further object of the invention is to control abso-
lutely the operational time of an electrical appliance by
controlling the power supplied thereto.

Still another object of the invention is to control op-
erational time of an electrical appliance while prevent-
ing the adjustment of such time duration.

These and other objects and advantages of the pres-
ent invention will become more apparent as the follow-
ing description proceeds.

To the accomplishment of the foregoing and related
ends, the invention, then, comprises the features here-
inafter fully described, the following description and
the annexed drawing setting forth in detail a certain il-

lustrative embodiment of the invention, this being in-
dicative, however, of but one of the various ways in
which the principles of the invention may be employed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The sole FIGURE is an isometric view partially bro-
ken away of a timer, electrical receptacle and container
therefor in accordance with the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring now more specifically to the drawing, a
timer apparatus for absolute regulation of operating
time of an electrical appliance is shown generally at 1.
The apparatus includes a container 2 formed of metal,
wood, plastic, or the like having bottom, side- and top
walls 3 through 8 with the bottom and sidewalls being
integrally connected and the top wall being connected
by hinges 9 for closing the top opening 10 of the con- 20
tainer. If desired, the top wall 8 may be completely re-
movable from the rest of the container, and the con-
tainer may be colored or painted to blend readily into
the surrounding environment. An opening 11 formed in
the container sidewall 5 has an electrical cord 12 ex- 25
tending therethrough from the interior of the container
to the exterior thereof, and a conventional electrical
plug 13 is connected to the end of the electrical cord
for connection to a conventional electrical outlet for
receipt of electric energy, for example, from the power
company. The opening 11 is preferably of cross-section
or size suitable for passage of the electrical cord 12
therethrough while denying entry otherwise to the in- 30
terior of the container.

A timer 14 having a time setting mechanism 15 and
a dial 16 is positioned within the container 1. The timer
14 is connected by electrical leads 17 to a conventional
electrical receptacle 18 also located within the con-
tainer 1, and the timer is operative to provide an elec- 40
trical connection between the electrical cord 12 and
the electrical lead 17 to provide electricity to the elec-
trical receptacle 18. The timer 14 is a conventional de-
vice, such as, for example, a mechanical timer or an
electrically operated timer, and in the latter case the
timer may receive input power from the electrical cord
12. If desired, plural timers may be positioned within
the container 2 to provide a set and re-set operation for
energization of the electrical receptacle 18, whereby
the first timer would provide electrical power to the
electrical receptacle beginning at the time set thereon
and the second timer would turn off the power.

The top wall 8 of the container 2 is preferably trans-
parent to permit viewing the interior of the container
when in the closed position and includes a conventional
lock 20 secured therein by a flange 21 and lock nut 22
arrangement. The lock 20 includes a latch member 23
which is operated by key 24. The latch member 23 is
adapted for performing a locking or latching function
in cooperation with a latching bar 25 located interiorly
of the container adjacent the top of the sidewall 4. The
locking mechanism for the apparatus 1 is but one of a
plurality of such mechanisms that may be used for se-
curing the top of the container in closed position, and
the invention is not limited to the particular mechanism
shown and described above. For example, the lock may
be a combination type lock, or instead of the latching
bar 25, a groove may be formed in one of the sidewalls

of the container 2 for cooperating with the latch member 23 to secure the top wall 8 in closed position. Alternatively, the top wall may be removable and the locking mechanism would provide for rigidly fastening the top wall to the container. Moreover, the locking mechanism may be located within one of the side or bottom walls of the container and have a latch member adapted for coupling a latching bar or the like associated with the top wall.

A notch 26 is cut into the top of the side wall 5 and has an open end extending in the direction toward the top wall 8 of the container 2. The notch is preferably of a suitable diameter or cross-section for receiving a power cord 27, shown in phantom, from an electrical appliance, such as, for example, a television, radio or the like, which terminates in a conventional electrical plug 28 adapted for connection to the electrical receptacle 18. The top wall 8 of the container 2 cooperates with the notch 26 to prevent removal of the power cord 27 and electrical plug 28 from the container when the former is in closed position since the cross-section of the electrical plug is greater than that of the notch. In an alternative embodiment, the top wall of the container may be defined partly by a fixed wall portion and partly by a movable wall portion coupled thereto to permit access to the interior of the container. In such case, the notch would be cut in any wall that permits the notch to have an open end which may be closed by closure of the movable portion of the container wall.

The apparatus 1 is intended for absolute control of potential energization and operation time of an electrical appliance, such apparatus effectively cooperating with the on-off switch or similar device normally used in controlling operation of the electrical appliance. In operation of the apparatus 1, the electrical plug 13 is connected in a conventional electrical outlet to provide energy to the timer 14, if needed, as well as to the electrical receptacle 18 as controlled by the timer. The lock 20 is unlatched and the top wall 8 of the container 2 is opened to permit insertion of the electrical plug 28 into the electrical receptacle 18. The power cord 27 of the electrical apparatus is then located in the notch 26, and the time setting mechanism 15 of the timer 14 is adjusted to provide electrical energization of the electrical receptacle 18 and the electrical apparatus by the power cord connection as indicated on the dial 16. The top wall 8 of the container is then closed and locked, and the key 24 is removed, whereby the absolute control of potential operational time of the electrical appliance is determined by the duration for which the timer 14 provides a connection from the input electrical cord 12 to the electrical receptacle 18.

Since the electrical plug 28 connected to the power cord 27 of the electrical appliance is secured within the container 2 by virtue of its being too large for removal through the notch 26 when the top wall 8 of the container is closed, the electrical appliance cannot be re-energized for operation after the timer 14 has expired without unlocking and opening the container 2 to re-set the timer or to remove the power cord 27 and electrical plug 28 therefrom. Of course, in the event that plural timers are positioned within the container 2 for selectively energizing and de-energizing the electrical receptacle 18 for controlling operation of an electrical appliance, once the timers are set and the container locked, the electrical appliance is absolutely under the control of the timers for potential energization.

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

1. Apparatus for absolute control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle, comprising a container defined by top, bottom and side walls, one of said walls having at least a movable portion adapted for opening to provide access to the interior of said container, hinge means for movably securing said movable portion to said container, the other of said walls being integrally connected, a notch formed in an edge of a wall adjacent said movable portion, said notch having an open end located with respect to said movable portion to be closed thereby when the latter is in a closed position, means for locking said movable portion of said one of said walls in such closed position to prevent access to the interior of said container, an electrical receptacle positioned in the interior of said container, an electrical cord extending from the interior of said container to the exterior thereof, said electrical cord being adapted for connection to a source of electric energy, timer means located in said container for providing an electrical connection between said electrical cord and said electrical receptacle, the length and time of the duration of said electrical connection being adjustably controlled by setting of said timer means, whereby when said timer means is set for a duration of a specific length to occur at a specific time, the electrical cord from the container is coupled to a source of electric energy and the power cord of the electrical appliance is connected to said electrical receptacle in said container and prevented from removal by closure of the open end of said notch by said movable portion and operation of said means for locking, the electrical appliance then is potentially operable only for the duration which the timer provides a connection between said electrical cord and said electrical receptacle.

2. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 1, wherein said notch has a cross-section smaller than that of said electrical plug so as to prevent extraction thereof from said container when said removable portion is in closed position.

3. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 1, further comprising an opening formed in one of said walls of said container, and said electrical cord extending through said opening from the interior of said container to the exterior thereof.

4. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 1, further comprising plural timer means located in said container and connected for initiating a connection between said electrical receptacle and said power cord and for terminating said connection.

5. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 1,

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wherein said timer means comprises electrical timer means.

6. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 1, wherein said timer means comprises mechanical timer means.

7. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 1, wherein said movable portion comprises said top wall of said container.

8. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 7, wherein said means for locking comprises a key-

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operated lock having a latch member, said key-operated lock being located in said top wall and said latch member being positioned to cooperate with a latching means in said container for locking said top wall in closed position.

9. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 8, wherein said top wall comprises a transparent material to permit viewing the interior of said container when said top wall is in closed position.

10. Apparatus for control of potential operation time for an electrical appliance having an input power cord terminating in an electrical plug adapted for connection to an electrical receptacle as set forth in claim 1, wherein said movable portion is removable from said container to provide access to the interior thereof.

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