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(54) **Title:** ELECTROMECHANICAL DRIVE SYSTEM

(57) **Abstract:** An illustrative access control system includes a locking assembly operable in locked and unlocked states, and a drive assembly operable to actuate the locking assembly. The drive assembly includes an electromechanical actuator, and energy storage device, and a control system. The electromechanical actuator is operable, upon receiving power, to transition the locking assembly between the locked state and the unlocked state. The energy storage device is electrically coupled to the electromechanical actuator, and configured to store electrical power from the power supply when the drive assembly is coupled to the power supply. The control system is configured to couple the drive assembly to the power supply in response to a first condition, and to thereafter transmit energy only from the energy storage device to power the electromechanical actuator, based at least in part upon a level of energy stored in the energy storage device.



ELECTROMECHANICAL DRIVE SYSTEM

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention generally relates to electronic locks, and more particularly, but not exclusively, to electronic locks with rapid charging of an energy storage device.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Present approaches electrified locks suffer from a variety of drawbacks, limitations, disadvantages and problems including those respecting mode selection, power consumption, and others. For example, certain standards and certifications dictate that an electric locking system operate in a fail-secure mode. In the fail-secure mode, the lock must remain locked, or transition from an unlocked state to the locked state in the event of power failure. Certain consumers, however, prefer locking systems operable in a fail-safe mode. In the fail-safe mode, the lock must remain unlocked, or transition from the locked state to the unlocked state in the event of power failure.

[0003] Certain conventional systems provide fail-safe and/or fail-secure functionality by utilizing a solenoid including a plunger movable between locking and unlocking positions. When power is applied to the solenoid, the plunger extends, causing the system to change locking states. When power is removed, a spring returns the plunger to its original position, and the lock returns to its idle state.

[0004] When such conventional systems are operating in the fail-secure mode, the solenoid is normally not energized, and the plunger is spring-biased to a locking position. To unlock the lock, power is supplied to the solenoid for a predetermined amount of time, moving the plunger to an unlocking position against the force of the spring. Once the power is cut, the spring returns the plunger to the locking position. Because providing electricity to the solenoid unlocks the system, the fail-secure mode is occasionally referred to as an electric unlocking (EU) mode.

[0005] When such conventional systems are operating in the fail-safe mode, the solenoid is constantly energized to retain the plunger in a locking position. To unlock the lock, the power is removed from the solenoid for a predetermined amount of time, during which time a biasing

spring moves the plunger to an unlocking position. Because providing electricity to the solenoid locks the system, the fail-safe mode is occasionally referred to as an electric locking (EL) mode.

[0006] In addition to the relatively high cost of solenoids, the requirement that power be continuously applied to retain the plunger in the locking or unlocking position makes such conventional systems inefficient and costly to operate. There is a need for the unique and inventive locking apparatuses, systems and methods disclosed herein.

SUMMARY

[0007] An illustrative access control system includes a locking assembly operable in locked and unlocked states, and a drive assembly operable to actuate the locking assembly. The drive assembly includes an electromechanical actuator, and energy storage device, and a control system. The electromechanical actuator is operable, upon receiving power, to transition the locking assembly between the locked state and the unlocked state. The energy storage device is electrically coupled to the electromechanical actuator, and configured to store electrical power from the power supply when the drive assembly is coupled to the power supply. The control system is configured to couple the drive assembly to the power supply in response to a first condition, and to thereafter transmit energy only from the energy storage device to power the electromechanical actuator, based at least in part upon a level of energy stored in the energy storage device. Further embodiments, forms, features, aspects, benefits, and advantages of the present application shall become apparent from the description and figures provided herewith.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

- [0008] Fig. 1 is a schematic block diagram of an access control system according to an embodiment of the invention.
- [0009] Fig. 2 is a schematic flow chart of a process of operating an access control system.
- [0010] Fig. 3 depicts a mortise lock assembly according to an embodiment of the invention.
- [0011] Fig. 4 illustrates a push-bar lock assembly according to an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

[0012] For the purposes of promoting an understanding of the principles of the invention, reference will now be made to the embodiments illustrated in the drawings and specific language will be used to describe the same. It will nevertheless be understood that no limitation of the scope of the invention is thereby intended. Any alterations and further modifications in the described embodiments, and any further applications of the principles of the invention as described herein are contemplated as would normally occur to one skilled in the art to which the invention relates.

[0013] Fig. 1 is a block diagram depicting an exemplary access control system 100 configured to permit or deny access to a space such as a closet, room, or building. The system 100 is operable in an unlocked state wherein access to the space is permitted, and a locked state wherein access to the space is prevented. The system 100 includes a locking member 101 operable in a locking position wherein the system 100 is in the locked state, and an unlocking position wherein the system 100 is in the unlocked state. The system 100 also includes an electromechanical actuator or motor 102 coupled to the locking member 101 via a motor shaft 103. The motor 102 is operable to drive the motor shaft 103 to move the locking member 101 between the locking and unlocking positions. In the illustrated form, the motor shaft 103 is directly coupled to the locking member 101, although it is also contemplated that the motor shaft 103 may be connected to the locking member 101 via additional motion-translating members. Illustrative examples of the latter form of connection are described below with respect to Figs. 3 and 4.

[0014] The motor 102 is a reversible motor operable in a first mode and a second mode. In the first mode, the motor 102 drives the motor shaft 103 in a first direction, thereby urging the locking member 101 toward one of the locking and unlocking positions. In the second mode, the motor 102 drives the motor shaft 103 in a second direction, thereby urging the locking member 101 toward the other of the locking and unlocking positions. In the illustrated form, the motor 101 is a direct current (DC) rotary motor, and the first and second directions are rotational directions. In certain forms, the motor 102 may be a DC stepper motor operable to drive the motor shaft 103 in the first rotational direction when receiving DC power of a first polarity, and to drive the motor shaft 103 in the second rotational direction when receiving DC power of an opposite polarity. While the illustrated motor 102 is a rotary motor, other forms of

electromechanical actuators/drivers are contemplated, such as rack and pinion linear actuators, geared designs using chains or belts, linear motor actuators, or other types of motion control systems. Such alternatives may also be designed with or without stepping motors.

[0015] The system 100 receives electrical power from a power supply 104. In the illustrated embodiment, the power supply 104 is an alternating current (AC) power supply, although it is also contemplated that a DC power supply may be employed. The system 100 is in selective electrical communication with the power supply 104, for example via a switch 106. While the illustrated switch 106 is a single pole, double throw (SPDT) switch, other forms of switch are contemplated. For example, in certain forms, the switch 106 may include a transistor such as a metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect transistor (MOSFET). The switch 106 is operable in a connecting state wherein the system 100 is electrically coupled with the power supply 104, and a disconnecting state wherein the system 100 is not electrically coupled with the power supply 104. The switch 106 is configured to transition between the connecting and disconnecting states in response to a signal, for example from a user interface 108. The system 100 may further include a voltage sensor 107 configured to sense the voltage V_{107} of power being supplied to the system by the power supply 104.

[0016] The system 100 includes an energy storage device or capacitor 110 configured to selectively accumulate and discharge electrical energy, a controller 120, a motor driver 130 which selectively transmits power to the motor 102 in response to commands or signals from the controller 120, and a capacitor charging circuit 140 configured to provide power to the capacitor 110 from the power supply 104. The system 100 may further include a low-dropout (LDO) regulator 150 configured to provide power at a relatively constant voltage to the controller 120.

[0017] The energy storage device 110 is of the high-energy-density type, and may, for example, comprise an electric double-layer capacitor (EDLC). These types of capacitors are occasionally referred to as “super-capacitors” or “ultra-capacitors”.

[0018] The controller 120 receives data indicative of the supplied power voltage level V_{107} and data indicative of the capacitor voltage level V_{110} . The system 100 may include sensors configured to sense the supplied voltage V_{107} and the capacitor voltage V_{110} , and analogue-to-digital converters (ADCs) (not illustrated) may provide data indicative of the voltage levels V_{107} , V_{110} to the controller 120. As discussed in further detail below, the controller 120 compares the

voltage level data V_{107} , V_{110} to threshold values, and issues commands or signals to the motor driver 130 in response to the comparing.

[0019] In certain forms, the system 100 may be selectively operable in a fail-safe or electric locking (EL) mode and in a fail-secure or electric unlocking (EU) mode. To provide EL/EU selection, the controller 120 may include a selector (not illustrated) operable to select between the EL and EU modes. In certain embodiments, the selector may be, for example, of the type described in the commonly-owned United States Patent Application No. 14/189,476, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety. In other embodiments, EL/EU selection may be performed digitally, for example via a command sent to the controller 120.

[0020] The motor driver 130 receives commands or signals issued by the controller 120, and activates the motor 102 in response to the commands. The motor driver 130 is configured to operate the motor 102 in the first mode in response to a first command, to operate the motor 102 in the second mode in response to a second command, and may further be configured to not operate the motor 102 in response to a third command. For example, in response to an UNLOCK command, the motor driver 130 may supply power of a first polarity to the motor 102, thereby activating the motor 102 in the first mode, moving the motor shaft 103 in the first direction, and urging the locking member 101 from the locking position toward the unlocking position. In response to a LOCK command, the motor driver 130 may provide power of a second, opposite polarity, thereby activating the motor 102 in the second mode, moving the motor shaft 103 in the second direction, and urging the locking member 101 from the unlocking position toward the locking position. The motor driver 130 may prevent power from being supplied to the motor 102 in response to a WAIT command, or alternatively, if neither the UNLOCK nor the LOCK command/signal is being issued.

[0021] The exemplary capacitor charging circuit 140 includes a rectifier 142, a buck converter 144, and a current regulator 146. During operation, the rectifier 142 converts AC power from the power supply 104 to DC power, the buck converter 144 outputs DC power of a substantially constant voltage, and the current regulator 146 regulates the DC power to a substantially constant current. While operating conditions limit the current that can be drawn from the power supply 104, by conditioning the power received from the power supply 104, the output current used to charge the capacitor 110 can be much higher than the current drawn from the power supply 104.

[0022] By regulating both the current and voltage, power may be supplied to the capacitor 110 at an optimal, substantially constant wattage. This which maximizes the efficiency of the charging, and reduces the amount of time required to fully charge the capacitor 110. By way of non-limiting example, if 12V and 500mA is available from the power supply 104, there is 6W available from the power supply. The capacitor 110 may only be rated to 5V, but due to the power conditioning provided by the capacitor charging circuit 140, the capacitor 110 may be charged to 5V at 1.2A (or 6W).

[0023] The schematic flow diagram and related description which follows provides an illustrative embodiment of performing procedures of controlling an access control system such as that shown in Fig. 1. Operations illustrated are understood to be exemplary only, and operations may be combined or divided, and added or removed, as well as re-ordered in whole or part, unless stated explicitly to the contrary herein. Certain operations illustrated may be implemented by a computer executing a computer program product on a non-transient computer readable storage medium, where the computer program product comprises instructions causing the computer to execute one or more of the operations, or to issue commands to other devices to execute one or more of the operations.

[0024] With reference to Figs. 1 and 2, the exemplary process 200 begins with an operation 202, which includes authenticating a user credential such as an authentication code, keycard, key fob, or biometric credential. The operation 202 may be performed by the user interface 108, which may, for example, receive the credential via a data line, a radio signal, or a near-field communication method. When the credential is authenticated, the process 200 continues to an operation 204, which includes determining whether the system 100 is operating in the EU mode or the EL mode. If the system 100 is operating in the EU mode, the process 200 continues 204EU to an EU operation 206. If the system 100 is operating in the EL mode, the process 200 continues 204EL to an EL operation 208.

[0025] The EU operation 206 includes an EU power-on operation 210 during which the system 100 is set to the unlocked state, followed by an EU power-off operation 220 during which the system 100 is set to the locked state. The EU power-on operation 210 begins with an operation 212, which includes which includes connecting the power supply 104 to the system 100. The operation 212 may be performed, for example, by transitioning the switch 106 from the disconnecting state to the connecting state.

[0026] The EU power-on operation 210 then proceeds to an operation 213, which includes conditioning the power, for example with the capacitor charging circuit 140. When the power supply is an AC power supply, the operation 213 may include converting the AC power to DC power such as with the rectifier 142. The operation 213 may further include reducing the voltage of the power such as with the buck converter 144, and/or regulating the current of the power such that the power is of a constant wattage or constant amperage, such as with the current regulator 146.

[0027] The EU power-on operation 210 then proceeds to an operation 214 which includes charging the capacitor 110 with the conditioned power. The EU power-on operation 210 then proceeds to an operation 216, which includes determining whether the capacitor voltage V_{110} is greater than a threshold capacitor voltage V_{thresh} . If the capacitor voltage V_{110} does not exceed the threshold capacitor voltage V_{thresh} , the EU power-on operation 210 returns 216N to the operation 214 to continue charging the capacitor 110.

[0028] If the capacitor charge V_{110} does exceed the threshold capacitor voltage V_{thresh} , the EU power-on operation 210 continues 216Y to an operation 218, which includes unlocking the system 100. The operation 218 may include issuing, with the controller 120, the UNLOCK command or signal to the motor driver 130. In response to the UNLOCK command, the motor driver 130 provides power of a first polarity to the motor 102. As a result of receiving the first polarity power via the motor driver 130, the motor 102 is activated in the first mode. In the first mode of the motor 102, the motor shaft 103 urges the locking member 101 from the locking position toward the unlocking position, thereby transitioning the system 100 from the locked state to the unlocked state.

[0029] Once the unlock operation 218 is complete, the EU operation 206 proceeds to the EU power-off operation 220. The EU power-off operation 220 begins with an operation 222, which includes disconnecting the power supply 104 from the system 100, for example by transitioning the switch 106 from the connecting state to the disconnecting state.

[0030] The EU power-off operation 220 then proceeds to an operation 224, which includes locking the system 100 in response to the disconnection of power. The operation 224 may include sensing the supplied-power voltage V_{107} , comparing the supplied-power voltage V_{107} to a threshold supply voltage indicative of power failure, and determining a no-power condition when the supplied-power voltage V_{107} falls below the threshold supply voltage. The operation 224

may further include determining a power-good condition when the supplied-power voltage V_{107} is greater than or equal to the threshold supply voltage. The operation 224 may further include monitoring the amount of time that has elapsed since the unlocking operation 218, comparing the elapsed time to a threshold unlocking time, and determining a timing condition when the elapsed time exceeds the threshold unlocking time. The operation 224 may further include issuing, with the controller 120, a LOCK command to the motor driver 130 in response to one or more of the conditions. In certain forms, the LOCK command may be issued in response to the timing condition, and the no-power condition may be ignored. In other forms, the LOCK command may be issued in response to the earliest occurrence of the timing condition and the no-power condition.

[0031] In response to the LOCK command, the motor driver 130 draws power from the capacitor 110, and provides power of a second, opposite polarity to the motor 102. In the illustrated form, the motor driver 130 draws the power directly from the capacitor 110 with no intervening power conditioning, to eliminate losses that may be caused by certain types of regulation. It is also contemplated that additional power conditioning elements – such as a buck converter, a boost converter, or a buck/boost converter – may condition the power from the capacitor 110 prior to providing the power to the motor driver 130. As a result of receiving the second-polarity power via the motor driver 130, the motor 102 is activated in the second mode, and urges the locking member 101 from the unlocking position to the locking position. Once the locking member 101 is in the locking position, the system 100 is in the locked state, and the EU operation 206 is complete.

[0032] The EL operation 208 includes an EL power-off operation 230 during which the system 100 is set to the unlocked state, followed by an EL power-on operation 240 during which the system 100 is set to the locked state. The EL power-off operation 230 is substantially similar to the EU power-off operation 220, and the EL power-on operation 240 is substantially similar to the EU power-on operation 210. In the interest of conciseness, the following description focuses primarily on the differences between the operations 230, 240 and the operations 220, 210.

[0033] In contrast to the EU power-off operation 220, which includes the locking operation 224, the EL power-off operation 230 includes an unlocking operation 234. The operation 234 may include determining a no-power condition as described with reference to the operation 224, and issuing, with the controller 120, the UNLOCK command to the motor driver 130 in response to

the no-power condition. In response to the UNLOCK command, the motor driver 130 draws power from the capacitor 110, and powers the motor 102 in the manner described with reference to the unlocking operation 218. However, because the power supply 104 is disconnected from the system 100 in the preceding operation 232, the power utilized in the operation 234 is supplied entirely by the capacitor 110.

[0034] In contrast to the EU power-on operation 210, which includes the unlocking operation 218, the EL power-on operation 240 includes a locking operation 248. The operation 248 may include determining a timing condition and/or determining a no-power condition as described with reference to the operation 224. The operation 248 may further include issuing the LOCK command in response to presence of the timing condition and absence of the no-power condition. In response to the LOCK command, the motor driver 130 supplies the motor 102 with inverted-polarity power in the manner described with reference to the locking operation 224. Because the power supply 104 was connected to the system 100 in the preceding operation 242, the power utilized in the operation 242 is supplied by the power supply 104 and the capacitor 110, which are connected to the motor driver 130 in parallel fashion. While the power is nominally supplied from both the power supply 104 and the capacitor 110, the operation 242 does not appreciably deplete the charge stored in the capacitor 110, as any discharge from the capacitor 110 results in additional charging of the capacitor 110. Once the operation 248 is complete, the system 100 is in the locked state, and the EL operation 208 is complete.

[0035] While the above-described power-off operations 220, 230 include intentionally disconnecting the power supply 104 from the system 100, those having skill in the art will recognize that should the power supply 104 be interrupted – for example due to a power failure – the power-off operations 220, 230 will nonetheless function in the same manner.

[0036] If the system 100 is operating in the EU mode and power is removed when the system 100 is in the unlocked state, the controller 120 senses the no-power condition and issues the LOCK command. In response, the motor driver 130 drives the motor 102 with power from the capacitor 110 to urge the locking member 101 to the locking position. Because the system 100 is in the locked state after the power failure, the system 100 has “failed secure”

[0037] Similarly, if the system 100 is operating in the EL mode and power is removed when the system 100 is in the locked state, the controller 120 senses the no-power condition and issues the UNLOCK command. In response, the motor driver 130 drives the motor 102 with power from

the capacitor 110 to urge the locking member 101 to the unlocking position. Because the system 100 is in the unlocked state after the power failure, the system 100 has “failed safe”.

[0038] As is evident from the foregoing, when power is removed from the system 100 – either intentionally or unintentionally – the motor 102 is driven entirely by power from the capacitor 110. If the charge in the capacitor 110 less than a threshold charge sufficient to drive the motor 102 for the amount of time required to move the locking member 101 between the locking position and the unlocking position, the system 100 may fail to transition to the appropriate state. The threshold charge may of course vary from system to system according to a number of factors, such as the power requirements of the motor 102, current leakage from elements such as the motor driver 130, operating conditions, and factors of safety.

[0039] As is known in the art, the charge stored on a capacitor can be calculated using the equation $E = \frac{1}{2}CV^2$, where E is the energy or charge, C is the capacitance, and V is the voltage. Accordingly, given a threshold charge E_{thresh} and the capacitance C_{110} of the capacitor 110, a threshold capacitor voltage V_{thresh} can be calculated as $V_{\text{thresh}} = \sqrt{\frac{2E_{\text{thresh}}}{C_{110}}}$.

[0040] Given a particular system and a set of expected operating parameters, a worst-case threshold charge can be calculated as the threshold charge of the system for the most adverse expected operating conditions under which the system 100 is expected to operate. In certain forms, the threshold capacitor voltage V_{thresh} is selected as the voltage of the capacitor 110 when storing the worst-case threshold charge. Such a capacitor is large enough (and has a high enough operating voltage) to store enough energy to operate the system 100, but still small enough to maximize the amount of potential stored. A smaller capacitor may not be able to store enough energy where a larger capacitor would not charge as quickly. In this manner, the capacitor 110 can be selected to have the lowest capacitance necessary to perform the required functions, reducing the size and cost of the capacitor 110.

[0041] In certain embodiments, the threshold charge E_{thresh} may be selected as the amount of charge required to drive the locking member 101 between the locked and unlocked states under standard operating conditions, plus a predetermined factor of safety. The factor of safety may be selected from among a plurality of ranges having varying minima and maxima. By way of non-limiting example such ranges may include a minimum selected from the group consisting of

10%, 20%, 30%, and 40%, and a maximum selected from the group consisting of 40%, 50%, 60%, and 70%.

[0042] By selecting a threshold capacitor charge E_{thresh} according to one of the above methods, the capacitor 110 may be selected as an EDLC with a relatively small capacitance (for example, on the order of 1mF to 100mF). In certain embodiments, the capacitor 110 may be selected with a capacitance from about 10mF to about 80mF, from about 50mF to about 70mF, from about 30mF to about 50mF, or from about 15mF to about 30mF. In such embodiments, performing one of the power-off operations 220, 230 under standard conditions may include discharging the capacitor 110 to a predetermined percentage of the threshold capacitor voltage V_{thresh} , and performing one of the power-off operations 220, 230 under the most adverse expected operating conditions may include discharging the capacitor 110 to a substantially depleted state.

[0043] It is also contemplated that the capacitor 110 may be selected with a greater capacitance, for example to enable the system 110 to perform multiple lock/unlock cycles without reconnecting to the power supply 104. In such embodiments, the capacitor 110 may be selected as an EDLC with a relatively large capacitance (for example, greater than 1F). During initial start-up of such systems the capacitor 110 may need to be connected to the power for a predetermined time, in order to build up enough charge to perform the multiple lock/unlock cycles. In certain embodiments of this type, the capacitor 110 may be selected with a capacitance from about 1F to about 5F, or from about 1.5F to about 2.5F.

[0044] As can be seen from the foregoing description, the inventive system 100 and process 200 provide a number of significant advantages over conventional systems. For example, during the power-on operations 210, 240, the power conditioning performed by the capacitor charging circuit 140 allows for rapid charging of the capacitor 110, while reducing the current that must be drawn from the power supply 104. Additionally, during the operations 210, 240, the system 100 draws very little power from the power supply 104 after the locking member 101 has been moved to the appropriate locking or unlocking position. Contrastingly, conventional solenoid-based systems require constant application of power to remain in one of the locking and unlocking positions. This reduction in power usage during the power-on operations 210, 240 is particularly advantageous when operating in the EL mode, wherein power must be supplied to the system 100 to retain the system in the locked state.

[0045] Figs. 3 and 4 depict illustrative forms of locking assemblies 300, 400 which include certain features similar to those described above with reference to the access control system 100, and may be operable by a process similar to the above-described process 200. While the embodiments described hereinafter may not specifically describe features analogous to those described above, such as the LDO regulator 150, such features may nonetheless be employed in connection with the described systems.

[0046] Fig. 3 depicts an electrically operable mortise assembly 300, for example of the type described in the commonly-owned U.S. Patent No. 5,628,216 to Qureshi et al., the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety. The mortise lock 300 includes a locking assembly 302 operable in locked and unlocked states, and a drive assembly 304 operable to transition the locking assembly 302 between the locked and unlocked states.

[0047] The locking assembly 302 includes a helical member or spring 310, a link 320 operably connected with the spring 310, a locking member or catch 330 operably connected with the link 320, a hub 340 rotationally coupled with a spindle (not illustrated), which is rotationally coupled with an outer handle (not illustrated), and a latch bolt 350 operably connected with the hub 340. The drive assembly 304 includes an electromechanical actuator or motor 360, and a control system 370 configured to control operation of the motor 360.

[0048] When the locking assembly 302 is in the unlocked state, the hub 340 is free to rotate. Rotation of the outer handle rotates a locking lever 306 via the hub 340, which in turn retracts the latch bolt 350. When the locking assembly 302 is in the locked state, the catch 330 engages the hub 340, thereby preventing the hub 340 from rotating. This arrangement is known in the art, and need not be further described herein.

[0049] The spring 310 is coupled to an output shaft 312 of the motor 360 by way of a coupler 314, such that rotation of the shaft 312 causes rotation of the spring 310. The locking assembly 302 may further include a casing 316 (illustrated in phantom) to protect the spring 310 during operation of the lock 300.

[0050] The link 320 is operably connected to the spring 310 such that rotation of the spring 310 in a first rotational direction urges the link 320 in a first linear direction, and rotation of the spring 310 in a second rotational direction urges the link 320 in a second linear direction. The connection may be formed, for example, by a pin coupled to the link 320 and extending through

the spring 310 as disclosed in the Qureshi patent, although other forms of connection are contemplated.

[0051] The catch 330 is operable in a locking position (Fig. 3) and an unlocking position (not illustrated). In the locking position of the catch 330, a recess 332 on the catch 330 engages a protrusion 342 on the hub, the hub 340 is prevented from rotating, and the locking assembly 302 is in the locked state. In the unlocking position of the catch 330, the recess 332 does not engage the protrusion 342, the hub 340 is free to rotate, and the locking assembly 302 is in the unlocked state.

[0052] The catch 330 is operably coupled to the link 320 such that movement of the link 320 in the first linear direction urges the catch 330 toward either the locking or the unlocking position, and movement of the link 320 in the second linear direction urges the catch 330 toward the other position. In the illustrated embodiment, movement of the link 320 in either the first or second direction is substantially perpendicular to the motion of the catch 330 between the locking and unlocking positions. It is also contemplated that the link 320 and the catch 330 may move in substantially the same direction, substantially opposite directions, at an oblique angle to one another, or that the motion of one or more of the link 320 and the catch 330 may be a pivoting motion.

[0053] The motor 360 is operable to rotate the motor shaft 312 in either of the first rotational direction and the second rotational direction, thereby rotating the spring 310 in a corresponding direction. As described above, this motion urges the link 320 in a corresponding direction, which in turn urges the catch 330 toward one of the locking and unlocking positions. The motor 360 may be substantially similar to the previously-described motor 102, and may include features such as those described with respect to the illustrated and alternative embodiments of the motor 102.

[0054] The control system 370 receives electrical power from a power supply (not illustrated) via a power inlet 371, and includes a capacitor 372, and a printed circuit board (PCB) 374 having mounted thereon a controller 376, a motor driver 378, and a capacitor charging circuit 379. The capacitor 372, controller 376, motor driver 378, and capacitor charging circuit 379 may be substantially similar to the capacitor 110, controller 120, motor driver 130, and capacitor charging circuit 140 described above, and may include features such as those described above with respect to the illustrated and alternative embodiments of the corresponding elements.

[0055] When the mortise lock 300 is operated according to the process 200, the capacitor charging circuit 379 receives power via the power inlet 371, conditions the power, and charges the capacitor 372 with the conditioned power. The controller 376 monitors the voltage of the capacitor 372, and compares the capacitor voltage to a threshold capacitor voltage as described above. When the capacitor voltage meets or exceeds the threshold capacitor voltage, the controller 374 issues a first command or signal to the motor driver 378. The controller 376 also monitors the voltage of the power inlet 371, and compares the power inlet voltage to a threshold power failure voltage. When the power inlet voltage falls below the threshold power failure voltage, the controller 374 issues a second command to the motor driver 378. When the mortise lock 300 is operating in an EL mode, the first command is a LOCK command, and the second command is an UNLOCK command. When the mortise lock 300 is operating in an EU mode, the first command is an UNLOCK command, and the second command is a LOCK command.

[0056] In response to the UNLOCK command, the motor driver 378 powers the motor 360 with power of a first polarity. In response, the motor 360 operates in a first state, and drives the motor shaft 312 – and thereby the spring 310 – in a first rotational direction. Rotation of the spring 310 in the first rotational direction urges the link 320 in a first linear direction. If the link 320 is blocked from moving in the first linear direction, the spring 310 elastically deforms, which results in a biasing force urging the link 320 in the first linear direction. When the link 320 is free to move in the first linear direction, such movement causes the catch 330 to move to the unlocking position.

[0057] In response to the LOCK command, the motor driver 378 powers the motor 360 with power of a second, opposite polarity. In response, the motor 360 operates in a second state, and drives the motor shaft 312 – and thereby the spring 310 – in a second rotational direction. Rotation of the spring 310 in the second rotational direction urges the link 320 in a second linear direction. If the link 320 is blocked from moving in the second linear direction, the spring 310 elastically deforms, which results in a biasing force urging the link 320 in the second linear direction. When the link 320 is free to move in the second linear direction, such movement causes the catch 330 to move to the locking position.

[0058] Fig. 4 depicts an electrically operable pushbar assembly 400, for example of the type described in the commonly-owned U.S. Patent No. 8,182,003 to Dye et al., the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety. The pushbar assembly 400 includes a

locking assembly 402 operable in an unlocked state and a locked state, and a drive assembly 404 operable to transition the locking assembly 402 between the locked state and the unlocked state.

[0059] The locking assembly 402 includes a helical member or threaded motor shaft 410, a linkage assembly 420 operably connected with the motor shaft 410, and a locking member or latch bolt 430 operably connected with the linking assembly 420. The drive assembly 404 includes an electromechanical actuator or motor 460, and a control system 470 configured to control operation of the motor 460.

[0060] The pushbar assembly 400 can be operated either manually or electrically. During manual operation, a user presses inward on a pushbar (not illustrated); this motion is transmitted via bell cranks 422 to linking rods 424 of the linking assembly 420, which in turn retracts the latch bolt 430. During electrical operation, power is supplied to the motor 460 via the control system 470 to rotate a nut (not illustrated) including internal threads which engage external threads of the motor shaft 410. The motor shaft 310 is restrained from rotational displacement by a pin 411; during rotation of the nut, the engagement of the threads causes the motor shaft 410 to retract toward the motor 460 in a first linear direction. This motion is transferred via the linkage assembly 420 to the latch bolt 430 to retract the latch bolt 430 to an unlocking position. When the motor 460 is de-energized, return springs urge the linking assembly 420 in a second, opposite linear direction to extend the latch bolt 430 to a locking position. Such operations are known in the art, and need not be further described herein.

[0061] The control system 470 receives electrical power from a power supply (not illustrated) via a power inlet 471, and includes a capacitor 472 and a printed circuit board (PCB) 474 having mounted thereon a controller 476, a motor driver 478, and a capacitor charging circuit 479. The capacitor 472, controller 476, motor driver 478, and capacitor charging circuit 479 may be substantially similar to the capacitor 110, controller 120, motor driver 130, and capacitor charging circuit 140 described above, and may include features such as those described above with respect to the illustrated and alternative embodiments of the corresponding elements.

[0062] When the pushbar assembly 400 is operated according to the process 200, the capacitor charging circuit 479 receives power via the power inlet 471, conditions the power, and charges the capacitor 472 with the conditioned power. The controller 476 monitors the voltage of the capacitor 472, and compares the capacitor voltage to a threshold capacitor voltage as described above. When the capacitor voltage meets or exceeds the threshold capacitor voltage, the

controller 474 issues a first command to the motor driver 478. The controller 476 also monitors the voltage of the power inlet 471, and compares the power inlet voltage to a threshold power failure voltage. When the power inlet voltage falls below the threshold power failure voltage, the controller 474 issues a second command to the motor driver 478 and a third command to a dogging assembly (not illustrated). When the pushbar assembly 400 is operating in an EL mode, the first command is a LOCK command, and the second command is an UNLOCK command. When the pushbar assembly 400 is operating in an EU mode, the first command is an UNLOCK command, and the second command is a LOCK command.

[0063] In response to the UNLOCK command, the motor driver 478 powers the motor 460 to retract the motor shaft 410 in the first linear direction. Movement of the motor shaft 410 in the first linear direction urges the linking assembly 420 in the first linear direction, which in turn retracts the latch bolt 430 to the unlocking position. In response to the LOCK command, the motor driver 478 disconnects power from the motor 460, and the return springs urge the linking assembly 420 and the motor shaft 410 in the second linear direction, thereby extending the latch bolt 430 to the locking position. After the motor driver 478 has completed the operation corresponding to the second command, the dogging assembly responds to the third command by engaging the locking assembly 402 to retain the latch bolt 430 in the locking position (when operating in the EU mode) or the unlocking position (when operating in the EL mode).

[0064] While the invention has been illustrated and described in detail in the drawings and foregoing description, the same is to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive in character, it being understood that only the preferred embodiments have been shown and described and that all changes and modifications that come within the spirit of the inventions are desired to be protected. It should be understood that while the use of words such as preferable, preferably, preferred or more preferred utilized in the description above indicate that the feature so described may be more desirable, it nonetheless may not be necessary and embodiments lacking the same may be contemplated as within the scope of the invention, the scope being defined by the claims that follow. In reading the claims, it is intended that when words such as “a,” “an,” “at least one,” or “at least one portion” are used there is no intention to limit the claim to only one item unless specifically stated to the contrary in the claim. When the language “at least a portion” and/or “a portion” is used the item can include a portion and/or the entire item unless specifically stated to the contrary.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus, comprising:
 - a locking assembly operable in a locked state and an unlocked state; and
 - a drive assembly operable to receive power from a power supply, the drive assembly including:
 - an electromechanical actuator operable upon receiving power to transition the locking assembly between the locked state and the unlocked state; and
 - an energy storage device electrically coupled to the electromechanical actuator, and configured to store electrical power from the power supply when the drive assembly is coupled to the power supply; and
 - a control system configured to couple the drive assembly to the power supply in response to a first condition, and to thereafter transmit energy only from the energy storage device to power the electromechanical actuator in response to a second condition;wherein the second condition is based at least in part upon a level of energy stored in the energy storage device.
2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second condition is further based upon a voltage level of the power received from the power supply.
3. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:
 - the locking assembly comprises:
 - a helical member operable to rotate in a first rotational direction and a second rotational direction;
 - a link operably connected to the helical member such that rotation of the helical member in the first rotational direction urges the link in a first linear direction, and rotation of the helical member in the second rotational direction urges the link in a second linear direction;
 - a locking member operable in a locking position wherein the locking assembly is in the locked state and an unlocking position wherein the locking assembly is in the unlocked state;

wherein the locking member is operably coupled to the link such that movement of the link in the first linear direction urges the locking member toward one of the locking position and the unlocking position, and movement of the link in the second linear direction urges the locking member toward the other of the locking position and the unlocking position; and

the electromechanical actuator comprises:

a rotary motor including a motor shaft rotationally coupled to the helical member, wherein the motor is operable in a first state wherein the motor rotates the helical member in the first rotational direction and in a second state wherein the motor rotates the helical member in the second rotational direction.

4. An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the helical member is a spring.

5. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the locking assembly comprises:

a threaded shaft movable in a first linear direction and a second linear direction;

a linking assembly operably connected to the threaded shaft such that movement of the threaded shaft in either of the first and second linear directions urges the linking assembly in the same direction;

a latch bolt operable in a locking position wherein the locking assembly is in the locked state and an unlocking position wherein the locking assembly is in the unlocked state;

wherein the latch bolt is operably coupled to the linking assembly such that movement of the linking assembly in the first linear direction urges the latch bolt toward one of the locking position and the unlocking position, and movement of the linking assembly in the second linear direction urges the latch bolt toward the other of the locking position and the unlocking position; and

the electromechanical actuator comprises:

a rotary motor operable in a first state wherein the motor drives the threaded shaft in the first linear direction and second state wherein the motor drives the threaded shaft in the second linear direction.

6. A method of operating an access control system selectively connectable to a power supply configured to supply power to the access control system when connected thereto, the access control system including a capacitor and an electromechanical actuator operable to transition the access control system between a locked state and an unlocked state, the method comprising:
- sensing a voltage of the supplied power;
 - comparing the supplied power voltage to a threshold power supply voltage;
 - determining a power-good condition when the supplied power voltage exceeds the threshold power supply voltage, and determining a power-fail condition when the supplied power voltage does not exceed the threshold power supply voltage;
 - in response to the power-good condition:
 - charging, with the supplied power, the capacitor to a capacitor charge not less than a threshold charge; and thereafter
 - powering, at least partially with the supplied power, the electromechanical actuator;
 - transitioning, with the electromechanical actuator, the access control system to a first state selected from the locked state and unlocked state;
 - wherein the capacitor charge is not less than the threshold charge upon completion of the transitioning; and
 - in response to the power-fail condition:
 - powering, with only the capacitor, the electromechanical actuator; and
 - transitioning, with the electromechanical actuator, the access control system to the other of the locked state and unlocked state.
7. A method according to claim 6, wherein the access control system is operable in a fail-safe mode and a fail-secure mode, and wherein:
- in the fail-safe mode, the first state is the locked state; and
 - in the fail-secure mode, the first state is the unlocked state.
8. A method according to claim 6, wherein the charging includes increasing a current of the supplied power, and providing the increased-current power to the capacitor.

9. A method according to claim 10, wherein the increased-current power comprises a substantially constant amperage.
10. A method according to claim 6, wherein the charging includes conditioning the supplied power, and providing the conditioned power to the capacitor, the conditioning including decreasing a voltage of the supplied power, and increasing an amperage of the supplied power.
11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the conditioned power comprises a substantially constant wattage.
12. A method according to claim 6, wherein the threshold charge is not less than a second charge sufficient to complete the transitioning in response to the power-fail condition when the access control system is operating under a set of non-optimal conditions.
13. A method according to claim 12, wherein the set of non-optimal conditions is a set of least favorable conditions in which the access control system is operable.
14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the threshold charge is substantially equal to the second charge.
15. A method of operating a access control system selectively connectable to a power supply configured to supply power to the access control system when connected thereto, the access control system including an energy storage device and an electromechanical actuator operable to selectively set the access control system in a locked state and an unlocked state, the method comprising:
 - comparing a threshold voltage level to a voltage of power received by the access control system;
 - in response to the voltage of power received by the access control system exceeding the threshold voltage level, performing a power-on operation including:
 - conditioning a portion of the received power, the conditioning including reducing voltage and increasing current of the received power;
 - charging, with the conditioned power, the energy storage device to a first voltage;

actuating the electromechanical actuator in a first state; and
setting, with the electromechanical actuator, the access control system to a first of the locked state and the unlocked state; and
in response to the voltage of power received by the access control system not exceeding the threshold voltage level, performing a power-off operation including:
providing energy to the electromechanical actuator from the energy storage device;
actuating, with only the energy from the energy storage device, the electromechanical actuator in a second state; and
setting, with the electromechanical actuator, the access control system to the other of the locked state and the unlocked state.

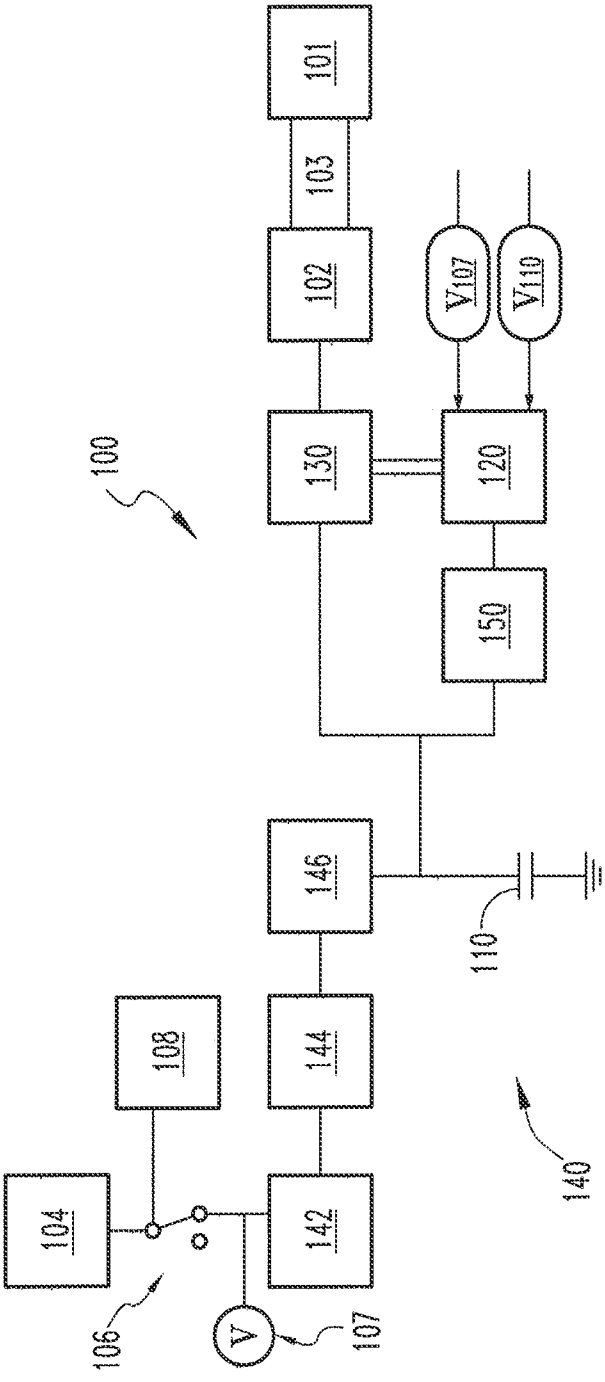


Fig. 1

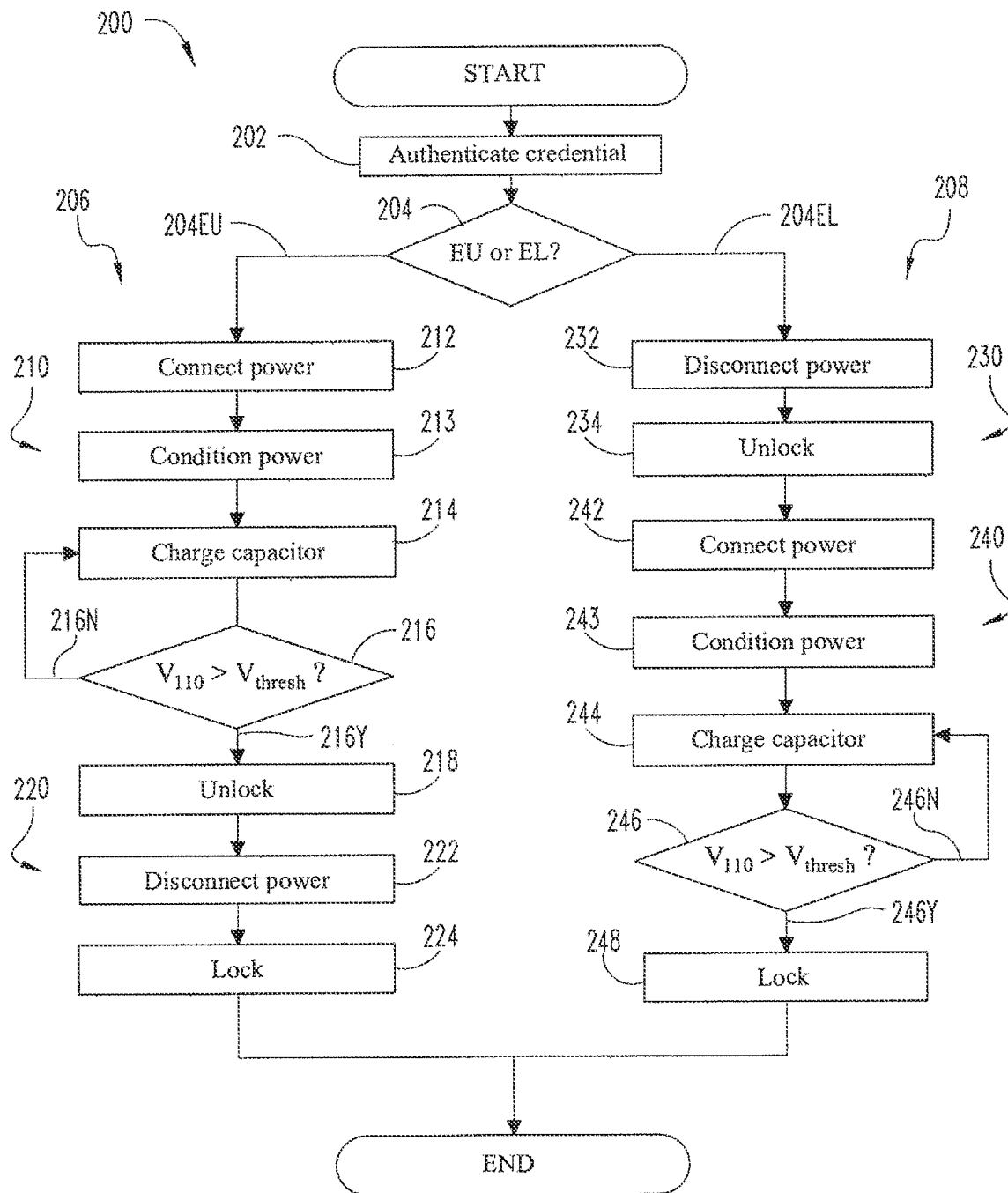


Fig. 2

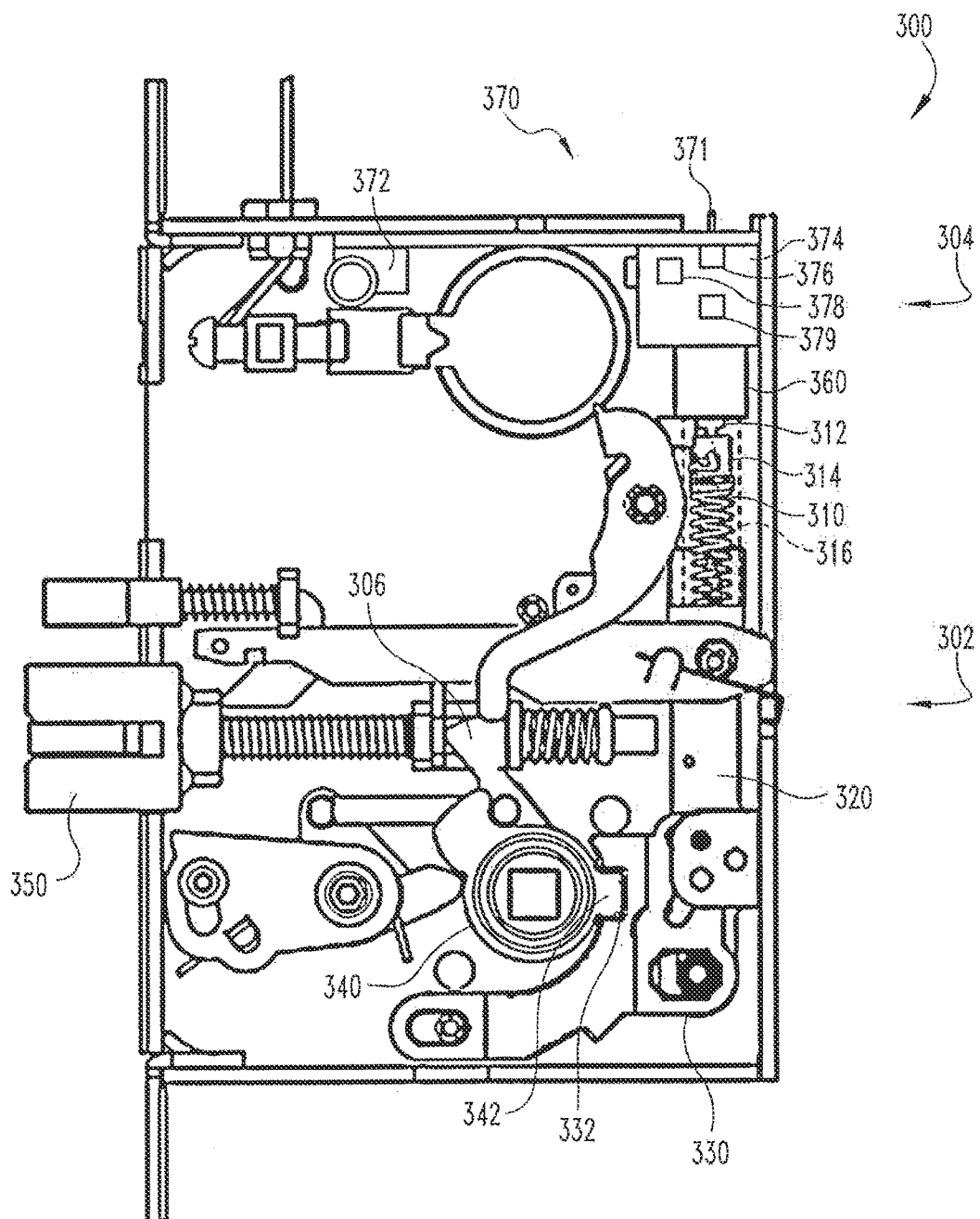


Fig. 3

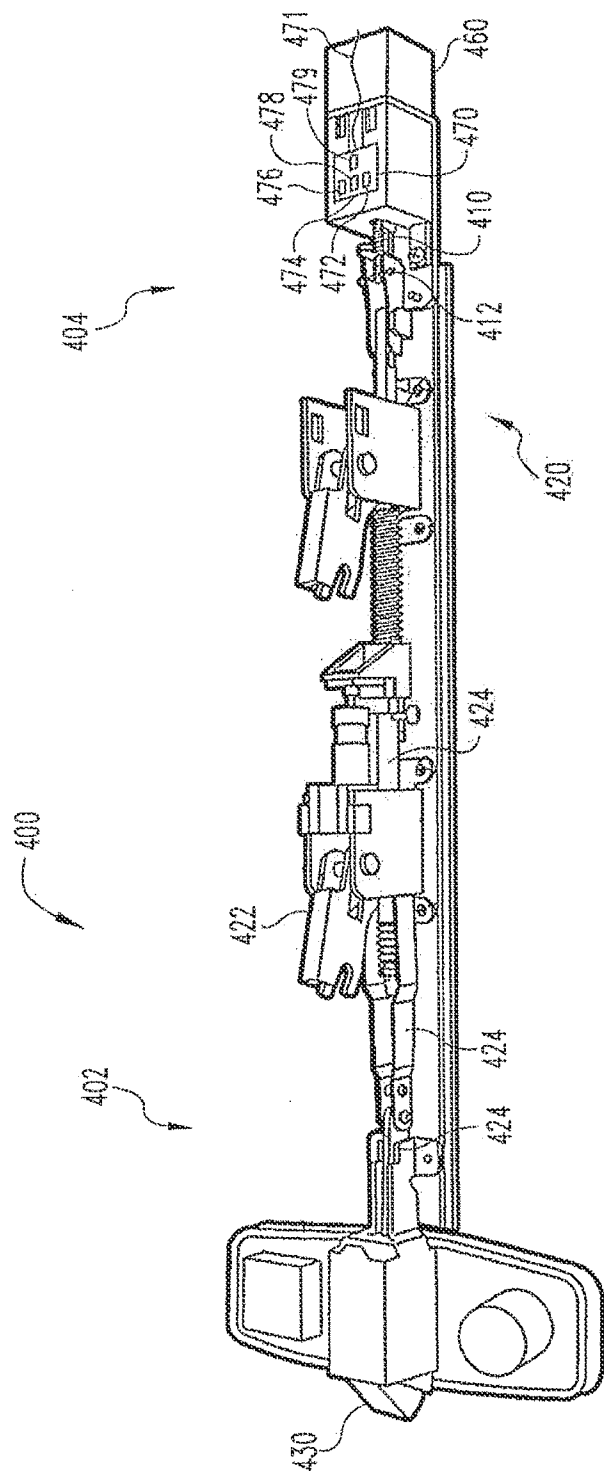


Fig. 4