United States Patent [19]

Wainwright

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[54] **WARNING DEVICE**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **9/9,** 9/14, 116/173

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B63b 21/52**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 9/8 R, 9, 14, 313; 116/124 B, 173; 128/145, 145.8

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

The essence of the present invention resides in the use of a belt which is adapted to fit around the waist of an individual and which is provided with a warning device thereon. The individual may be a swimmer, skin diver or snorkeler. The belt structure includes a mid-section being provided with a padding which is disposed on the inside surface thereof. The mid-section of the belt is provided with an upwardly extending flexible arm retaining member. A flexible arm extends upwardly from the retaining member on the mid-section of the belt and may have connected thereto a warning falg, an international danger signal or flashing light, which will be visible to a mariner so that the mariner will be aware of the position of an individual swimmer in the water. Flexible belt members are connected to the ends of the mid-section of the belt with appropriate locking means to fasten the entire belt around the body of the user.

7 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures

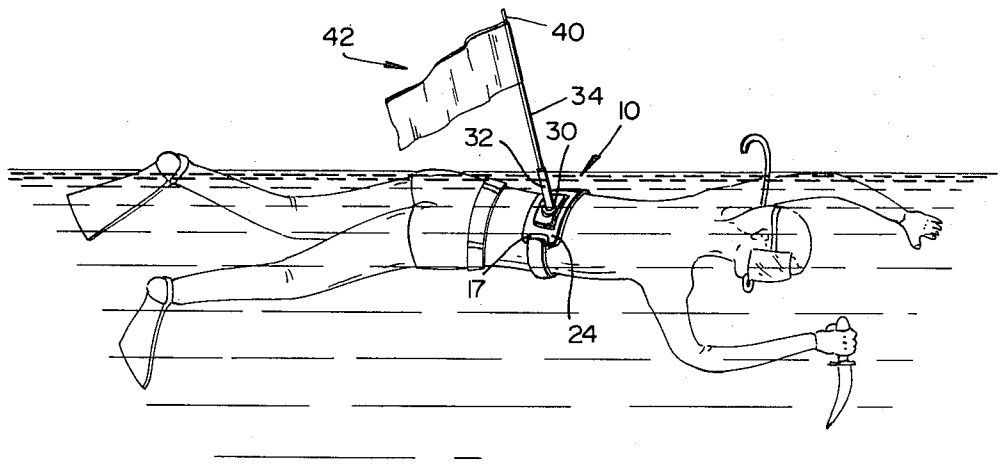


FIG. 1

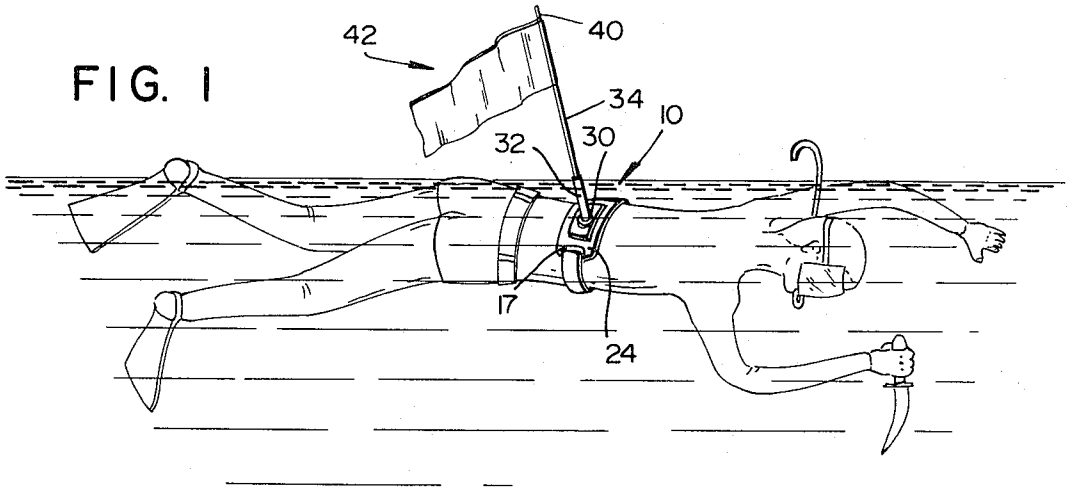


FIG. 2

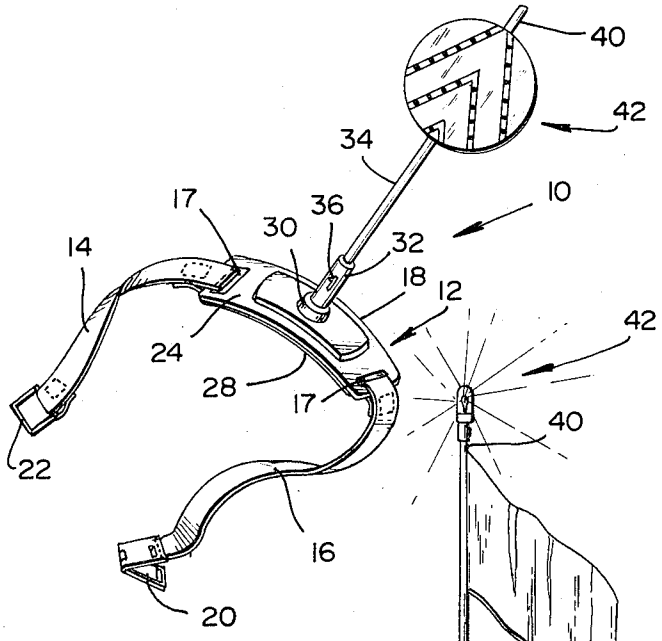
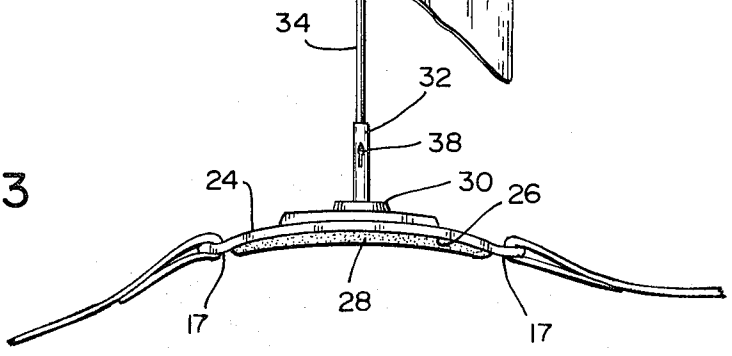


FIG. 3



WARNING DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Search

This invention relates to a warning device and more particularly to a warning device worn by swimmers and snorkelers.

2. Description of the Prior Art

The present invention relates to a warning device and more particularly to a belt which is worn by a swimmer to indicate the wearer's presence in a trafficked area of water. Heretofore, it has been known that many swimmers have met with unfortunate accidents while swimming because they were unnoticed by boats and were accidentally struck thereby. As a result of the vastly expanded interest in boating as well as snorkeling the problems and dangers to swimmers and snorkelers have become more numerous and, therefore, the situation more acute. The statistics on injuries which occur to swimmers and snorkelers have shown a tremendous increase in fatalities to the point where in numerous states legislation is being proposed to restrict both boating and swimming in certain areas.

It is the general object of the present invention to avoid and overcome the foregoing and other difficulties with respect to the prior art, by providing a simple and inexpensive warning mechanism to be worn by swimmers and snorkelers.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a warning mechanism which stands out of the water while the swimmer or snorkeler is in the normal horizontal position so that the warning mechanism is clearly visible.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a warning means which is easily discernable by vehicles in the vicinity of the swimmer or snorkeler.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a safety belt which is easily connectable to the body of the user.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a warning device which is connected to a belt which will emit a warning signal.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a relatively rigid member which stands normal to the belt to which it is attached and yet may be flexibly connected thereto.

The aforementioned objects and other objects which will become apparent as the description proceeds are achieved by providing a belt including a mid-section and flexible end sections connected thereto. The entire belt is connectable around the waist of the user and being provided with a retainer member which stands upright from the top surface of the mid-section. A pad is disposed on the inner surface of the mid-section which will be in contact with the back of the user. The retainer member is flexibly connected to the mid-section of the belt and is adapted to releasably receive a rigid rod which may have connected thereto a flag or flashinglike arrangement.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present invention reference should be had to the accompanying drawings wherein like numerals of reference indicate similar parts throughout the respective views and wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the belt and warning system being worn by a swimmer;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the warning system; and

FIG. 3 is a side view of the warning device.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

As shown in FIGS. 1–3, the invention of the warning device is generally indicated by the reference numeral 10. The warning device 10 is comprised of a belt 12 having end sections 14 and 16 and a mid-section 18. The mid-section 18 is releasably connectable to one end of each end section (14, 16) through the loops 17 provided at the ends of the mid-section 18.

As shown in FIG. 2, the one end 16 is provided with a buckle 20 which is adapted to receive a mating member 22 on the end section 14. The buckle arrangement 20, 22 is of such type as is well known to those skilled in the art and is adapted to adjust the size of the belt. The mid-section 18 of the belt 12 is provided with an upper surface 24 and a lower surface 26. A pad 28 is provided on the bottom surface 26 such that it will fit against the back of the user to prevent any chaffing or irritation as a result of its direct contact with the user's back. In order to provide a warning signal the upper surface 24 of the mid-section 18 of the belt 12 is provided with an upright flexible member 30, as shown in FIG. 2, has fixed thereto a cylindrical retaining member 32 which is adapted to receive a rigid rod 34 and which is removably connectable therein by a standard locking arrangement 36. Such standard locking arrangement may take the form of a spring-loaded member on the lower end of the rigid rod which will mate with the slot 38 in the retaining member 32 when the rod is inserted in the retaining member 32. The rigid rod 34 is provided at its upper end 40 with a warning device 42 which may take various forms, as shown in FIGS. 1, 2 and 3. FIG. 1 shows the use of a flag 42 which would be appropriately colored to stand out and thereby be noticeable from a boat. Alternatively, the international warning signal may be attached to the upper end of the rigid rod (FIG. 2) or a flashing light (FIG. 3) may be utilized.

In any case, the particular means of warning device utilized serves the primary function of calling to the attention of boatmen that a swimmer or snorkeler is in the immediate vicinity and the boatmen should proceed with extreme caution. Obviously, the sighting of the warning device will automatically and precisely position the swimmer or snorkeler.

While in accordance with the patent statutes a preferred and alternative embodiments have been described in detail, it should be particularly understood that the invention should not be limited thereto or thereby.

What is claimed is:

1. A warning device comprising a belt for securing said device to the waist of a swimmer's body, a mid-section portion releasably connected to said belt, an upstanding rigid rod, an up-right flexible member mounted on said mid-section portion for receiving said upstanding rigid rod to hold said rigid rod perpendicular to said swimmer's body, a warning device connected to the upper end of said rigid rod, said rigid rod maintaining said warning signal above the water level while the swimmer is in a horizontal position so that the warning signal may be seen by approaching marine vehicles.

2. The warning device according to claim 1 wherein said warning means is a flag.

3. The warning device according to claim 1 wherein said warning means is an international signal.

4. The warning device according to claim 1 wherein said warning means is a flashing light.

5. The warning device according to claim 1 wherein said belt is comprised of two end sections and a mid-section, said mid-section having disposed thereon said retaining member.

6. The warning device according to claim 5 wherein said mid-section is provided with a pad on the bottom surface thereof which is adapted to fit against the back of the swimmer.

7. The warning device according to claim 6 wherein a flexible member is connected to the upper surface of said mid-section and said retainer member is connected thereon.

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