A pail includes a base and at least one wall extending upwardly from a periphery of the base to an opening of the pail. A lip protrudes outwardly from an upper edge of the wall adjacent the opening. A skirt curves outwardly and downwardly from an outer surface of the wall below the lip. A lid for the pail includes an upper wall and three latch portions extending downwardly from an outer periphery of the upper wall. The three latch portions are substantially evenly disposed about the outer periphery of the upper wall. A tear away strip connects the three latch portions, to prevent removal of the lid from the pail. When the tear away strip is torn away from the lid, the lid can be removed from the pail by manually deflecting one of the latch portions.
PAIL WITH SKIRT AND LID

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] Pails are often used to ship and sell products to consumers. The pails include a base and a side wall extending upwardly from a periphery of the base. At an open end of the pail, a lip may be formed for retaining a lid thereon. Further, the pail may include one or more reinforcing rings protruding outwardly from the side of the side wall. These rings sometimes cause the pails to “shingle,” wherein the ring of one pail rides up on top of the ring of an adjacent pail thereby interfering with stacking of the pails.

[0002] Many pails include lids that snap down over a lip at the open end of the pail. The lids may include a tear away portion around the periphery of the lid. The tear away portion prevents the lid from being removed until the tear away portion is torn away from the rest of the lid. Generally, four latch portions remain on the lid after the tear away portion has been removed. The latch portions permit the lid to be removably re-secured to the pail. Removal of the lid is a two step process, where the user must unsnap two opposing latch portions with two hands, then rotate his hands to unsnap the other two latch portions.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] A pail according to one embodiment of the present invention includes a base and at least one wall extending upwardly from a periphery of the base to an opening of the pail. A lip protrudes outwardly from an upper edge of the wall adjacent the opening. A skirt curves outwardly and downwardly from an outer surface of the wall below the lip. The skirt performs several functions. First, the curved outer surface of the skirt prevents shingling by adjacent containers. Instead, the skirt of one container will slide down the curved surface of the skirt of an adjacent container. The skirt can be used as a handle and can be gripped from underneath to help lift the pail. The skirt also limits the amount of nesting of two empty pails, so that they do not get stuck together.

[0004] A lid includes an upper wall and three latch portions extending downwardly from an outer periphery of the upper wall. The three latch portions are substantially evenly disposed about the outer periphery of the upper wall. A tear away strip connects the three latch portions, to prevent removal of the lid from the pail. When the tear away strip is torn away from the lid, the lid can be removed from the pail by manually detaching two of the latch portions in a single step. Thus, the lid is easier to remove from the pail in one step.

[0005] These and other features of the application can be best understood from the following specification and drawings, the following of which is a brief description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a pail according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0007] FIG. 2 is a side view of the pail of FIG. 1.

[0008] FIG. 3 is a top view of the pail of FIG. 1.

[0009] FIG. 4 is a section view taken along line 4-4 of FIG. 3.

[0010] FIG. 5 is a bottom perspective view of the pail of FIG. 1.

[0011] FIG. 6 illustrates the pail of FIG. 1 with a similar pail nested therein.

[0012] FIG. 7 is a side view of the pail of FIG. 1 with a similar pail adjacent thereto.

[0013] FIG. 8 illustrates the pail of FIG. 1 with a handle and lid (tear strip removed).

[0014] FIG. 9 is a bottom perspective view of the lid of FIG. 8 with the tear strip in place.

[0015] FIG. 10 is a bottom perspective view of the lid of FIG. 9 with the tear strip torn away.

[0016] FIG. 11 is a bottom view of the lid of FIG. 10.

[0017] FIG. 12 is a top view of the pail and lid of FIG. 8, with the tear strip removed.

[0018] FIG. 13 is a section view taken along line 13-13 of FIG. 12, with the tear strip removed.

[0019] FIG. 14 is an enlarged view of a portion of FIG. 13.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0020] A pail 10 according to one embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIG. 1. The pail 10 includes a base 12 and a side wall 14 extending upwardly from the outer periphery of the base 12. At the open end of the pail 10, a lip 16 protrudes outwardly from the upper edge of the side wall 14. Spaced below the lip 16, a mid-ring 18 protrudes outwardly from the side wall 14. Spaced below the mid-ring 18, a skirt 20 curves outwardly and downwardly from an outer surface of the side wall 14.

[0021] A pair of handle attachment walls 22 (one shown in FIG. 1) are spaced outwardly of the side wall 14 and generally parallel thereto, or, more specifically, tangential thereto. The handle attachment wall 22 includes an aperture 26 for attaching a handle. Curved side walls 28 enclose the handle attachment wall 22. The handle attachment wall 22 extends from the skirt 20 to the mid-ring 18.

[0022] Referring to FIG. 2, the handle attachment wall 22 extends downwardly to the lower most edge of the skirt 20 and upwardly to the mid-ring 18. This reinforces the handle attachment wall 22, the mid-ring 18 and the skirt 20. The handle attachment wall 22 is tapered toward the upper end of the handle attachment wall 22. The side walls 28 extend from the skirt 20 to the mid-ring 18 and also curve inwardly at the top of the handle attachment wall 22. The lip 16, mid-ring 18 and skirt 20 all contribute to the rigidity of the side wall 14 and help it maintain a circular cross-section.

[0023] FIG. 3 is a top view of the pail 10. FIG. 4 is a section view taken along line 4-4 of FIG. 3 of the pail 10. As shown, the mid-ring 18 is angled downwardly as it protrudes outwardly from the outer surface of the side wall 14. The skirt 20 generally has an outer surface that is rounded and curved. Ribs 30, perpendicular to the side wall 14 extend between the side wall 14 and skirt 20 to reinforce the skirt 20. The base 12 is slightly bowed upward toward the center and includes an annular lip 32 protruding downwardly from the lower surface of the base 12, thereby defining a lower recess 34.

[0024] FIG. 5 is a bottom perspective view of the pail 10. A plurality of ribs 30 extend about the periphery of the side wall 14 inside the skirt 20. The rounded recesses formed by the skirt 20 between the ribs 30 define handle areas about the circumference of the pail 10. The handle attachment wall 26 defines a recess between the handle attachment wall 26 and the side wall 14 that opens downwardly through the skirt 20.
What is claimed is:
1) A pail comprising:
a base;
at least one wall extending upwardly from a periphery of
the base to an opening of the pail;
a lip protruding outwardly from an upper edge of the at
least one wall; and
a skirt curving outwardly and downwardly from an outer
surface of the at least one wall below the lip.
2) The pail of claim 1 wherein the skirt has a generally
rounded cross-section.
3) The pail of claim 1 wherein the skirt includes a plurality
of cross-ribs generally perpendicular to the at least one wall,
the skirt curving outwardly and downwardly over the cross-
ribs.
4) The pail of claim 1 further including a handle attachment
wall spaced from the at least one wall.
5) The pail of claim 4 wherein the handle attachment wall
is generally parallel to the at least one wall.
6) The pail of claim 4 wherein the handle attachment wall
extends upwardly from the skirt.
7) The pail of claim 6 wherein the handle attachment wall
opens downwardly.
8) The pail of claim 7 wherein the handle attachment wall
includes a handle attachment opening.
9) The pail of claim 8 wherein the skirt has a generally
rounded cross-section.
10) The pail of claim 9 wherein the skirt includes a plurality
of cross-ribs generally perpendicular to the at least one wall,
the skirt curving outwardly and downwardly over the cross-
ribs.
11) The pail of claim 7 further including a mid-ring pro-
truding outwardly from the at least one wall, the handle
attachment wall extending from the mid-ring to the skirt.
12) The pail of claim 11 further including a pair of side
walls connecting the at least one wall to the handle attachment
wall, the mid-ring and the skirt.
13) A pail lid comprising:
an upper wall;
three latch portions extending downwardly from an outer
periphery of the upper wall, the three latch portions
substantially evenly disposed about the outer periphery
of the upper wall; and
a tear-away strip connecting the three latch portions.
14) The pail lid of claim 13 further including an inner lip
protruding downwardly from the upper wall, the inner lip
spaced inwardly from the latch portions.
15) The pail lid of claim 14 further including a plurality of
ribs protruding downwardly from the upper wall outwardly
from the inner lip.
16) The pail lid of claim 15 further including a middle lip
protruding downwardly from the upper wall, the plurality
of ribs between the inner lip and the middle lip.
17) The pail lid of claim 16 wherein the upper wall is an
annular upper wall.
18) The pail lid of claim 17 further including a lower wall,
the inner lip extending downwardly from the upper wall to an
outer periphery of the lower wall.
19) The pail lid of claim 18 wherein the ribs extend onto a
lower surface of the lower wall.
20) A pail comprising:
a base;
at least one wall extending upwardly from a periphery of
the base to an opening of the pail;
up to the mid-ring 18. The recess is defined by the mid-ring
18, side walls 28, handle attachment wall 22 and two adjacent
ribs 30, coincident with the side walls 28.
[0025] As shown in FIG. 6, when a similar pail 10' is nested
within the pail 10, the skirt 20' contacts the upper most edge
of the side wall 14 of the lower pail 10 to limit the amount of
nesting between the pails 10, 10', to prevent the pails 10, 10'
from becoming stuck together.
[0026] FIG. 7 illustrates the pails 10, 10' side by side. The
skirts 20, 20' may contact one another, but if one skirt 20 rides
up onto the other skirt 20', the weight of the material in the pail
10 will cause the skirt 20 to slide down the outer curved,
rounded surface of the skirt 20'. This provides for easier
stacking of the pails 10, 10'.
[0027] FIG. 8 illustrates the pail 10 with an optional wire
handle 40 having ends 42 received within apertures 26 of the
handle attachment walls 22. Such handles 40 are well known.
The pail 10 is also shown with an optional lid 50. The lid 50
includes an annular upper wall 52 and a circular lower wall
54. Three latch portions 56 protrude downwardly from an
outer periphery of the annular upper wall 52. An inner annular
lip 58 protrudes downwardly from an inner circumference of
the annular upper wall 52 to connect the annular upper wall 52
to the circular lower wall 54. The lid 50 of FIG. 8 is shown
without the tear away strip. FIG. 9 is a bottom view of the lid
50 with the tear away strip 64 in place. As shown, the tear
away strip 64 protrudes upwardly from an outer most annular
lip 65 protruding downwardly from an outer periphery of the
annular upper wall 52 (FIG. 8) and connecting the latch
portions 56 to one another. The lid 50 further includes an inner
annular lip 58 protruding downwardly from the upper wall 52
and a middle annular lip 60 protruding downwardly from the
annular upper wall 52, outwardly of the inner annular lip 58.
A plurality of ribs 66 protrude downwardly from the circular
lower wall 54 of the lid 50 and extend between the inner annular
lip 58 and the middle annular lip 60 to reinforce both of
them.
[0028] FIG. 10 illustrates the lid 50 of FIG. 9 with the tear
away strip 64 removed. Generally, the tear away strip 64 (FIG.
9) is torn away from the outer most annular lip 65 and from the
latch portions 56.
[0029] As shown in FIG. 11, the lid 50 includes three latch
portions 56 that are equally (or equally) spaced about the
periphery of the lid 50, i.e. having centers spaced by
about 120°.
[0030] FIG. 12 is a top view of the lid 50 on a pail 10, with
the tear strip 64 removed.
[0031] FIG. 13 is a section view taken along line 13-13 of
FIG. 12 with the tear strip 64 removed. FIG. 14 is an enlarged
view of the area of the pail surrounding the latch portion 56 of
the lid 50 of FIG. 13. As shown, when the tear strip 64 is
removed, the latch portions 56 latch underneath the lip 16 of
the pail 10, while other portions of the lid 50, the outer most
annular lip 65 simply mates with the lip 16, without latching
thereunder. Thus, by deflecting two of the latches 56 out-
wardly, the lid 50 can be removed from the pail 10 and
removably resealed to the pail 10.
[0032] In accordance with the provisions of the patent stat-
utes and jurisprudence, exemplary configurations described
above are considered to represent a preferred embodiment of
the invention. However, it should be noted that the invention
can be practiced otherwise than as specifically illustrated and
described without departing from its spirit or scope.
a lip protruding outwardly from an upper edge of the at least one wall;
a skirt curving outwardly and downwardly from an outer surface of the at least one wall below the lip; and
a pail lid including an upper wall having three latch portions extending downwardly from an outer periphery of the upper wall, the three latch portions substantially evenly disposed about the outer periphery of the upper wall.

21) The pail of claim 20 further including a tear-away strip connecting the three latch portions.

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