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(56) Documents Cited
US 5149166 A **US 4869538 A** **US 4828303 A**
US 4815777 A **US 4561685 A** **US 4014583 A**

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UK CL (Edition L) **B7B BPC BPX**
INT CL^5 **B60R 13/04 19/20 19/42**
Online databases: EDOC WPIL

(54) **Vehicle body protector.**

(57) An inflatable plastic protecting body (2) has a securing strip (3) connected thereto whereby it may be supported on the outside of a vehicle by closing the end of the strip in a car door or window. A sucker (6) may be provided on the strip 3 for holding the protector in place while the end of the strip, which has a stop element (7), is secured inside the vehicle door or window.

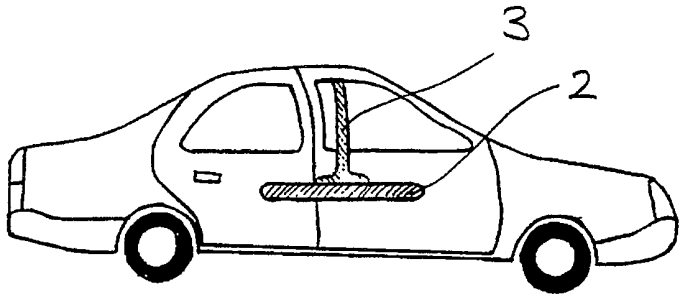

Figure 2

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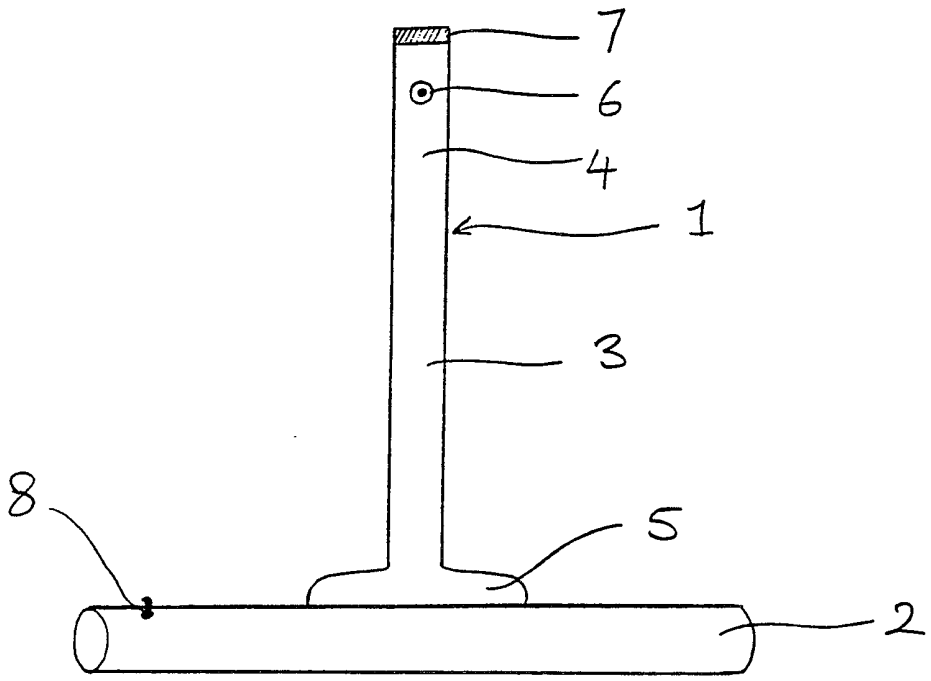

Figure 1

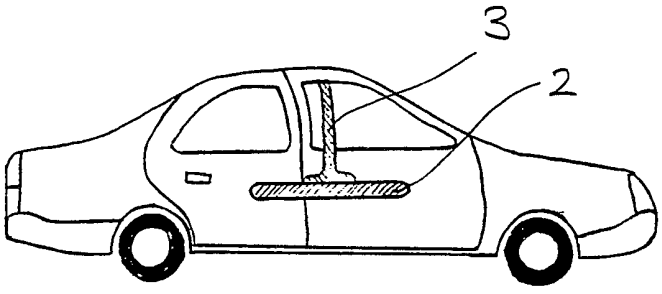

Figure 2

VEHICLE BODY PROTECTOR

The present invention relates to a vehicle body protector, in particular a protector for car doors.

Vehicle bodies, especially car doors, are often scratched or dented either by an occupant of the vehicle opening a door against a solid object or by an occupant of a neighbouring vehicle opening a door against the vehicle body. Such damage to vehicle bodies is prevalent in garages and public car parks.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a vehicle body protector.

According to the present invention there is provided a vehicle body protector comprising a resilient protecting body and securing means connected thereto whereby the protector can be supported on the outside of a vehicle by the securing means being anchored to the vehicle body.

In a preferred embodiment the resilient body is an inflatable plastic cylindrical body having a valve for the ingress and egress of air; the securing means comprising an elongate flat plastics strip connected at one end to the resilient body and including means at its other end to enable it to be held by a vehicle door or window. The securing means may be provided with a sucker for attaching it to a vehicle body while the strip is closed in the car door or window.

The present invention is particularly useful when neighbouring vehicles are parked too closely to allow persons to enter or alight from a vehicle.

An embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying diagrammatic drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a vehicle body protector; and

Figure 2 shows a car fitted with a vehicle body protector.

Referring to Figure 1, a vehicle body protector 1 comprises an elongate cylindrical protecting body 2 and a securing means 3 in the form of an elongate strip.

The strip 3 comprises an elongate section 4 and a stabilising section 5.

The strip 3 is attached to the body 2 via the stabilising section 5. The stabilising section 5 is wider than the elongate section 4 of the strip to help the protecting body rest flat against a vehicle body.

In the embodiment shown, the protecting body is an inflatable plastic tube, although it may also be made of a resilient material such as rubber or sponge.

The strip is preferably made of a strong plastic or fabric.

As shown in Figure 2, a vehicle body protector is fitted to a vehicle by trapping a stopping element 7 fixed to the top end of the strip 3 in a closed vehicle door or window so that the protecting member rests horizontally against the vehicle body.

Preferably, the protecting body rests mid-height against the vehicle door to prevent damage thereto.

To fix the vehicle body protector to a vehicle, the stopping element and adjacent end portion of the strip remote from the body is folded over the open vehicle door or window to rest inside the vehicle. A sucker 6, provided on the back of the strip, helps to position the strip whilst the door or window is being closed by adhering to the inside of the vehicle door or window. In this way, the stopping element 7 is located inside the vehicle to prevent the strip from being pulled through the closed vehicle door or window.

Adhesion means other than a sucker may equally be used. The stopping element is a solid plastic rod fitted at the free end of the strip, although other solid elements may be used.

The dimensions of the vehicle body protector may be varied according to the dimensions of the vehicle body to be protected. For example, the length of the protecting member may be dependent upon the length of the car.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the protecting body and the strip are both made of 0.3mm polyvinylchloride and are moulded together. To mould the protecting body and strip together, the protecting body is provided with two narrow plastic flaps (not shown) along a part of its length, between which flaps the free end of the strip at the stabilising section is located and fixed. The protecting body is an inflatable cylindrical tube being 1 m long and 100 mm in diameter, whilst the strip is 0.9 m long and comprises a 100 mm wide elongate section 4 and a 250 mm wide stabilising section 5. The protecting body may be inflated through a valve 8. When not in use, the protector may be deflated for storage in a vehicle boot, for example.

CLAIMS

1. A vehicle body protector comprising a resilient protecting body and securing means connected thereto whereby the protector can be supported on the outside of a vehicle by the securing means being anchored to the vehicle body.

2. A protector as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the resilient body is an inflatable plastic body having a valve for the ingress and egress of air.

3. A protector as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the inflatable body is in the form of an elongate cylinder.

4. A protector as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the securing means comprises an elongate flat strip of plastic connected at one end to the resilient body and including means at its other end to enable it to be held by a vehicle door or window.

5. A protector as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the securing means is provided with a stopping element adjacent the end of the strip remote from the resilient body.

6. A protector as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the securing means is provided with a sucker between its ends.

7. A vehicle body protector substantially as described herein with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Patents Act 1977 Examiner's report to the Comptroller under Section 17 (The Search report)	Application number GB 9318757.3
Relevant Technical Fields (i) UK Cl (Ed.L) B7B (BPX, BPC) (ii) Int Cl (Ed.5) B60R 13/04, 19/20, 19/42	Search Examiner PAT EVERETT Date of completion of Search 27 OCTOBER 1993
Databases (see below) (i) UK Patent Office collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications. (ii) ONLINE DATABASES : EDOC WPIL	Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of Claims :- ALL

Categories of documents

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Y: Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of the same category.

A: Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.

P: Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of the present application.

E: Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of the present application.

&: Member of the same patent family; corresponding document.

Category	Identity of document and relevant passages		Relevant to claim(s)
X	US 5149166 A	(WILLE) - Figures 1, 2 especially	1,4,5
X	US 4869538 A	(PRESLEY) - Figures 1, 10, note inflatable plastics tube 2	1-3
X	US 4828303 A	(SORIA) - whole document relevant, note strap and bar arrangement 48 and suckers 50-56	1,4,5,6
X	US 4815777 A	(CAMPBELL) - note expandable portion 8	1,4
X	US 4561685 A	(FISCHER) - Figure 4	1,4
X	US 4014583 A	(FORBES) - Figures 1,2	1,4,5

Databases: The UK Patent Office database comprises classified collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications as outlined periodically in the Official Journal (Patents). The on-line databases considered for search are also listed periodically in the Official Journal (Patents).