SHOWER CURTAIN SUPPORT APPARATUS AND METHOD

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ABSTRACT

A shower curtain support assembly having a telescoping shower curtain rod that is pivotally affixed to a mounting or support bracket and rotatable about a Y-axis through a horizontal plane to multiple positions, including a deployed position and an undeployed or stored position. The shower curtain support assembly may further have a telescoping shower curtain rod extendable to, and retractable from, a retaining or support bracket. The telescoping shower curtain rod may have a clip on a proximal end for removably engaging with a receiving pocket or bracket. The telescoping rod may be arcuate, straight and/or hinged. The cross-section of the rod may include various geometric shapes.
FIG. 1
SHOWER CURTAIN SUPPORT APPARATUS AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] This description relates to shower curtain support assemblies and more particularly to telescoping shower curtain rods and mounting or support components for the same.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] Shower curtains are typically used for preventing water from splashing out of the shower enclosure area into the surrounding bathroom. Common shower configurations may include a bathtub with a shower curtain in a three walled shower enclosure. Shower curtains are typically hung from a tension mounted shower curtain rod, and while the shower curtain can be moved into an open or closed position, the rod remains fixed in place. Even when the shower curtain is pulled back into an open position, the curtain is positioned in the shower enclosure opening. Further, the fixed shower curtain rod remains a visual and physical barrier in the enclosure opening. Shower curtain rods and draped shower curtains are considered aesthetically unappealing or undesirable to many people, and they create a visual and physical encroachment on the space in a bathroom. Further, with regard to the shower curtain rod, the person entering the shower often has to duck in order to avoid hitting their head on the curtain rod when entering or leaving the shower.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0005] A shower curtain support assembly having a horizontally moveable telescoping shower curtain rod wherein the telescoping shower curtain rod is pivotally moveable about a first mounting or support bracket securely retaining a distal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod to a wall of the shower enclosure. The shower curtain support assembly has a telescoping shower curtain rod that is extendable, retractable and may be pivotally and rotatably positioned in a plurality of locations to provide enclosures of varying size or to store the telescoping shower curtain rod and shower curtain in a stored position. When the telescoping shower curtain rod is in a fully deployed position, the rod may be removable retained at a distal end by a clip or bracket. When the telescoping shower curtain rod is in an undeployed position, the telescoping shower curtain rod may be pivotally rotated to a stored position away from the enclosure opening and may further be releasably retained in the stored position by a clip or bracket. Alternatively, the telescoping shower curtain rod may provide cantilevered support for the shower curtain in the stored position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING(S)

[0006] FIG. 1 is a front elevation view of a shower enclosure employing a telescoping shower curtain rod and mounting or support components according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0007] FIG. 2 is a partial top front isometric view of a shower enclosure showing various positions of a telescoping shower curtain rod and mounting or support components according to one illustrated embodiment, the telescoping shower curtain rod having a straight shape and a rectangular profile.

[0008] FIG. 3 is a top plan view of another shower enclosure showing various positions of a telescoping shower curtain rod and mounting or support components according to another illustrated embodiment.

[0009] FIG. 4 is a top plan view of yet another shower enclosure showing various positions of a telescoping shower curtain rod and mounting or support components according to yet another illustrated embodiment.

[0010] FIG. 5 is a top plan view of a shower enclosure showing a telescoping shower curtain rod having an angled end and positions of mounting or support components according to another illustrated embodiment.

[0011] FIG. 6 is an isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod having an arcuate shape and rectangular profile, and associated mounting or support components according to another illustrated embodiment.

[0012] FIG. 7 is an isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod having a straight shape and a rectangular profile, and associated mounting or support components according to another illustrated embodiment.

[0013] FIG. 8 is an isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod having an arcuate shape and rectangular profile, and associated mounting or support components according to another illustrated embodiment.

[0014] FIG. 9 is an isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod having an angled hinge section, and associated mounting or support components according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0015] FIG. 10A is a partial isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod with an exemplary clip in an engaged position on a reciprocating mounting or support component according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0016] FIG. 10B is an isometric view of the exemplary clip in FIG. 10A in a disengaged position according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0017] FIG. 11 is a top plan view of the exemplary clip engaged with a reciprocating bracket wherein the receiving bracket has directional tabs for retaining the clip in an engaged position according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0018] FIG. 12 is a partial isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod with an exemplary capped hollow cylindrical shaped clip in a disengaged position apart from the reciprocal mounting or support component wherein the clip has a grip associated therewith according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0019] FIG. 13 is a partial isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod with an exemplary capped hollow cylindrical shaped clip in a disengaged position apart from the associated mounting or support component according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0020] FIG. 14 is a partial isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod with an exemplary hook in a disengaged position apart from the reciprocal mounting or support component.
component wherein the clip has a grip associated therewith according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0021] FIG. 15 is a partial isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod with an exemplary spring loaded clip mechanism in a disengaged position apart from the reciprocal c-shaped mounting or support component according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0022] FIG. 16 is a partial isometric view of a telescoping shower curtain rod with an exemplary slideably retained c-bracket clip in a disengaged position apart from the reciprocal u-shaped mounting or support component according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0023] FIG. 17 is a front elevational view of an exemplary telescoping shower curtain rod in an extended position according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0024] FIG. 18 is an exemplary enlarged cross-sectional view along line 18-18 of the telescoping shower curtain rod in FIG. 17.

[0025] FIGS. 19A-D are exemplary cross-sectional views along line 19-19 of the telescoping shower curtain rod of FIG. 18 illustrating various cross-sectional profiles for the telescoping shower curtain rod.

[0026] FIG. 20 is a front elevational view of yet another exemplary telescoping shower curtain rod in an extended position according to one illustrated embodiment.

[0027] FIG. 21 is a cross-sectional view along line 21-21 of the telescoping shower curtain rod shown in FIG. 20.

[0028] FIGS. 22A and 22B are isometric views of exemplary connecting pieces for interlocking telescoping segments of the telescoping shower curtain rod shown in FIG. 21.

[0029] FIGS. 23A through 23C are isometric views of exemplary end caps of the telescoping shower curtain rod shown in FIG. 21.

[0030] FIG. 24 is an exploded view of the telescoping shower curtain rod further illustrating the telescoping segments, end caps and connection pieces shown in FIG. 21.

[0031] FIG. 25 is an enlarged view of the exploded connection mechanism of the telescoping rod shown in FIG. 24.

[0032] In the drawings, identical reference numbers identify similar elements or acts. The sizes and relative positions of elements in the drawings are not necessarily drawn to scale. For example, the shapes of various elements and angles are not drawn to scale, and some of these elements are arbitrarily enlarged and positioned to improve drawing legibility. Further, the particular shapes of the elements as drawn, are not intended to convey any information regarding the actual shape of the particular elements, and have been solely selected for ease of recognition in the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0033] In the following description, certain specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of various embodiments. However, one skilled in the relevant art will recognize that the embodiments may be practiced without one or more of these specific details, or with other methods, components’, materials, etc. In other instances, well-known structures associated with the shower curtain support assembly have not been shown or described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring descriptions of the embodiments.

[0034] Unless the context requires otherwise, throughout the specification and claims which follow, the word “comprise” and variations thereof, such as, “comprises” and “comprising” are to be construed in an open, inclusive sense, that is as “including, but not limited to.”

[0035] Reference throughout this specification to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment. Thus, the appearances of the phrases “in one embodiment” or “in an embodiment” in various places throughout this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Further more, the particular features, structures, or characteristics may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more embodiments.

[0036] The headings provided herein are for convenience only and do not interpret the scope or meaning of the claims.

[0037] Described herein is a shower curtain support assembly having a telescoping shower curtain rod extendable to, and retractable from, a retaining or support bracket mounted to a wall of a shower enclosure. A distal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod may be pivotally rotatable about affixed mounting or support bracket to multiple positions including an open position and a closed or stored position. When in an open position, the telescoping shower curtain rod may be removable affixed at a proximal end to a receiving pocket or bracket mounted to the shower enclosure wall. The telescoping shower curtain rod may have a clip on the proximal end for removably engaging with the receiving pocket or bracket. The telescoping shower curtain rod may be arcuate, straight and/or hinged. The cross-section of the telescoping shower curtain rod may include various geometric shapes including rectangular, oblong, circular or elliptical.

[0038] FIG. 1 shows a front elevation view of an exemplary shower enclosure 100, shower curtain support assembly 101 and shower curtain 104. The shower curtain support assembly 101 comprises a telescoping shower curtain rod 102 and mounting or support components 103. FIG. 1 shows the telescoping shower curtain rod 102 telescopically extended from its undeployed position, and deployed across the shower enclosure 100 from its undeployed position. The shower curtain 104 hangs from the telescoping shower curtain rod 102.

[0039] A distal end 106 of the telescoping shower curtain rod 102 is pivotally connected to a first mounting or support bracket 108 mounted to a wall 109 of the shower enclosure 100 for movement about a vertical axis Y such that the telescoping shower curtain rod 102 may be swung across a plane (i.e., the plane of the sheet of FIG. 1) defined by the opening of the shower enclosure 100. In accordance with aspects of one embodiment a proximal end 110 of the, telescoping shower curtain rod 102 includes mounting or support mechanism such as a clip 112 or a detent. The telescoping shower curtain rod 102 is extendable to allow the clip 112 to removably engage the receiving pocket or bracket 114 mounted to an opposite wall 115 of the enclosure 100.
FIG. 2 shows an isometric partial view of an exemplary shower enclosure 200 having a shower curtain support assembly 202. For purposes of clarity, the, shower curtain is not shown in the following figures. The shower curtain support assembly 202 includes a mounting or support bracket 204 pivotally retaining a distal end 206 of a telescoping shower curtain rod 208, which is shown in a deployed or extended position. The exemplary mounting or support bracket 204 allows the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 to rotate through a horizontal plane about a vertical axis Y (FIG. 1). The proximal end 210 of the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 includes a clip 212 with a handle 214 for releasably engaging a receiving pocket or receiving bracket 216. The mounting or support brackets 204, 216 are fixedly attached to walls 218 of the shower enclosure with typical mechanical fasteners such as screw, bolts, adhesives or similar devices.

The telescoping shower curtain rod 208 in FIG. 2 is shown in three exemplary positions A, B, C, however, it is understood there may be additional or fewer receiving brackets positioned in various locations on the shower enclosure walls to allow for additional or fewer releasably engaged positions of the telescoping shower curtain rod. A first fully deployed position A of the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 allows the shower curtain to be extended along the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 to provide maximum space within the shower enclosure 200 for showering. A second partially deployed position B allows for the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 to be fully contained within the shower enclosure 200 while allowing adequate space within the shower enclosure 200 for a person to shower. Alternatively, the second position B may be used as a stored position, allowing the shower curtain to be contained within the shower enclosure 200 such that the shower curtain is not intruding on the bathroom space beyond the shower enclosure 200. A third exemplary fully undeployed position C is illustrative of a retracted stored position for the telescoping shower curtain rod 208. In this third position, the shower curtain (not shown) and the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 are retracted along a wall 218 of the shower enclosure 200, thus allowing for compact storage of the shower curtain support assembly 202. In the third exemplary position C, the shower curtain and the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 are physically and visibly removed from an opening of the shower enclosure 200, thus allowing for the appearance of more space in the bathroom area.

The distal end 206 of the exemplary telescoping shower curtain rod 208 is pivotally connected to a retaining bracket 204 to allow the telescoping shower curtain rod to rotate about a Y-axis through a horizontal plane. The retaining bracket 204 is affixed to the wall 218 of the shower enclosure 200 with mechanical fasteners as described above. Alternatively, the distal end 206 of the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 may be pivotally affixed directly to the shower enclosure wall 218.

In the exemplary embodiment, the proximal end 210 of the exemplary telescoping shower curtain rod 208 includes an exemplary clip 212 and integral handle 214 for releasably engaging a receiving pocket or bracket 216. When the clip 212 is engaged with the pocket 216, the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 is secured in position such that the shower curtain can be slid along the telescoping shower curtain rod 208 without disengaging the previously engaged connection at the proximal end 210 of the telescoping shower curtain rod 208. Alternatively, the telescoping shower curtain rod may provide cantilevered support to the shower curtain (not shown) such that a clip and receiving bracket is not required.

FIG. 3 shows a top plan view of a shower and tub enclosure 300. Three exemplary telescoping shower curtain rods 302, 304, 306 are illustrated in a fully deployed configuration. Each telescoping shower curtain rod 302, 304, 306 is pivotally connected at a distal end 307 to a bracket 308 along a wall 310 of the shower and tub enclosure 300. The first telescoping shower curtain rod 302 is linearly telescoping rod that is removable affixed at a proximal end 314 of the telescoping shower curtain rod 302 to a wall 312 perpendicular to the wall 310 wherein the distal end 307 is pivotally affixed. The telescoping shower curtain rod 302 thus forms a triangular shaped shower area when in a fully deployed position. The linearly telescoping shower curtain rod 302 is further shown a retracted and undeployed stored position 320. In this exemplary embodiment, the telescoping shower curtain rod 302 is stored in a cantilevered position.

The second telescoping shower curtain rod 304 is also linearly telescoping, and further contains a hinge 316 toward the proximal end 314 to provide a polygonal shaped shower area. The third telescoping shower curtain rod 306 is shown in an arcuate shape which provides a larger area to shower.

FIG. 4 shows a top plan view of the telescoping shower curtain rods 302, 304, 306 of FIG. 3 adapted to be received in a two-walled shower enclosure 420.

FIG. 5 shows a top plan view of yet another configuration of a shower and tub enclosure 500 having a telescoping shower curtain rod 502 according to another illustrated embodiment. The telescoping shower curtain rod 502 is shown in the fully deployed position and includes a first angled portion 504 and a second angled portion 506 to provide a rectangular shape providing additional shower room when the telescoping shower curtain rod 502 is in the fully deployed position. Further shown in FIG. 5 are exemplary locations for receiving clips 508, 509. The telescoping shower curtain rod 502 is in a retracted stored position when removably secured into clip 508. The telescoping shower curtain rod 502 is in a partially deployed and stored position when removably secured into clip 509 providing reduced shower space but allowing the shower curtain (not shown) to be positioned within the shower and tub enclosure 500.

In operation, the telescoping shower curtain rod 502 of FIG. 5 provides additional showering room by extending the perimeter of the enclosure, while maintaining the functionality of the shower curtain, namely, retaining the water within the shower and tub, or shower enclosure. Increasing the size of the shower enclosure is desirable for many reasons, including providing sufficient room to avoid the shower curtain touching the bather, and providing oversized persons with adequate showering room, and accommodating multiple people at one time.

FIGS. 6 through 9 illustrate various exemplary telescoping shower curtain rod embodiments. It will be understood that components of the telescoping shower curtain rods shown in these figures may be interchanged, for
example, the connecting bracket, the clip or hook configuration, the telescoping shower curtain rod shape, the hinge locations, and the receiving bracket.

[0050] FIG. 6 shows a shower curtain support assembly 600 having an arcuate shaped telescoping shower curtain rod 602, a pivotal hinge 606 at a distal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod 602 for allowing the telescoping shower curtain rod 602 to be pivotally rotatable about the Y-axis through a horizontal plane, a slideably engageable bracket 604 on a proximal end of the shower curtain support assembly 600, and a clip 608 on the proximal end of the shower curtain support assembly 600 for removably engaging a bracket mounted on a wall (not shown). The exemplary clip 608 includes a loop or handle 610 for holding the clip when deploying undeploying or pivotally rotating the telescoping shower curtain rod 602.

[0051] FIG. 7 shows an exploded view of a shower curtain support assembly 700 and a pocket bracket 712. The shower curtain support assembly 700 has a linear shaped telescoping shower curtain rod 702, a fixably engageable bracket 704 on a distal end of the shower curtain support assembly 700, a pivotal hinge 706 for allowing the telescoping shower curtain rod 702 to be pivotally rotatable about the Y-axis through a horizontal plane, and a cone 708 on the proximal end of the shower curtain support assembly 700 for removably engaging a pocket bracket 712 which is mounted on a wall of a shower enclosure. The exemplary cone 708 includes an integral grip 711 for gripping the proximal end of the shower curtain support assembly 700 when deploying, undeploying or pivotally rotating the telescoping shower curtain rod 702.

[0052] FIG. 8 shows an exploded view of a shower curtain support assembly 800 and a bracket 812 having a pocket 814. The shower curtain support assembly 800 has an arcuate shaped telescoping shower curtain rod 802, a fixably engageable bracket 804 on a distal end of the shower curtain support assembly 800, a pivotal hinge 806 for allowing the telescoping shower curtain rod 802 to be pivotally rotatable about the Y-axis through a horizontal plane, and a hook 808 affixed to the proximal end of the shower curtain support assembly 800 for removably engaging the pocket 814 of the bracket 812. The bracket 812 is mounted on a wall of a shower enclosure. The exemplary cone 808 includes an integral grip 811 for gripping the proximal end of the shower curtain support assembly 800 when deploying, undeploying or pivotally rotating the telescoping shower curtain rod 802.

[0053] FIG. 9 shows an exploded view of a shower curtain support assembly 900 and brackets 912 for securing the support assembly 900 to walls of a shower enclosure (not shown). The shower curtain support assembly 900 has a linear shaped telescoping shower curtain rod 902, a bracket 904, a slideably engageable mechanism 905, a pivotal hinge 906 at a distal end, an angled hinge 916, a clip 908 and a bracket 912 having a receiving pocket 914. The slideably engageable mechanism 905 on the distal end of the shower curtain support assembly 900 connects to the bracket 904 to fixedly secure the telescoping shower curtain rod 902 to the wall. The pivotal hinge 906 allows the telescoping shower curtain rod 902 to be pivotally rotatable about the Y-axis through a horizontal plane. The angled hinge 916 rotates inward to provide a larger shower area as described above. The clip 908 is affixed to a proximal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod 902 to removably engage the pocket 914 of the bracket 912. The bracket 912 is mounted on a wall of a shower enclosure. The exemplary clip 908 includes an integral grip 911 for gripping the proximal end of the shower curtain support assembly 900 when deploying, undeploying or pivotally rotating the telescoping shower curtain rod 902.

[0054] FIGS. 10 through 16 show alternative embodiments of the removably engageable connection at a proximal end of the telescoping curtain rod. These alternative embodiments, and those alternative embodiments and other alternatives described herein, are substantially similar to previously described embodiments, and common acts and structures are identified by the same reference numbers. Only significant differences in operation and structure are described below.

[0055] FIG. 10A shows an isometric view of an exemplary removably engageable connection located on a proximal end of a telescoping shower curtain rod. FIG. 10B is an isometric view of the removably engageable connection of FIG. 10A in an unengaged configuration. FIGS. 10A and 10B show a telescoping shower curtain rod 1002 having a fixed right angle 1003. An integral clip 1008 and a handle 1011 are connected to the proximal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod 1002 by a connection 1020. The connection 1020 is slideably secured on a proximal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod 1002. A support or mounting bracket 1012 includes a pocket 1014 for removably receiving the clip 1008. The clip 1008 may be released from the pocket 1014 by gripping the handle 1011 and exerting a lateral force toward an open side of the pocket 1014. The exemplary receiving, pocket 1014 further includes a lip 1018 on the interior of the pocket, thus providing a ledge for a bottom edge 1019 of the clip 1008 to, sit upon. The lip 1018 provides additional retaining means for holding the telescoping shower curtain rod 1002 in position.

[0056] FIG. 11 shows a top view of a clip 1108 located on a proximal end of a telescoping curtain shower rod positioned in a receiving bracket 1114. The clip 1108 is secured in a receiving bracket having directional tabs 1122, 1124 to prevent accidental release or disengagement of the clip.

[0057] FIG. 12 shows yet another embodiment of the removably engageable connection located on the proximal end of a telescoping shower curtain rod 1202. The connection includes a hollow capped cylinder 1208 and a reciprocal solid retaining cylinder 1214 with a rounded cap 1225 for removably receiving the capped hollow cylinder 1208. The connection further includes an integral handle 1211 for positioning the capped hollow cylinder 1208 on or off the retaining cylinder 1214. The solid retaining cylinder 1214 is secured to a wall of the shower enclosure with a mounting for support 1212. The rounded cap 1225 of the solid retaining cylinder 1214 acts as a guide for positioning the hollow cylinder 1208 thereon. The cap 225 of the hollow cylinder 1208 may provide additional vertical support for the telescoping shower curtain rod 1208 by resting on the cap 1225 of the solid retaining cylinder 1214.

[0058] FIG. 13 shows an alternative embodiment of the hollow cylinder 1208 and solid retaining cylinder 1214 connection of FIG. 12. In the alternative embodiment shown in FIG. 13, the connection does not include a grip or handle. In accordance with this embodiment, the user grasps the telescoping shower curtain rod 1302 for roving the cylinder and engaging the connection.
Fig. 14 shows yet another embodiment of the removably engageable connection on the proximal end of a telescoping shower curtain rod 1402. The connection includes a cone 1408 and a reciprocal cone shaped concave pocket or catch 1414 integral with a mounting or support bracket 1412. The mounting or support bracket 1412 is secured to a wall of the shower enclosure. The connection further includes an integral handle 1411 for positioning the cone 1408 into the pocket or catch 1414. The reciprocal shape of the pocket or catch 1414 acts as a guide for positioning the cone 1408 therein.

Fig. 15 shows yet another embodiment of the removably engageable connection on the proximal end of a telescoping shower curtain rod 1502. The connection includes a spring loaded rod mechanism 1508 positioned at a proximal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod 1502 and a c-shaped receiving bracket 1512 having reciprocal pockets 1514 for receiving ends of the spring loaded rod mechanism 1508. Aspects of this removably engageable connection function similar to a toilet paper retaining dispenser as is known in the art. The bracket 1512 is secured to a wall of the shower enclosure.

Fig. 16 shows yet another embodiment of the removably engageable connection on the proximal end of a telescoping shower curtain rod 1602. The connection includes a slideably retained e-bracket 1608 connected with a rotation pivot 1603 to a proximal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod 1602 and a reciprocal u-shaped receiving bracket 1612 having rails 1614 for receiving the e-bracket 1608. An alternative embodiment of this exemplary connection include a locking mechanism as is known in the art to secure the e-bracket 1608 to the reciprocal u-shaped receiving bracket 1612. The bracket 1612 is secured to a wall of the shower enclosure.

The grip, loop, or handholds shown with the exemplary embodiments may alternatively be removable for integral with the clip. The grip may further be retractable. The grip, loop, or handhold may include any variety of shapes including but not limited to tabs, hooks, handles, angles, t-bars, pull cords, bulbs or the like. The grip may include a decorative shape that functions as a handle while allowing the shower curtain support assembly to further blend in with and enhance the decor of the bathroom. These decorative shapes may be any shape currently known in the art.

The clip, e-bracket, cylinder and the like may be affixed to the proximal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod through a variety of mechanical means known in the art. Alternatively, the clip, e-bracket, cylinder and the like may be integrally formed with the telescoping shower curtain rod.

Fig. 17 shows an exemplary telescoping shower curtain rod 1702. Fig. 18 shows an enlarged cross-sectional view of the telescoping shower curtain rod of Fig. 17. The telescoping shower curtain rod 1702 shown in Fig. 17 has five telescoping sections, however, it is understood that there may be more or less telescoping sections depending on the size of the shower enclosure.

Fig. 18 shows a first section of rod 1802 that is slideably disposed within a relatively larger diameter, second section of rod 1804, and the second section of rod 1804 is slideably disposed within a relatively larger, third cross-section of rod 1806 such that the telescoping rods 1802, 1804, 1806 nest within one another when in an deployed or retracted position. The rod sections 1802, 1804, 1806 are generally in the form of hollow tubes. A respective inner tube section is in the form of an elongated rod or tube that has a cross-sectional diameter that allows it to freely slide within a respective outer tube section.

The first and second rod sections 1802, 1804 shown in Fig. 18 have end caps 1808 on an end slideably disposed within the adjacent rod. The second section of rod 1804 is further shown to include a connection piece 1812 partially contained within and juxtaposed between the second and third rod 1804, 1806 and partially extending on an exterior surface 1811 of the second rod 1804. The end caps 1808 include tabs 1810 or other securing means for securing the end caps 1808 on the end of the respective rod. The end caps 1808 further extend a distance along the exterior of the respective rod to provide a positive stop when the respective rod is in a deployed or extended position thus preventing the rod from completely separating from the respective adjacent rod. The connection piece 1812 also contains a tab or other securing means (not shown) for securing the connection piece 1812 to the respective rod. The connection piece 1812 further includes a tapered section 1814 transitioning the portion of the connection piece 1812 contained within the nested rods to the portion of the connection piece 1812 contained on an exterior of the respective rod. The transition includes a thickened section 1815 that provides a positive stop when the rods are in an undeployed or retracted position thus preventing the rods from completely reeding into the adjacent rod.

The rods may be constructed of aluminum or other alloy or metal, or may be constructed of a plastic or other composite material. The end caps and connection pieces are molded plastic in the exemplary embodiment, but may be made of alternative materials that facilitate the sliding of the rods relative to one another. The end caps and connecting pieces may be further coated with Teflon or other coating to facilitate the sliding of the rods relative to one another.

Figs. 19A-D show various cross-sectional shapes of the telescoping shower curtain rod along line 19-19 of Fig. 18 and as described elsewhere throughout the specification. Fig. 19A shows an oval cross-sectional shape 1902, Fig. 19B shows a round cross-sectional shape 1904. Fig. 19C illustrates a rectangular cross-sectional shape 1906, and Fig. 19D shows an oblong cross-sectional shape 1908. Shower curtain rings, as are known in the art, could be shaped in corresponding shapes to each cross-sectional telescoping shower curtain rod shape shown. It is understood the telescoping shower curtain rod could conceivably be any geometric shape that would allow shower curtain rings to slide thereon, and the shapes are not limited to the four exemplary shapes shown in Figs. 19A-D. Further, in alternative embodiments, the telescoping shower curtain rod may contain ridges or grooves as desired for visual and functional enhancement.

Fig. 20 is an alternative embodiment of a telescoping shower curtain rod 2002. Fig. 21 is a cross-sectional view along line 21-21 of Fig. 20. Fig. 20 shows a first section of rod 2002 that is slideably disposed within a relatively larger diameter second section of rod 2004, and
the second section of rod 2004 is slideably disposed within a relatively larger third cross-section of rod 2006 such that the telescoping rods 2002, 2004, 2006 nest within one another when in an undeployed position. The first and second rod sections, 2002, 2004 shown in FIG. 21 have end caps 2108 on an end slideably disposed within the adjacent rod. The first and second section of rods 2002, 2004 are further shown to include connection pieces 2112 partially contained within and between the respective rods and partially extending to an exterior surface 2111 of the rods 2002, 2004. The end caps 2108 include tabs 2110 or other securing means for securing the end caps 2108 on the end of the respective rod. The end caps 2108 further extend a distance along the exterior of the respective rod to provide a positive stop against the corresponding connection piece when the respective rod is in the fully deployed position thus preventing the rod from completely separating from the respective adjacent rod. The connection piece 2112 also contains a tab 2117 or other securing means for securing the connection piece 2112 to the respective rod.

[0070] The connection piece 2112 further includes a tapered section 2114 providing a smooth transition between exterior surfaces and sections. The connection pieces include an interior section juxtaposed between respective rod sections to facilitate sliding and to provide a positive stop corresponding to the end cap so that when the rods are in a fully deployed position they are not disengaged.

[0071] In operation, the smooth transition between exterior surfaces of adjacent rod sections allows the rings of the shower curtain to slide freely along the length of the telescoping shower curtain rod.

[0072] FIGS. 22A and 22B show connection pieces 2112 with exemplary positioned retaining tabs 2117. FIG. 22A is a connection piece 2112 made of an integral sleeve having diametrically opposed slits 2118 along a portion of the sleeve for facilitating sliding and the connection piece over the respective rod. FIG. 22B is a connection piece 2112 having a first section 2210 and a second section 2220, the first and second sections combine to provide a connection piece 2112. According to one embodiment, the first section 2210 and/or the second section 2220 include a tab 2117 or other securing mechanism.

[0073] FIGS. 23A thorough 23C show exemplary end caps 2108, 2302, and 2304 with exemplary positioned retaining tabs 2110. FIG. 23A is an end cap 2108 manufactured in one piece and having diametrically opposed slits 2119 along a portion of the end cap 2108 for facilitating sliding the end cap 2108 over the respective rod. The end cap of FIG. 23A further includes a partial cap 2121 at a distal end of the end cap 2108 to prevent the end cap 2108 from slipping beyond the end of the rod. FIG. 23B is an end cap 2302 having a first section 2310 and a second section 2320, the first and second sections combine to provide an end cap 2302. FIG. 23C is an alternative embodiment of an end cap 2304 wherein the end cap 2304 is a cylindrical sleeve and does not contain a retaining cap at one end as shown and describe with respect to FIG. 23A.

[0074] The connection pieces and the end caps can be modified to accommodate any cross-sectional shape of a respective telescoping shower curtain rod in accordance with aspects disclosed herein.

[0075] FIG. 24 shows an exploded view of the telescoping shower curtain rod of FIG. 23. FIG. 25 shows, an exploded enlarged view of one connection between nesting rods of the telescoping shower curtain rod of FIG. 23.

[0076] The above description of illustrated embodiments, including what is described in the Abstract, is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Although specific embodiments of and examples are described herein for illustrative purposes, various equivalent modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, as will be recognized by those skilled in the relevant art. The teachings provided herein can be applied to shower curtain support assemblies, not necessarily the exemplary assembly generally described above.

[0077] The various embodiments described above can be combined to provide further embodiments. All of the U.S. patents, U.S. patent applications, U.S. patent applications, foreign patents, foreign patent applications and non-patent publications referred to in this specification and/or listed in the Application Data Sheet, are incorporated herein by reference, in their entirety. Aspects of the embodiments can be modified, if necessary, to employ systems, apparatuses and concepts of the various patents, applications and publications to provide yet further embodiments.

[0078] These and other changes can be made in light of the above-detailed description. In general, in the following claims, the terms used should not be construed to limit the claims to the specific embodiments disclosed in the specification and the claims, but should be construed to include all shower curtain assemblies that operated in accordance with the claims. Accordingly, the invention is not limited by the disclosure, but instead its scope is to be determined entirely by the following claims.

1. A shower curtain support assembly, comprising:
   - a retaining bracket; and
   - a telescoping rod having a distal end and a proximal end,
   - the distal end pivotally affixed to the retaining bracket,
   - the telescoping rod extending longitudinally from the retaining bracket, wherein the telescoping rod is moveable between a first undeployed position and a second fully deployed position.

2. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 1 further comprising a receiving bracket spaced a distance apart from the retaining bracket and a detent on the proximal end of the telescoping rod, the receiving bracket having a reciprocal notch configured to receive the detent wherein the detent on the distal end of the telescoping rod engages the receiving bracket securely retaining the telescoping rod in position when the telescoping rod is in a fully deployed position.

3. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 2 wherein the detent is a clip.

4. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 2 wherein the detent is a ball and the notch is a socket.

5. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 2 further comprising a grip at a distal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod and extending vertically downward from the telescoping shower curtain rod.

6. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 2 further comprising a handle at a distal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod adjacent to the detent.
7. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 2 further comprising a loop at a distal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod adjacent to the detent.

8. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 1 wherein the telescoping rod has an oval cross-sectional shape.

9. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 1 wherein the telescoping rod has a rectangular cross-sectional shape.

10. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 1 wherein the telescoping rod has an oblong cross-sectional shape.

11. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 1 wherein the telescoping rod has a circular cross-sectional shape.

12. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 2 further comprising a second receiving bracket affixed to the wall of the shower enclosure spaced a distance apart from the first receiving bracket and the retaining bracket, the second receiving bracket having a reciprocal notch configured to receive the detent, the second receiving bracket positioned to removably secure the retracted telescoping shower rod in a stored position.

13. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 2 further comprising a plurality of receiving brackets affixed to the wall of the shower enclosure spaced apart from each and positioned along the horizontal plane.

14. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 2 further comprising an angled hinged portion at the proximal end of the telescoping shower curtain rod, wherein the detent is contained at a distal end of the angled hinged portion, wherein the angled portion of the telescoping shower curtain rod is configured to provide additional space within the shower enclosure.

15. A shower curtain support assembly, comprising:

mounting means adapted to be attachable to the surface of a shower enclosure wall; and

first telescoping means having a first end and a second end, the first end pivotally mounted on the mounting means, the telescoping means having a plurality of telescoping segments nested within one another and slideably extendable, wherein the first end of the telescoping means is pivotally rotatable about the mounting means.

16. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 15, further comprising:

an engaging means on the second end of the telescoping means; and

a second mounting means adapted to be attachable to an opposite surface of a shower enclosure wall with respect to the first mounting means, wherein the second mounting means includes a reciprocal component for removably receiving the engaging means.

17. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 15 further comprising a gripping means affixed to the engaging means.

18. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 15 further comprising a plurality of mounting means positioned apart from one another and affixed to the surface of the wall, the plurality of mounting means sized to securely retain the engaging means.

19. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 15 wherein the plurality of telescoping segments are coaxial along a longitudinal axis.

20. A shower curtain support assembly, comprising:

a mounting bracket; and

a telescoping rod assembly having a plurality of nested telescoping rod segments, the telescoping rod assembly having a proximal end and a distal end, the telescoping rod assembly pivotally attached to the mounting bracket at a proximal end.

21. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 20 further comprising:

a clip contained on a distal end of the telescoping rod assembly; and

at least one of a support bracket, the support bracket configured to engage the clip.

22. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 20 wherein the telescoping rod assembly is an arcuate shape.

23. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 20 wherein the telescoping rod assembly has a connection piece between telescoping rod segments, wherein the connection piece provides a smooth transition between telescoping rod segments of varying diameter.

24. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 20 wherein the clip further includes an integral grip.

25. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 24 wherein the grip is a handle extending vertically downward from the telescoping rod assembly.

26. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 24 wherein the grip is a loop having an opening sized to accommodate a hand.

27. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 20 wherein the telescoping rod assembly has at least three telescoping rod segments.

28. A shower curtain support assembly for use in a bathing enclosure, comprising:

a first bracket; and

a telescoping rod having a first end and a second end, the first end pivotally engaged with the first bracket, wherein the telescoping rod is pivotable about the first bracket through a substantially horizontal plane across an opening to the bathing enclosure.

29. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 28 wherein the telescoping rod comprises a plurality of slideably disposed segments nested together, the segments having a cross-sectional shape and diameter that allow adjacent segments to slide relative to one another.

30. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 29 wherein the cross-sectional shape of the segments are circular.

31. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 29 wherein the cross-sectional shape of the segments are rectangular.

32. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 29 wherein the cross-sectional shape of the segments are oblong.

33. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 28 wherein the telescoping rod further includes at least one of a connection piece between adjacent segments of the telescoping rod and end caps on an end of the segment nested within an adjacent segment, the connection pieces and end
caps providing a retaining means for retaining the segments in a partially nested configuration when the telescoping rod is in a deployed position.

34. The shower curtain support assembly of claim 33 wherein the connection piece comprises a first portion juxtaposed between adjacent segments and a second tapered portion extending beyond an end of a first larger diameter segment and along an exterior surface of a second smaller diameter segment, the tapered portion providing a smooth transition between segments of different diameters.

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