A flotation device has a main body with an opening therein to receive a container. The flotation device is preferably covered with a waterproof or resistant covering to protect a foam main body portion. The flotation device may also have openings
FLOTATION DEVICE FOR A CONTAINER

[0001] This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) to provisional application No. 61/431,418, filed on Jan. 10, 2011, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention is directed to a flotation device for a container and more particularly it is a flotation device into which a bucket or other container can be inserted and will allow the container to float.

[0004] 2. Technical Background

[0005] Typical five gallon buckets are used for a variety of purposes. These include use as bait buckets, to hold tools in a variety of businesses, to carry supplies, etc. Many of the users will use them around water, and particularly on a boat. In the event that the user is not careful, the bucket can be knocked into the water, or if used on the shore, could be washed out by a wave. Thus, it would be helpful to have a way of preventing the bucket from being lost and also provide a number of openings therein to hold tools, drinks, lures, etc.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In one aspect, flotation device is provided that includes a main body having an opening in a central portion thereof to receive a container for floating on water, the opening extending from a top surface through the main body to the bottom surface, a covering substantially surrounding the main body, the covering providing protection for the main body from water, and at least one cavity in a top surface of the main body

[0007] Additional features and advantages of the invention will be set forth in the detailed description which follows, and in part will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art from the description or recognized by practicing the invention as described herein, including the detailed description, which follows, the claims, as well as the appended drawings.

[0008] It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description of the present embodiments of the invention are intended to provide an overview or framework for understanding the nature and character of the invention as it is claimed. The accompanying drawings are included to provide a further understanding of the invention and are incorporated into and constitute a part of this specification. The drawings illustrate various embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles and operations of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is a drawing of a top view of one embodiment of a flotation device according to the present invention;
[0010] FIG. 2 is a drawing of a side view of the flotation device of FIG. 1;
[0011] FIG. 3 is an elevational view of the body of the flotation device according to the present invention being applied to one type of container;
[0012] FIG. 4 is an elevational view of the body of the flotation device of FIG. 3 installed on a container; and

[0013] FIG. 5 is a cross sectional view of the flotation device as illustrated in FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0014] Reference will now be made in detail to the present preferred embodiment(s) of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Whenever possible, the same reference numerals will be used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like parts.

[0015] As illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2, one embodiment of a flotation device 100 according to the present invention is illustrated. The flotation device 100 has a main body 102 that is preferably floating foam center 104 with a water resistant/ water proof covering 106. See also FIG. 5. The main body 102 has a top surface 110, a bottom surface 112, an outside surface 114, and an inside surface 116. The foam center 104 may be made of other materials that allow the flotation device 100 to float on water, thus requiring that the density of the material of center 104 be less than water. For example, it could be an inflatable covering as well. The covering 106 may be made of a polymer rubber coating or any other appropriate material that will prevent the center 104 from becoming waterlogged. The covering 106 also will assist in keeping the center 104 from being degraded and getting dirt in it.

[0016] As can be best seen in FIG. 1, the main body 102 is preferably round with a center opening 108, but may be of any appropriate outer shape. It should be noted that since the flotation device 100 is to encircle as bucket as described in more detail below, it is preferable that the opening 108 be round, but it may also have other configurations and still fall within the scope of the present invention. The overall dimensions of the flotation device 100 will depend on the size of the container to be used with the flotation device 100 and the contents to be placed in the container. As an example, a five gallon bucket 120 is illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4, but a three and a half gallon bucket may be used. The flotation device 100 need not be of the same thickness or diameter for the five and the three and a half gallon containers. Similarly, a differently shaped container may be used with the body of the flotation device, including without limitation, oval, rectangular, and square.

[0017] Cavities 122 around the circumference of the main body 102 may be used to store objects or tools during use. The locations and sizes of the cavities 122 may be different than illustrated. It should be noted that some of the cavities are circular and some are oval. Other shapes are also possible. It is also possible that the cavities 122 have other protective coverings instead of or in addition to the covering 106. For example a hard plastic covering 124 could be inserted in the bottom 126 of each of the cavities 122 to prevent tools or objects from puncturing the covering 106. Thus, the cavities 122 preferably do not extend through the main body 102 so that the cavities 122 would retain the objects/tools inserted therein. However, some or all of the cavities 122 may extend completely through the main body 102 if so desired.

[0018] The main body 102 of the flotation device 100 is, as illustrated in FIG. 3, slid over the container 120, preferably from the bottom, and may engage a projection on the container to prevent the container 120 from passing completely through the opening 108 of the main body. FIG. 4 illustrates the flotation device 100 in place on the container 120. While the container 120 is illustrated as a bucket, it may also be a
cooler or other type container. The flotation device 100 may be attached to the container in other ways as well.

[0019] It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made to the present invention without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus it is intended that the present invention cover the modifications and variations of this invention provided they come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

1. A flotation device comprising:
main body having an opening in a central portion thereof to receive a container for floating on water, the opening extending from a top surface through the main body to the bottom surface;
a covering substantially surrounding the main body, the covering providing protection for the main body from water; and
at least one cavity in a top surface of the main body.

2. The flotation device according to claim 1, wherein the covering is a polymer rubber coating.

3. The flotation device according to claim 1, wherein the main body is circular and the opening is circular.

4. The flotation device according to claim 1, wherein the at least one cavity has a protective covering therein.

5. The flotation device according to claim 1, wherein the at least one cavity includes a plurality of cavities and at least one of the plurality of cavities has a shape different from the other of the plurality of cavities.

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