A lunch box, configured for attachment to a portable container, includes a body having an interior accessible through an opening, a lid movably attached to the body and configured to selectively cover the opening, and a locking mechanism attached to the body and having a first attachment component and a second attachment component. The locking mechanism has (i) a first attached configuration wherein the first attachment component is selectively coupled to the second attachment component such that a portion of the portable container is selectively retained between the locking mechanism and the body, and (ii) a second attached configuration wherein at least one of the first and second attachment components is selectively coupled to a portion of the portable container.
Fig. 1

Fig. 2
EXECUTIVE LUNCH BOX
CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/788,817, filed Mar. 15, 2013, entitled “Executive Lunch Box,” currently pending, the entire contents of which are incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

People travelling to work, meetings, or other events will often take a bag or case, such as a briefcase, suitcase, purse, hand bag, or the like, to carry important items. Often it is also desired to bring along a lunch or other type of food or drink that would best be kept in a separate lunch box or lunch bag for various reasons (e.g., cold storage, avoiding messes, or the like). Unfortunately, the bag or case carried by the individual is usually too small, too full, or too unsanitary to contain the lunch box. The individual is therefore left with having to handle two items instead of one.

Systems where a small bag may be attached to a larger bag or case are currently available. However, many of these systems require the larger bag to have a custom type of locking mechanism for receiving and retaining the smaller bag. Other systems are designed for use with a variety of larger bags, but the connection between the two bags is often not too small to allow, so that during walking or travel the smaller bag moves around with respect to the larger bag, creating annoyances and potential damage to either of the bags or their contents.

It would be desirable to provide a lunch box that may be securely to a variety of types of larger bags or cases but maintains a tight fit to prevent the aforementioned relative movement of the lunch box to the larger bag or case.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly stated, an embodiment of the present invention comprises a lunch box configured for attachment to a portable container. The lunch box includes a body having an interior accessible through an opening, a lid movably attached to the body and configured to selectively cover the opening, and a locking mechanism attached to the body and having a first attachment component and a second attachment component. The locking mechanism has (i) a first attachment configuration wherein the first attachment component is selectively coupled to the second attachment component such that a portion of the portable container is selectively retained between the locking mechanism and the body, and (ii) a second attachment configuration wherein at least one of the first and second attachment components is selectively coupled to a portion of the portable container.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The following detailed description of preferred embodiments of the invention, will be better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. For the purpose of illustration, there are shown in the drawings embodiments which are presently preferred. It should be understood, however, that the invention is not limited to the precise arrangements and instrumentalities shown.

FIG. 1 is a front side elevational view of a lunch box in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a back side elevational view of the lunch box of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a back side perspective view of the lunch box of FIG. 1 with a locking mechanism in a first configuration for attachment to the handle of a bag;

FIG. 4 is a back side perspective view of the lunch box of FIG. 1 with the locking mechanism in a second configuration;

FIG. 5 is a side perspective view of a first example bag to which the lunch box of FIG. 1 may be attached; and

FIG. 6 is a front side elevational view of a lunch box attached to a second example bag in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Certain terminology is used in the following description for convenience only and is not limiting. The words “right”, “left”, “lower”, and “upper” designate directions in the drawings to which reference is made. The words “inwardly” and “outwardly” refer to directions toward and away from, respectively, the geometric center of the device and designated parts thereof. The terminology includes the above-listed words, derivates thereof, and words of similar import. Additionally, the words “a” and “an” mean “at least one.”

Referring to the drawings in detail, there is shown in FIG. 1 a preferred embodiment of a lunch box 10. A body 12 of the lunch box 10 is preferably of a soft construction and is made from vinyl that contains foam insulation (not shown) to maintain temperature within the interior of the lunch box 10. However, the body 12 may be of hard or soft construction and may be manufactured from other materials, such as aluminum, tin, plastic, leather, or like food-safe fabrics, polymers, metals, or combinations thereof. The body 12 preferably has the shape of a square or rectangular cube, but may have other shapes such as cylindrical, parallelepiped, or the like. The lunch box 10 in FIG. 1 preferably has a fold-over lid 14 to cover an opening (not shown) of the body 12 accessing the interior thereof, and may be secured using a fastener 16 that in FIG. 1 takes the form of a turnkey. Other fasteners may be used as well, such as the belt and buckle combination shown in FIG. 6, hook-and-loop fasteners, clasps, clips, clamps, or the like.

The lid 14 may also be detachable from the body 12 or take other configurations. In some embodiments, the lid 14 may be omitted and the body 12 may be opened and closed using a fastener or the like.

A handle 18 may be provided on the lid 14 or a portion of the body 12 of the lunch box 10 to enable a user to conveniently carry the lunch box 10. The handle 18 may be attached to the lid 14 or body 12 by conventional methods, such as rivets or other mechanical fasteners, adhesives, or the like. Alternatively or additionally, the lunch box 10 may include one or more rings 20 (FIG. 3), each of which may be secured to the body 12 or lid 14 by a fastener 22. The rings 20 are configured to support a strap (not shown) that may have hooks (not shown) thereon which mate with the rings 20.

The interior of the lunch box 10 may include a number of pockets or compartments (not shown) that may be designed for general or specific storage. For example, a pocket may be provided for a water bottle, utensils, reusable...
ice packs, napkins, or the like. The interior is also preferably designed to contain conventionally sized food containers in addition to the specific compartments. The pockets or compartments can be integrally formed by the body 12 or may be attached thereto, as is conventionally known. Zippers or other closure mechanisms (not shown) may be provided on the body 12 to allow access to compartments in a manner other than through the lid 14. For example, one side of the body 12 may include a zipper to allow quick access to the water bottle compartment in the interior. Pockets or compartments may also be provided on the lid 14 or on the outside of the lunch box 10, as desired.

[0019] The lunch box 10 is configured for attachment to a conventional briefcase, suitcase, purse, handbag, or the like. A first example bag 30 is shown in FIG. 5. The first example bag 30 has a body 31 and includes a pair of elongated straps 32 attached to the body 31 for use as handles. A second example bag 34 is shown in FIG. 6 as having a body 35 with a single handle 36 attached thereto via metal loops 37.

[0020] To facilitate attachment to a bag such as the example bags 30, 34, the lunch box 10 is provided with a fastening mechanism 40 as shown in FIG. 2. In a preferred embodiment, the fastening mechanism 40 includes a pair of carabiner clips 42, each of which may be secured to a length of chain 44. A ring 46 is preferably attached to each chain 44 at a respective end opposite the corresponding carabiner clip 42. Each ring 46 is preferably respectively secured to the body 12 of the lunch box 10 via a fabric loop 48, which may be attached to the body 12 by stitching, mechanical fasteners, rivets, adhesives, or the like. It is preferred that each combination of a fabric loop 48, ring 46, chain 44, and carabiner clip 42 has a total length L when in a substantially horizontal position. Preferably, the length L is such that when the fastening mechanism 40 is in the configuration shown in FIG. 2 (i.e., the carabiner clips 42 are interlocked with each other), each carabiner clip 42 exerts a pulling force on the other carabiner clip 42. As a result, the locking mechanism 40 is taut against the body 12 of the lunch box 10.

[0021] FIG. 3 shows the lunch box 10 in the process of attachment to an elongated strap 32 of the first example bag 30. The locking mechanism 40 is preferably locked around the elongated strap 32 proximate a location where the elongated strap 32 is coupled to the body 31 of the first example bag 30. The taut configuration of the locking mechanism 40 holds the lunch box 10 tightly against the first example bag 30 to prevent excessive movement with respect thereto. If desired, adjustment straps (not shown) may be included to allow for tightening or loosening of the locking mechanism 40 around the elongated strap 32. In addition, a spring (not shown) may be added to the locking mechanism 40, such as between the chain 44 and the carabiner clip 40 to maintain the locking mechanism 40 in a taut configuration.

[0022] It is further preferred that the locking mechanism 40 has a second configuration shown in FIGS. 4 and 6. With the carabiner clips 42 unlocked from one another, the carabiner clips 42 can be used to connect to existing features of a bag. For example, in FIG. 6, each of the carabiner clips 42 of the lunch box 10 is coupled to a corresponding metal loop 37 of the second example bag 34. This configuration of the locking mechanism 40 allows the lunch box 10 to be connected to a bag even if the preferred configuration (FIG. 2) is impractical for use with the bag to which the lunch box 10 is to be attached.

[0023] While the locking mechanism 40 is shown as having carabiner clips 42, other types of clips or detachable mechanical fasteners may be used in keeping with the invention. Similarly, the construction of the locking mechanism 40 is not limiting, as the stated components thereof are merely exemplary. For example, the carabiner clips 42 may be attached directly to fabric loops 48 thereby omitting the rings 46 and chains 44. Similarly, certain components of the locking mechanism 40 may be replaced with equivalents thereof.

[0024] From the foregoing, it can be seen that embodiments of the present invention comprise a lunch box. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that changes could be made to the embodiments described above without departing from the broad inventive concepts thereof. It is understood, therefore, that the invention is not limited to the particular embodiments disclosed, but is intended to cover modifications within the spirit and scope of the present invention.

1. A lunch box configured for attachment to a portable container, the lunch box comprising:
   a body having an interior accessible through an opening;
   a lid movably attached to the body and configured to selectively cover the opening;
   a locking mechanism attached to the body and having a first attachment component and a second attachment component, the locking mechanism having:
   (i) a first attachment configuration wherein the first attachment component is selectively coupled to the second attachment component such that a portion of the portable container is selectively retained between the locking mechanism and the body, and
   (ii) a second attachment configuration wherein at least one of the first and second attachment components is selectively coupled to a portion of the portable container.

2. The lunch box of claim 1, wherein the first and second attachment components include carabiner clips that are coupled to one another in the first attached configuration and coupled to the portable container in the second attached configuration.

3. The lunch box of claim 2, wherein the carabiner clips are each secured to the body by a fabric loop.

4. The lunch box of claim 3, wherein the first and second attachment components each include a ring secured to the respective fabric loop and coupled to the respective carabiner clip.

5. The lunch box of claim 4, wherein each of the first and second attachment components includes a length of chain arranged between the respective ring and carabiner clip.

6. The lunch box of claim 1, wherein the lid is secured to the body to close the opening with a fastener.

7. The lunch box of claim 6, wherein the fastener is one of a turnkey or a buckle.

8. The lunch box of claim 1, wherein the lid includes a handle arranged thereon.

9. The lunch box of claim 1, wherein the body is insulated.