

(19) **DANMARK**

(10) **DK/EP 2118967 T3**



(12)

Oversættelse af
europæisk patentskrift

Patent- og
Varemærkestyrelsen

-
- (51) Int.Cl.: **H 01 R 4/50 (2006.01)**
- (45) Oversættelsen bekendtgjort den: **2016-08-22**
- (80) Dato for Den Europæiske Patentmyndigheds bekendtgørelse om meddelelse af patentet: **2016-05-04**
- (86) Europæisk ansøgning nr.: **08730003.4**
- (86) Europæisk indleveringsdag: **2008-02-15**
- (87) Den europæiske ansøgnings publiceringsdag: **2009-11-18**
- (86) International ansøgning nr.: **US2008054118**
- (87) Internationalt publikationsnr.: **WO2008101181**
- (30) Prioritet: **2007-02-15 US 675315** **2007-10-10 US 870256**
- (84) Designerede stater: **AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MT NL NO PL PT RO SE SI SK TR**
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- (54) Benævnelse: **Ultraviolet lampe til anvendelse i vandrensere**
- (56) Fremdragne publikationer:
WO-A1-2006/136026
WO-A2-2007/098163
US-A- 2 135 267
US-A- 4 256 989
US-A- 5 040 993
US-A- 5 166 527
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US-B1- 6 634 902

DESCRIPTION

Background of the Invention:

1. Field of the Invention

[0001] This invention generally relates to improvements in lamps, especially ultraviolet lamps used in air and water purifiers and disinfection units.

2. Description of Related Art

[0002] Ultraviolet air and water or other liquid purifiers are known for disinfecting contaminated air or water or other liquid for domestic, industrial, municipal, or commercial use. Such purifiers include at least one lamp for emitting ultraviolet radiation installed into a chamber over which contaminated air or water or other liquid pass to kill microorganisms therein. In conventional manner, the lamp includes two electrodes spaced apart within an elongated arc tube containing a gas, particularly noble gas with or without additives. A pair of end caps (i.e., bases) are mounted at the ends of the tube. Each electrode contains two lead wires from the lamp seal each of which, or in some instances only one, are electrically connected to respective contact(s) or terminal pin(s). The lamp is typically inserted endwise into a sleeve installed in the water, other liquid or air purifier with or without the use of an external quartz sleeve. To simplify insertion and electrical connection, the pins are conveniently mounted on one of the end caps. When the electrodes are energized by voltage from an electrical power supply, an electrical discharge is initiated in the gas between the electrodes. This discharge results from a reaction between the electrical energy, gas and mercury to produce ultraviolet radiation to be emitted from the lamp in a manner well known in the art.

WO2007/098163 A2, US 5 422 487 A, US 2006/186782 disclose a lamp base and a corresponding socket, having two stepped portions each providing a raised face, while pin connectors for electrical connections are provided in each of the raised faces. US 6,634,902 B1 discloses a lamp base and a corresponding socket according to the preamble of the independent claims.

[0003] An example of an ultraviolet lamp of the type described above is disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,166,527 (527), all of the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference. The '527 patent discloses a lamp, especially useful as an ultraviolet lamp for use in a water purifier, comprising an elongated, hollow arc tube extending along a longitudinal axis between opposite end regions. The tube contains a gas, preferably a noble gas with or without additives. A pair of electrodes is spaced apart along the longitudinal axis. The electrodes are respectively mounted within the arc tube at the end regions thereof. A pair of end caps is respectively mounted at the end regions of the arc tube. A first electrical contact or pair of electrical contacts or terminal pins extends in mutual parallelism along the longitudinal axis and is electrically connected to one or both of the electrode lead wires. A second electrical contact or pair of electrical contacts or terminal pins extends in mutual parallelism along the longitudinal axis and is electrically connected to one or both of the other of the electrode lead wires. Both pairs of pins are mounted on, and extend outwardly along the longitudinal axis of, one of the end caps. A wire conductor is, or two wire conductors are, located exteriorly of the tube and electrically connected to one pin or one pair of pins at one end region of the tube, as well as to the electrode at the other end region of the tube.

[0004] Two embodiments, of the lamp disclosed in the '527 patent are shown in prior art Figures 1 and 2. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the pairs of pins are offset relative to each other along the longitudinal axis. This offset resists the formation of an electrical arc between the pairs of pins exteriorly of the arc tube, especially in the presence of the moisture-laden, humid environment of the water purifier.

[0005] Still referring to prior art Figures 1 and 2, the one end cap has a stepped outer end wall having a pair of wall portions lying in mutual parallelism in planes generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis. The first pair of pins is supported on, and extends through, one of the end wall portions for a predetermined distance, and the second pair of pins is supported on, and extends through, the other of the end wall portions for the same predetermined distance. The planes of the end wall portions are spaced apart by a predetermined spacing larger than said predetermined distance in order to still further prevent electrical arcing between the pairs of pins exteriorly of the arc tube. A barrier wall internally of the one end cap physically separates the electrical connections to the two pairs of pins to resist the formation of an electrical arc between the pairs of pins interiorly of the one end cap. The barrier wall is advantageously made of the same non-conductive material as the one end cap.

[0006] In addition to the two-tiered stepped bases of the '527 patent, other multi-tiered bases have been manufactured including those bases shown in prior art Figures 3-7.

[0007] Although well-suited for their intended purposes, there continues to be a need for improved lamp base designs, particularly ultraviolet lamps.

[0008] There are many different types of lamps that have a base or end cap that can be connected with a socket to provide electrical connections to the lamps. The end cap and socket must be constructed to permit easy replacement of the lamp while securely holding the lamp. This may be particularly important in certain applications where vibration or movement of the lamp or lamp fixture could result in unintentional separation between the lamp's end cap and the socket. Additionally, the electrical connections must remain secure.

[0009] In some applications where a multiplicity of contact pins and/or pin orientations is utilized, it is often difficult to align the contact pins to make the electrical connection necessary to operate the lamp. Often, the contact pins may become misaligned or bent due to their extension or projection from the base of the lamp, preventing their insertion into a socket. It may also be possible to insert the end cap into a socket such that the contacts are not connected with the proper terminals in the socket, resulting in improper operation of the lamp. Also, on a typical "slide into place" male/female pin connector there is no locking or twist locking and thus the pins may slide out and become disconnected easily by vibration for example.

[0010] An example of an ultraviolet lamp of the type described above is disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,166,527 ('527), which uses a stepped base with pins connector, all of the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference. The '527 patent discloses a lamp or bulb, used as an ultraviolet lamp for use in an air or water purifier, comprising an elongated, hollow arc tube extending along a longitudinal axis between opposite end regions. The tube contains a gas, preferably a noble gas with or without additives. A pair of electrodes is spaced apart along the longitudinal axis. The electrodes are respectively mounted within the arc tube at the end regions thereof. A pair of end caps is respectively mounted at the end regions of the arc tube. A first electrical contact or pair of electrical contacts or terminal pins extends in mutual parallelism along the longitudinal axis and is electrically connected to one or both of the electrode lead wires. A second electrical contact or pair of electrical contacts or terminal pins extends in mutual parallelism along the longitudinal axis and is electrically connected to one or both of the other of the electrode lead wires. Both pairs of pins are mounted on, and extend outwardly along the longitudinal axis of, one of the end caps. A wire conductor is, or two wire conductors are, located exteriorly of the tube and electrically connected to one pin or one pair of pins at one end region of the tube, as well as to the electrode at the other end region of the tube. This design is mainly designed to prevent electrical arcing and does not lock in place.

[0011] As noted in WO/2006/ 136026 to Elku et al. which is a variation of the slide-on pin connector above, a potential problem with this approach is that in many applications, the radiation lamp is immersed in a flow of water and turbulence created within that water treatment system invariably imparts a vibratory motion to the lamps. This frequently results in the lamp being vibrated or shaken loose of its electrical connection base or socket thereby causing the lamp to be rendered completely or intermittently inoperative. When such an event occurs, the water being treated may not be fully disinfected. The prior art has attempted to address this problem by using a relatively complicated mechanical connection (e.g., a so-called "push-and-twist" connection) to secure the lamp to the connection base. See, for example, United States patent 5,422,487 to Sauska et al. and United States patent 6,884,103 to Kovacs. The potential problem with these approaches is the complexity of the mechanical connection between the lamp and the base unit requiring the use of springs, specialized connection lugs and the like. Further, a connection system which is predicated on a dual motion system such that pushing and twisting if used incorrectly for example may give rise to higher incidents of lamp breakage, electrical shock, and other damage to the lamp by field personal. Therefore, eliminating a forceful "push" necessary to deflect a heavy locking spring in a "push and twist" lock would be beneficial because the typically glass lamp would be subject to reduced force and stress.

[0012] Also, it is important that lamps of proper wattage be used for safety, heat, and fire concerns. Thus, a unique keying system that only allows lamps of proper wattage to be inserted into the base will also help safety.

[0013] Accordingly, there remains the need in the art for a safety lamp device, particularly a radiation lamp, which will provide a reliable, locking, and secure from movement, electric connection, yet be relatively inexpensive, uncomplicated, durable, rugged, and simple to implement with smooth operation and with reduced force and stress on the lamp for safety purposes. Also, a lamp that reduces the chance of electrical shock is needed for safety purposes.

[0014] Thus, there continues to be a need for improved lamp base designs, particularly ultraviolet lamps.

Summary of the Invention:

[0015] In accordance with at least an embodiment of the present invention, a lamp base includes a cylindrical body having an end surface, a first step portion and a second step portion, a first upper pin connector provided on the first step portion, a second upper pin connector provided on the second step portion, and a first and second lower pin connector provided on the end surface.

[0016] The above-described end cap configuration for the lamp may be mated to a complimentary shaped receptacle known as a socket. The socket may be wired to a power source.

[0017] The designs will further allow for matching of the lamp and connector to a specific power supply to reduce the chance of connecting an ultraviolet lamp into an improperly matched power supply.

[0018] The lamp of this invention is preferably an ultraviolet lamp and finds particular application for use in a water, other liquid, or air purifier.

[0019] The features of the lamp base, the socket and the assembly in accordance with the invention are defined in claims 1, 7, and 13 respectively.

[0020] Preferred embodiments are defined in the claims 2-6, 8-12 and 14-16.

Brief Description of the Drawings:

[0021] Embodiments will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings which are meant to be exemplary, not limiting, and wherein like elements are numbered alike in several Figures, in which:

FIGURES 1-7 are respective views of end caps used in ultraviolet lamps in accordance with the prior art;

FIGURE 8 is a cross-sectional view along the longitudinal axis of a water purifier employing the ultraviolet lamp;

FIGURE 9 is a cross-sectional elevation view along the line 9-9 of FIGURE 8;

FIGURE 10 is a perspective elevation view of a first embodiment of an end cap for a lamp;

FIGURE 10A is a cross-sectional elevation view along the line 10A-10A of FIGURE 10;

FIGURES 11-14 are perspective elevation views of second, third, fourth and fifth embodiments of end caps;

FIGURES 15-19 are perspective elevation views of sockets for the end caps of FIGURES 10-14, respectively;

FIGURES 20-24 are perspective elevation views of additional embodiments of end caps having female recesses; and

FIGURES 25-29 are perspective elevation views of sockets for the end caps of FIGURES 20-24, respectively.

FIGURES 30-31 are perspective views of an embodiment of a socket useable with the lamp base shown in Figs. 38-45.

FIGURES 32-35 are side views of the embodiment shown in Figs. 30-31.

FIGURE 36 is a top plan view of the embodiment shown in Figs. 30-35

FIGURE 37 is a bottom plan view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 30-35.

FIGURES 38-39 are perspective views of a lamp base useable with the socket of shown in Figures 30-37.

FIGURES 40-43 are side views of the base shown in Figs. 38-39.

FIGURE 44 is a top plan view of the base shown in Figs. 38-43

FIGURE 45 is a bottom plan view of the base shown in Figs. 38-44.

Figures 1-45 do not form part of the invention as claimed.

FIGURES 46-48 are various views of a lamp base according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 49-51 are various views of a socket according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 52-55 are various views of a lamp base according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 56-59 are various views of a socket according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 60-64 are various views of a lamp base according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 65-68 are various views of a lamp base according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 69-73 are various views of a socket according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 74-75 are perspective views of a lamp base and socket assembly according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 76-79 are various views of a lamp base according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 80-84 are various views of a socket according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURES 85-92 are plan views show various possible configurations of pin connectors, truncated parts, and keys according to at least some embodiments of the present invention.

FIGURES 93 shows a lamp base according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 94 is an exploded perspective view of a lamp base and an adapter according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 95 is an assembled perspective view of a lamp base and an adapter according to at least an embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments:

[0022] Referring now to FIGURE 8 of the drawings, reference numeral 10 generally identifies a water purifier having a cylindrical housing 12 extending along a longitudinal axis. A hollow, axially-extending sleeve 14 is centrally mounted within the housing 12 between apertured support walls 18, 20 spaced apart along the longitudinal axis. The support walls 18, 20, together with the interior wall of the housing 12 and the exterior wall of the sleeve 14, bound an interior space 16. A water inlet 22 admits pressurized water to be purified into the space 16. A water outlet 24 discharges the purified water from the space 16. The space 16 serves as a flow-through passage for the water contained therein which, during the course of its flow, is exposed to ultraviolet radiation as described below.

[0023] A removable cover 26 overlies the support wall 18 at one end of the housing 12. The cover 26 is detachably coupled to the housing 12 by a set of threaded fasteners 28 to permit access to the interior of the sleeve 14 through the aperture of the support wall 18. An electrical socket 30 is removably mounted within the aperture of the support wall 18. An ultraviolet lamp 32 is slidably inserted into the interior of the sleeve 14 through the aperture of the support wall 18. An electrical connection, as described below, is made with the socket 30. In operation, the lamp 32 emits ultraviolet radiation of sufficient intensity to kill microorganisms in the water, other liquid or air contained in the space 16 to purify the same for domestic and commercial applications.

[0024] The lamp 32 includes an elongated, hollow, sealed, arc tube 34 constituted of a light-transmissive material, e.g. silica quartz or other ultraviolet transmitting glass tube. The tube 34 has opposite end regions 36,38 spaced apart along the longitudinal axis. A gas, preferably mercury vapor with or without additives, is sealingly contained within the tube.

[0025] A pair of electrodes 40, 42 is respectively mounted within the tube at the end regions 36, 38. A pair of end caps 44, 46 constituted of a non-conducting material, e.g. ceramic, is respectively mounted at the end regions 36, 38 over the sealed end regions of the tube. Each end cap has a bore having a closed base against which a sealed end region of the tube abuts when the sealed end region is inserted fully into a respective end cap. End cap 44 (best show in FIGURES 10 and 10A) also has a barrier wall 70a, 70b, extending between semi-circular bases 72, 74 such that bases 72, 74 are stepped with base 72 being the upper or distal base and base 74 being the lower or proximal base. A male member 75 extends laterally from barrier wall 70a, 70b, along

lower base 74. Member 75 is centrally positioned along wall 70a, 70b thus splitting the wall into the two sections 70a and 70b. Member 75 has a height which is equal to the distance between respective bases 72 and 74. Member 75 also acts to divide lower base 74 into two symmetrical sections (each comprising an approximately 90 degree quadrant).

[0026] Still referring to FIGURE 10, a first pair of electrical contacts or terminal pins 48, 50 extends in mutual parallelism along the longitudinal axis, and is mounted on, and extends outwardly of, the end cap 44 (through base 72). A second pair of electrical contacts or terminal pins 52, 54 also extends in mutual parallelism along the longitudinal axis, and is also mounted on, and extends outwardly of, the same end cap 44 (through base 74). Pins 52 and 54 are separated from one another by member 75. The pins 48, 50 extend into interior compartment 76, and the pins 52, 54 extend into compartment 78 (see FIGURE 10A).

[0027] The pins 48, 50 are electrically connected within end cap 44 to one end of a wire conductor 56. The conductor 56 is located exteriorly of the tube 34, and extends along the longitudinal axis to the opposite end cap 46 wherein the other end of the conductor 56 is connected to the electrode 42. The pins 52, 54 are electrically connected within the end cap 44 to the electrode 40. The barrier wall 70a, 70b physically separates the pairs of pins.

[0028] Thus, as shown in FIGURE 10, the end cap 44 has a stepped, outer end wall having a pair of semi-circular end wall portions 72, 74 lying in mutual parallelism in planes generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis. As best shown in FIGURE 15, the socket 30 has a complementary stepped, outer end wall together with a centrally located recess 76. During mating, the pins 48, 50, 52, 54 will be received into respective sockets 78, 80, 82, 84 while member 75 is received into mating recess 76.

[0029] A set of centering rings 62, 64, preferably constituted of a synthetic plastic material, is located on tube 34, being placed thereon before the end caps are attached to the end regions of the tube 34. The rings 62, 64 coaxially surround the tube 34 and frictionally engage and support the tube, and assist in centering the tube within sleeve 14.

[0030] Referring now to FIGURES 11-14, additional embodiments of the end cap depicted in FIGURE 10 are shown. All of these end caps have a similar configuration to that shown in FIGURE 10 including a pair of parallel but longitudinally displaced semi-circular bases 72, 74 having a barrier wall 70a, 70b, extending therebetween so as to form a stepped base. In addition, a male member or extension extends centrally outwardly from barrier wall 70a, 70b. While this male extension was in the form of a relatively thin wall 75 in the end cap 44 of FIGURE 10, the male extension takes on a differing geometric shape in the various embodiments shown in FIGURES 11-14. More specifically, the end cap 86 in FIGURE 11 has a rounded arcuate shape (e.g., V-shaped, semi-circular shaped) extension 102 extending between barrier wall sections 70a and 70b. The end cap 88 in FIGURE 12 has an extension 104 in the shape of a rectangular box which includes a pair of opposed sidewalls 106, 108 which extend outwardly from and perpendicularly to respective barrier wall sections 70a and 70b. The end cap 90 of FIGURE 13 also has a box like extension 110 which is similar to extension 104 (in FIGURE 12); however, extension 112 has a more square cross-section relative to the rectangular cross-section of extension 104. Thus, the barrier wall sections 70a and 70b in FIGURE 13 are relatively larger than the respective barrier wall sections 70a and 70b in FIGURE 12. End cap 92 in FIGURE 14 is a V-shaped triangular shape extension member 112 which forms the divider between barrier wall sections 70a and 70b.

[0031] Significantly, all of the additional embodiments of FIGURES 11-14 have in common the feature of FIGURE 10 wherein a male member extends outwardly from barrier wall 70a, 70b, and is coextensive with stepped (that is longitudinally displaced) base sections 72, 74. It will be appreciated that in accordance with this invention, the male member may have any suitable configuration besides those shown in FIGURES 10-14 and that such configuration may be symmetrical, asymmetrical, spherical, conical, aspheric or any other desired shapes.

[0032] As in the receptacle 30 shown in FIGURE 15 which receives the end cap 44 in FIGURE 10, the end caps of the embodiments of FIGURES 11-14 have similarly complimentary shaped respective receptacles 94, 96, 98 and 100 as shown in FIGURES 16-19, respectively. Thus, receptacle 94 of FIGURE 16 has a rounded arcuate shaped recess 114 for receiving and mating with rounded or U-shaped extension 102 in FIGURE 11. Similarly, receptacle 96 has a rectangular shaped recess 116 which is sized and configured to mate with and be received by rectangular extension 104 in FIGURE 12. Receptacle 98 in FIGURE 18 has a square shaped recess 118 for mating with and being received by square shaped extension 110 in FIGURE 13 while receptacle 100 of FIGURE 19 has a V-shaped recess 120 for mating with and being received by V-shaped extension 112 in FIGURE 14. Again, it will be appreciated that the receptacles of FIGURES 15-19 may include a recess having any desired shape, so long as the shape is complimentary to, and can be received by, the shape of the extensions in the mating end cap.

[0033] In still another alternative embodiment, it will be appreciated that the male extension in the plug ended lamp and the female recess in the complimentary receptacle may be reversed such that the lamp cap will exhibit the recess while the receptacle will exhibit the complimentary male extension for mating with the recess in the cap. Such alternative configurations are shown in the end caps of FIGURES 20-24 and also in FIGURES 38-45. The end caps of FIGURES 20-24 and 38-45 are similar to the

respective end caps shown in FIGURES 10-14 with the only difference being that the male extension has been substituted with the female recess in FIGURES 20-24. Thus, end cap 44' includes a narrow recess 122 (similar to the recess 76 shown in FIGURE 15), end cap 86' and 86a include an arcuate shaped recess 124, 124a (similar to the recess 114 in FIGURE 16), end cap 88' includes a rectangularly shaped recess 126 (similar to the recess 116 in FIGURE 17), end cap 90' of FIGURE 23 includes a square shaped recess 128 (similar to the recess 118 in FIGURE 18) and end cap 92' of FIGURE 24 includes a V-shaped recess 130 (similar to the V-shaped recess 120 of FIGURE 19).

[0034] Similarly, with reference to FIGURES 25-29 and 30-37, receptacles or bases are shown which are configured to mate with the end caps of FIGURES 20-24 and 38-45, respectively. Thus, receptacle 30' of FIGURE 25 includes male extension 132 which is sized and configured to be received by recess 122 in FIGURE 20. Receptacle 30a of FIGURES 30-37 includes male extension 134a which is sized and configured to be received by recess 124a in FIGURE 38. Fig. 38 also shows how semi-circular bases 72a may contain an asymmetrical section 72b which may be added to help ensure that unauthorized parts are unable to be used. This is a safety feature because improper wattage lamps or improper lamp designs may commonly be attempted to be substituted so the asymmetrical section 72b helps to prevent this unsafe occurrence. The sockets shown on FIGURES 30-37 may be used with the corresponding end caps or bases shown in FIGURES 38-45 or the designs may be exchanged with each other, i.e., the end cap may look like the receptacle or base or vice versa. Receptacle 94' of FIGURE 26 includes arcuate shaped male extension 134 which is sized and configured to be received by arcuate recess 124 in FIGURE 21. Similarly, receptacle 96' of FIGURE 27 includes a rectangular extension 136 which is sized and configured to be received by rectangular recess 126 of FIGURE 22, receptacle 98' of FIGURE 28 includes a square shaped extension 138 which is sized and configured to be received by squared shaped recess 128 in FIGURE 23 and receptacle 100' of FIGURE 29 includes a triangular shaped extension 140 which is sized and configured to be received by rectangular shaped recess 130 in FIGURE 24.

[0035] It will be appreciated that all of the embodiments of the present invention represent an advance over the stepped cap configuration of the aforementioned '527 patent in that the use of the extension (or alternatively the recess) positioned centrally along the barrier wall will provide improved interlocking between the lamp and the receptacle and will also ensure proper orientation of the respective pins within the recesses of the receptacle.

[0036] In operation, the cover 26 is removed, and a lamp 32 is inserted into the interior of the sleeve 14 via the aperture in the support wall 18. After insertion, the socket 30 is connected to the pins 48, 50, 52, 54. Then the cover 26 is installed on the housing 12. Electrical wires 66,68 extend exteriorly of the socket to a non-illustrated electrical power supply. A voltage difference across the wires 66,68 is applied to both electrodes 40, 42 causing an electrical discharge within the tube. This discharge causes ultraviolet radiation to be emitted. This radiation passes through the light-transmissive wall of the sleeve 14 to irradiate the water contained in the space 16.

[0037] The aforementioned barrier wall 70a, 70b prevents arcing interiorly of the end cap 44 by physically separating the electrical connections between the pins 48, 50 and the wire conductor, on the one hand, and the electrical connections between the pins 52, 54 and the electrode 40, on the other hand. The pairs of pins are thus effectively isolated.

[0038] It will be understood that each of the elements described above, or two or more together, also may find a useful application in other types of constructions differing from the types described above.

[0039] In accordance with the invention, a lamp base 200 includes at least a first step portion and a second step portion, as seen in Figures 46-48.

[0040] For example, Figures 46-48 illustrate various views of a lamp base 200 according to at least an embodiment of the present invention. The lamp base 200 is generally cylindrical in shape and has an end surface 202. Additionally, a first step portion and a second step portion may extend outward from end surface 202 of lamp base 200.

[0041] As further seen in Figures 46-48, the first step portion includes a curved face 220a, a flat face 220b, and a raised face 220c. Similarly, the second step portion includes a curved face 222a, a flat face 222b and a raised face 222c. Curved faces 220a, 222a and flat faces 220b, 222b extend perpendicular to the end surface. Raised faces 220c, 222c are perpendicular to curved faces 220a, 222a and flat faces 220b, 222b, respectively.

[0042] Lamp base 200 also includes a number of pin connectors. For example, as seen in Figures 47-48 (see also Figure 75), a first upper pin connector 212 extends from the raised face 220c of the first step portion, a second upper pin connector 214 extends from the raised face 222c of the second step portion, and a first lower pin connector 216 and a second lower pin connector 218 extend from the end surface.

[0043] The first and second lower pin connectors 216, 218 are arranged in a variety of configurations. For example, the first and second lower pin connectors 216, 218 are arranged symmetrically with respect to a center of the end surface, as seen in Figures 85-88. Additionally, the first and second lower pin connectors 216, 218 are arranged asymmetrically with respect to a center of the end surface, as seen in Figures 89-92. These arrangements of the lower pin connectors 216, 218 are helpful in ensuring proper alignment when a lamp base is coupled with a socket, as explained in detail below.

[0044] Additionally, key recesses 240 are provided on the lamp base 200 to help in alignment when coupling with a socket, as explained in more detail below. As seen in Figure 48, for example, key recesses 240 are provided in the flat faces 220b, 222b of the first and second step portions.

[0045] There are many different possible configurations of key recesses, as seen in Figure 85, for example. Figure 85 shows how a key recess can be found at one of at least four positions (key #1, key #2, key #3, key #4) in the flat face of the step portion.

Additionally, Figure 85 shows how a key recess can be found at one of at least four positions (key #5, key #6, key #7, key #8). It is important to note that the keys can be placed independent from each other, and thus many possible combinations of key positions can be achieved. It will also be appreciated that the key positions are not limited to only the positions shown in Figure 85, and that other suitable positions are also possible.

[0046] As seen in Figure 48, the first step portion also includes a first truncated portion 232 and a second truncated portion 234. When compared with the second step portion, truncated portions 232, 234 are flat surfaces where it appears that the step portion has been truncated, or "cut off." In at least the embodiment shown in Figure 48, the truncated portions 232, 234 are provided at a first and second end of the first step portion. However, other configurations are possible. For example, as seen in Figure 86, the first truncated portion 232 may be provided at a first end of a first step portion, and a second truncated portion 234 may be provided at a first end of a second truncated portion. The truncated portions help to ensure proper alignment when a lamp base is coupled with a socket, as explained in more detail below.

[0047] Figures 49-51 illustrate at least one possible embodiment of a socket 300. The socket 300 is generally cylindrical in shape and has an end surface. Additionally, a central step portion 310 extends perpendicular to the end surface of socket 300. Central step portion 310 may include a first flat face 314 extending perpendicular to the end surface and a second flat face 316 extending perpendicular to the end surface.

[0048] Additionally, as seen in Figures 50 and 51, socket 300 includes a first upper connector 326 provided within a recess formed in the central step portion 310 and a second upper connector 328 provided within a recess formed in the central step portion 310. Socket 300 also includes a first lower connector 322 provided within a recess formed in the end surface, and a second lower connector 324 provided within a recess formed in the end surface. The first and second upper connectors 326, 328 may be positioned either symmetrically or asymmetrically with respect to a center of the end surface of the socket 300.

[0049] Figures 50-51 also illustrate that the socket 300 includes key protrusions 340 protruding out from the first flat face 314 and the second flat face 316. These key protrusions 340 can be positioned in a wide variety of configurations, complementing the wide variety of configurations possible for key recesses 240.

[0050] Additionally, Figures 50-51 show that socket 300 also includes a first tapered portion 312a and a second tapered portion 312b. The tapered portions 312a, 312b extend out from the first and second ends of first flat face 314, as seen in Figure 51, for example, or a first tapered portion 312a extends out from a first end of first flat face 314 while the second tapered portion 312b extends out from a first end of second flat face 316.

[0051] Figures 52-73 and 76-93 show various additional views of at least some possible embodiments and configurations of lamp bases 200 and sockets 300.

[0052] Figures 74 and 75 show how a lamp base 200 and a socket 300 according to at least an embodiment of the present invention can couple with each other. Lamp base 200 and socket 300 are structured such that first upper pin connector 212 couples with first lower connector 322, second upper pin connector 214 couples with second lower pin connector 324, first lower pin connector 216 couples with first upper connector 326, and second lower pin connector 218 couples with second upper connector 328.

[0053] Additionally, it is seen in Figures 74 and 75 that the key recesses 240 of lamp base 200 are structured to align with the key protrusions 340 of the socket 300 when the lamp base and the socket are coupled. In other words, when lamp base 200 is

coupled with socket 300 in the proper alignment, key protrusions 340 will slide into key recesses 240. If lamp base 200 is misaligned with socket 300, then the key protrusions 340 will not align with the key recess 240.

[0054] Additionally, as another method to ensure proper alignment, it is seen from Figures 74 and 75 that first tapered portion 312a will align with first truncated portion 232, and second tapered portion 312b will align with the second truncated portion 234.

[0055] As noted above, there are many alignment features designed to ensure that the lamp base 200 is properly aligned with socket 300 when they are coupled, for example, the key protrusions 340 and key recesses 240 and the truncated portions 232, 234 and tapered portions 312a, 312b. These alignment features result in significant and non-trivial benefits over conventional devices.

[0056] For example, it will be appreciated that the alignment features described above can ensure that there is only one possible way for a lamp base to fit into the socket. In other words, the alignment features ensure that the first upper pin connector 212 will always couple with the first lower connector 322, the second upper pin connector 214 will always couple with the second lower connector 324, etc. This is an important safety feature because it prevents the pin connectors from mistakenly being connected to the wrong polarity of a power source, for example, which could damage the lamp. Thus, the alignment features described above can help to prevent damage to lamps by ensuring proper coupling.

[0057] Additionally, the alignment features described above can help to ensure that a lamp is only coupled with an appropriate socket. For example, an appropriate socket may have a given configuration of key protrusions 340 and/or tapered portions 312a, 312b, and unless the lamp base is a properly corresponding lamp base that has complementary key recesses 240 and/or truncated portions 232, 234, the lamp base cannot be coupled to the socket.

[0058] Additionally, these features provide important safety benefits as well. For example, if connector pins are improperly connected to the wrong polarities, sparks can be generated that pose a fire risk, or the user may be exposed to electric shock. Each of the alignment features above helps to ensure proper coupling of lamp bases and sockets, thus reducing the risk of these hazards and protecting the safety of the user.

[0059] Additionally, in at least another embodiment of the present invention, as seen in Figures 94 and 95, an adaptor may be provided so that lamp bases may be retrofitted to couple with new sockets. For example, in Figure 94, lamp base 400 is a simple lamp base with four pin connectors 450, 452. Adaptor 410 can be fitted onto the end of lamp base 400. Adaptor 410 has a flat face 415, and end face 410 that is perpendicular to the flat face 415, and a key recess 440. After the adaptor 410 is fitted to lamp base 400, adaptor 410 simulates a step portion and pin connector 450 extends through adaptor 410. A second adaptor 410 can be also be fitted so that the lamp base 400 has two step portions. The key recesses 440 on the adaptors can be configured to match the key protrusions of a corresponding socket. In this way, it is possible to achieve the benefits of ensuring proper alignment when coupling a lamp base and socket, as described above, by simply upgrading already existing lamp bases with adaptors 410.

[0060] The presently disclosed embodiments are therefore to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, the scope of the invention being indicated by the appended claims, rather than the foregoing description, and all changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are therefore intended to be embraced therein.

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

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- [US5422487A](#) [0002] [0011]
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PATENTKRAV

1. Lampesokkel (200), som kan monteres på en lampekolbes ende og er udformet til at passe sammen med en fatning (300), hvilken lampesokkel (200) omfatter:

5 Et cylindrisk legeme med en endeflade (202);

et første trin-afsnit og et andet trin-afsnit, som hvert omfatter en plan flade (220b, 222b), der strækker sig vinkelret på endefladen (202), og en forhøjet flade (220c, 222c), som er vinkelret på den plane flade (220b, 222b);

10

en første, øvre stiftkonnektor (212), der er tilvejebragt på den forhøjede flade (220c) i det første trin-afsnit, og som strækker sig vinkelret på det første trin-afsnit,

15

en anden, øvre stiftkonnektor (214), der er tilvejebragt på den forhøjede flade (220c) i det andet trin-afsnit og strækker sig vinkelret på det første trin-afsnit;

en første (216) og anden (218) nedre stiftkonnektor, som er tilvejebragt på endefladen (202) og strækker sig vinkelret på endefladen (202);

20

hvorved lampesoklen (200) er udformet til at passe sammen med en fatning (300) ved lineær indsætning af stiftkonnektorerne (212, 214, 216, 218) i tilsvarende konnektorer på fatningen,

kendetegnet ved, at lampesoklen (200) ydermere omfatter en første notudsparring (240), som er tilvejebragt i det første trin-afsnits plane flade (220b), hvilken notudsparring (240) er struktureret således, når lampesoklen (200) er koblet til fatningen (300), at den første notudsparring (240) flugter med et første notfremspring (340) på fatningen (300).

25

30

2. Lampesokkel (200) ifølge krav 1, ydermere omfattende en anden notudsparring (240), som er tilvejebragt i det andet trin-afsnits plane flade (222b).

35

3. Lampesokkel (200) ifølge krav 1, hvorved den første (216) og den anden (218) nedre stiftkonnektor er positioneret symmetrisk i forhold til endefladens (202) midte.

40

4. Lampesokkel (200) ifølge krav 1, hvorved den første (216) og den anden (218) nedre stiftkonnektor er positioneret asymmetrisk i forhold til endefladens (202) midte.

45

5. Lampesokkel (200) ifølge krav 1, hvorved det første trin-afsnit ydermere omfatter:

Et første trunkeret afsnit (232), som er tilvejebragt i en første ende på det første trin-afsnit; og

45

et andet trunkeret afsnit (234), der er tilvejebragt i en anden ende på det første trin-afsnit.

6. Lampesokkel (200) ifølge krav 1, hvorved det første trin-afsnit omfatter et første trunkeret afsnit (232), som er tilvejebragt i en første ende på det første trin-afsnit; og
- 5 7. Fatning (300), der er udformet til at passe sammen med en lampesokkel (200), omfattende:
 - Et cylindrisk legeme med en endeflade;
 - 10 - et centralt trin-afsnit (310), som strækker sig vinkelret på endefladen, hvilket centrale trin-afsnit (310) omfatter:
 - o En første plan flade (314), som strækker sig vinkelret på endefla-
 - 15 o den anden plan flade (316), der strækker sig vinkelret på endefladen;
 - en første øvre konnektor (326), der er tilvejebragt i en udsparring, som er dannet i det centrale trin-afsnit (310);
 - 20 - en anden øvre konnektor (328), der er tilvejebragt i en udsparring, som er dannet i det centrale trin-afsnit (310);
 - en første nedre konnektor (322), der er tilvejebragt i en udsparring, som er dannet i endefladen;
 - 25 - en anden nedre konnektor (324), der er tilvejebragt i en udsparring, som er dannet i endefladen; og
 - hvorved fatningen (300) er udformet til at passe sammen med lampesoklen (200) ved lineær modtagning af stiftkonnektorer (212, 214, 216, 218) på lampesoklen (200) i de tilsvarende konnektorer (322, 324, 326, 328),
 - 30
- 35 **kendetegnet ved**, at fatningen (300) omfatter et første notfremspring (340), som rager ud fra den første plane flade (314), hvilket første notfremspring (340) er struktureret således, at når fatningen (300) kobles til lampesoklen (200), vil det første notfremspring (340) flugte med en første notudsparring (240) i lampesoklen (200).
- 40 8. Fatning (300) ifølge krav 7, ydermere omfattende et andet notfremspring (340), som rager ud fra den anden plane flade (316).
9. Fatning (300) ifølge krav 7, hvorved den første øvre konnektor (326) og den anden øvre konnektor (328) er positioneret symmetrisk i forhold til endefladens midte.
- 45 10. Fatning (300) ifølge krav 7, hvorved den første øvre konnektor (326) og den anden øvre konnektor (328) er positioneret asymmetrisk i forhold til endefladens midte.
- 50 11. Fatning (300) ifølge krav 7, ydermere omfattende:

- Et første affaset afsnit (312a), der strækker sig udad fra en første ende af den første plane flade (314); og et andet affaset afsnit (312b), som strækker sig udad fra en anden ende af den første plane flade (314).

5

12. Fatning (300) ifølge krav 7, ydermere omfattende:

- Et første affaset afsnit (312a), som strækker sig udad fra en første ende af den første plane flade (314); og et andet affaset afsnit (313b), som strækker sig udad fra en første ende af den anden plane flade (316).

10

13. Anordning med lampesokkel (200) og fatning (300) til anvendelse med en lampekolbe, hvorved anordningen omfatter:

15

- En lampesokkel (200), som er udformet med henblik på at passe sammen med en ende af en lampesokkel, hvilken lampekolbesokkel (200) omfatter:

- Et cylindrisk lampesokkellegeme, der omfatter en sokkelendeflade (202);

20

- Et første trin-afsnit og et andet trin-afsnit, som hvert omfatter en plan flade (220b, 222b), der strækker sig vinkelret på sokkelendefladen (202), og en forhøjet flade (220c, 222c), som er vinkelret på den plane flade (220b, 222b);

25

- En første øvre stiftkonnektor (212), der er tilvejebragt på den forhøjede flade (220c) på det første trin-afsnit og strækker sig vinkelret på det første trin-afsnit;

30

- en anden øvre stiftkonnektor (214), som er tilvejebragt på det andet trin-afsnits forhøjede flade (222c) og strækker sig vinkelret på det første trin-afsnit; og

35

- en første (216) og anden (218) nedre stiftkonnektor, der er tilvejebragt på sokkelendefladen (202) og strækker sig vinkelret på endefladen (202); og

en fatning (300), som er udformet med henblik på at passe sammen med lampesoklen, hvilken fatning (300) omfatter:

- Et cylindrisk fatningslegeme, der omfatter en fatningsendeflade;

40

- Et centralt trin-afsnit (310), som strækker sig vinkelret på fatningsendefladen, hvilket centrale trin-afsnit (310) omfatter en første plan flade (314), der strækker sig vinkelret på endefladen; og en anden plan flade (316), som strækker sig vinkelret på endefladen;

45

- En første øvre konnektor (326), der er tilvejebragt i en udsparring, som er dannet i det centrale trin-afsnit (310);

50

- en anden øvre konnektor (328), som er tilvejebragt i en udsparring, der er dannet i det centrale trin-afsnit (310); en første nedre konnektor (322), som er tilvejebragt i en udsparring, der er dannet i endefladen; og

- en anden nedre konektor (324), som er tilvejebragt i en udsparring, der er dannet i endefladen;

5 hvorved den første nedre konektor (322) og den anden nedre konektor (324) er udformet med henblik på at passe sammen med den første øvre stiftkonektor (212) og den anden øvre stiftkonektor (214) ved lineær indsætning af den første øvre stiftkonektor (212) og den anden øvre stiftkonektor (214) i henholdsvis den første nedre konektor (322) og den anden nedre konektor (324);

- den første øvre konektor (326) og den anden øvre konektor (328) er udformet til at passe sammen med den første nedre stiftkonektor (216) og den anden nedre stiftkonektor (218) ved lineær indsætning af den første nedre stiftkonektor (216) og den anden nedre stiftkonektor (218) i henholdsvis den første øvre konektor (326) og den anden øvre konektor (328);

- det centrale trin-afsnit (310) er udformet til at passe sammen med det første trin-afsnit og det andet trin-afsnit, når fatningen (300) og lampesoklen (200) er koblet sammen; og hvorved anordningen ydermere er

kendetegnet ved en første notudsparring (240), som er tilvejebragt i det første trin-afsnits plane flade (220b) og

- et første notfremspring (340), som rager frem fra den første plane flade (314);

og ved, at det første notfremspring (340) er udformet til at passe sammen med den første notudsparring (240), når fatningen (300) og lampesoklen (200) er koblet sammen.

14. Anordning ifølge krav 13, ydermere omfattende:

- En anden notudsparring (240), som er tilvejebragt i det andet trin-afsnits plane overflade (222b);
- et andet notfremspring (340), der rager frem fra den anden plane flade (316);

40 hvorved det andet notfremspring (340) er udformet med henblik på at passe sammen med den anden notudsparring (240), når fatningen (300) og lampesoklen (200) er koblet sammen.

15. Anordning ifølge krav 13, hvorved

45 det første trin-afsnit ydermere omfatter et første trunkeret afsnit (232), som er tilvejebragt i det første trin-afsnits første ende, og et andet trunkeret afsnit (234), der er tilvejebragt i det første trin-afsnits anden ende; et første affaset afsnit (312a) strækker sig udad fra en første ende af den første plane flade (314);

et andet affaset afsnit (312b) strækker sig udad fra en anden ende af den første plane flade (314); og
det første affasede afsnit (312a) flugter med det første trunkerede afsnit (232),
og det andet affasede afsnit (312b) flugter med det andet trunkerede afsnit
5 (234), når fatningen (300) er koblet til lampesoklen (200).

16. Anordning ifølge krav 13, hvorved

10 det første trin-afsnit ydermere omfatter et første trunkeret afsnit (232), som er tilvejebragt i en første ende af det første trin-afsnit; det andet trin-afsnit ydermere omfatter et andet trunkeret afsnit (234), der er tilvejebragt på en første ende af det andet første-trin-afsnit;
et første affaset afsnit (312a) strækker sig udad fra en første ende af den første plane flade;
15 et andet affaset afsnit (312b) strækker sig udad fra en første ende af den anden plane flade; og
det første affasede afsnit (312a) flugter med det første trunkerede afsnit (232),
og det andet affasede afsnit (312b) flugter med det andet trunkerede afsnit
20 (234), når fatningen (300) er koblet sammen med lampesoklen (200).

DRAWINGS

FIG. 1
PRIOR ART

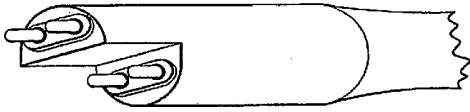


FIG. 2
PRIOR ART



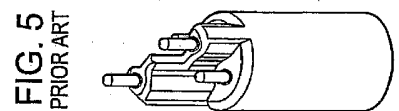
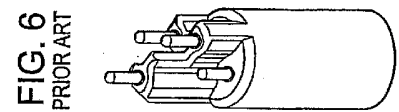
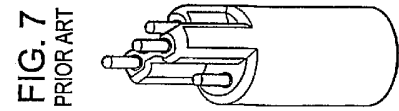


FIG. 8

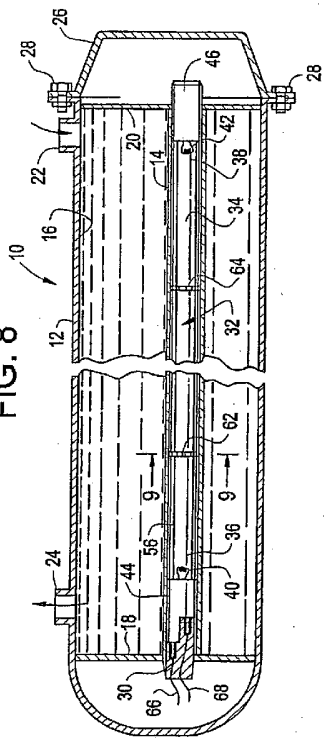


FIG. 9

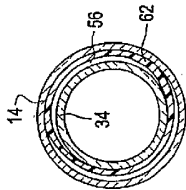
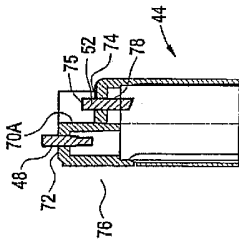
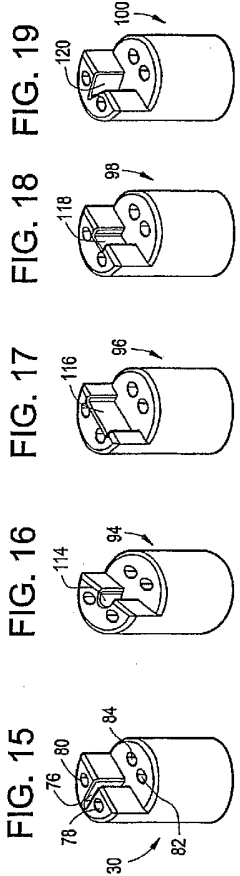
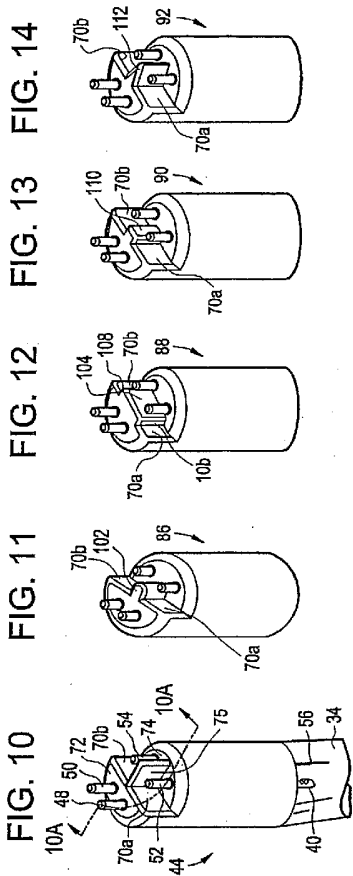
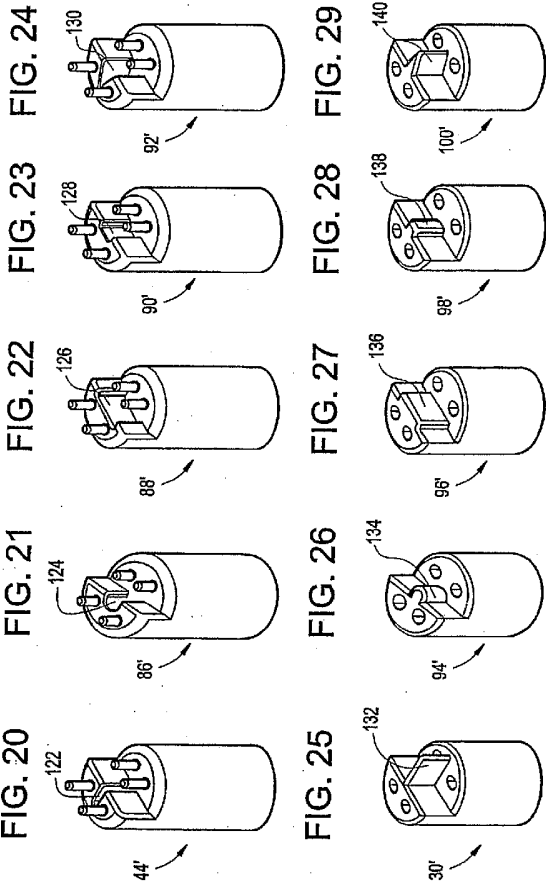
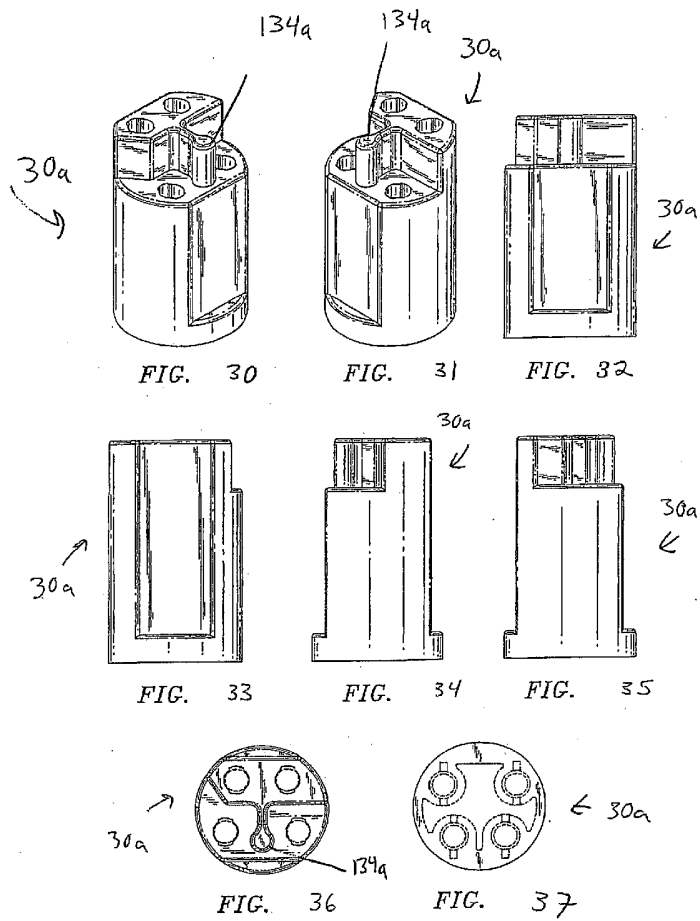


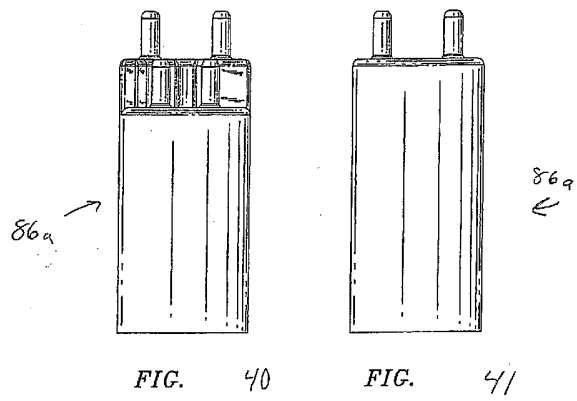
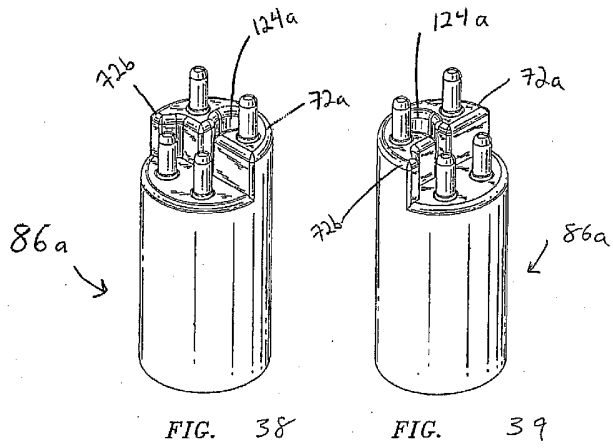
FIG. 10A

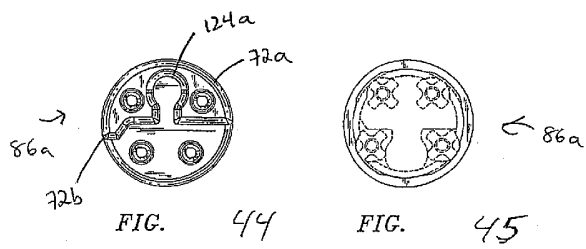
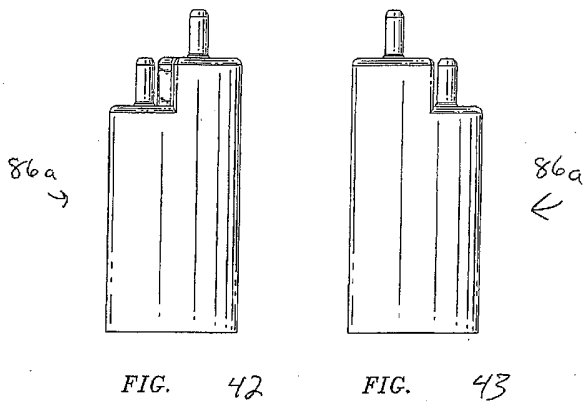


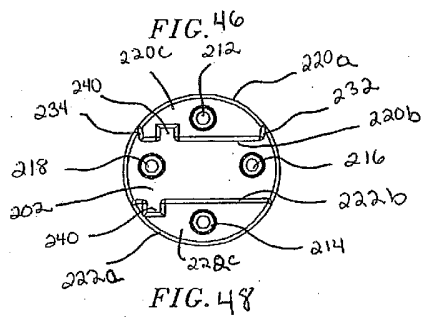
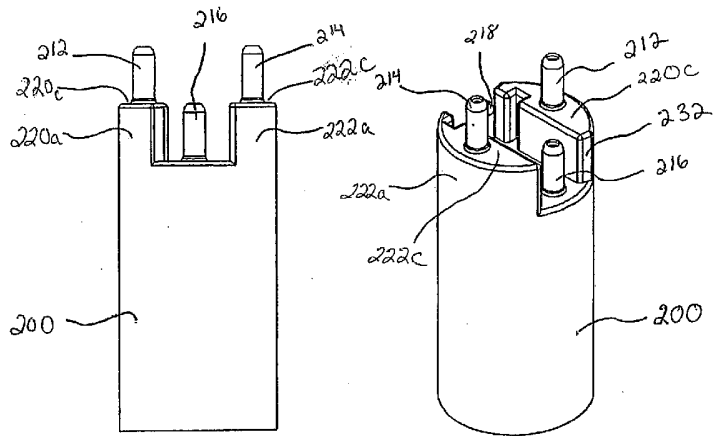












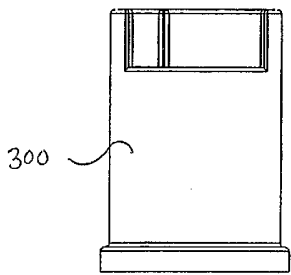


FIG. 49

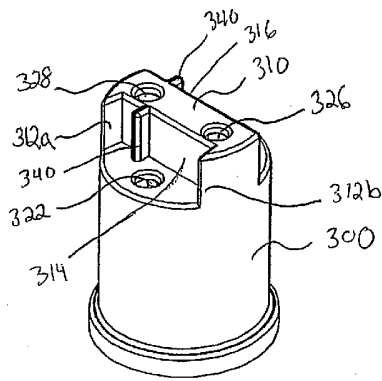


FIG. 50

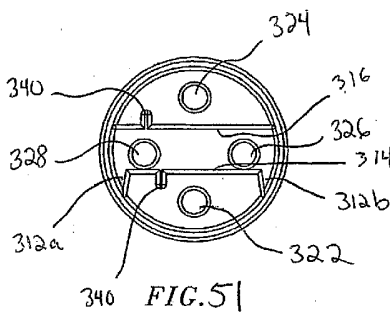
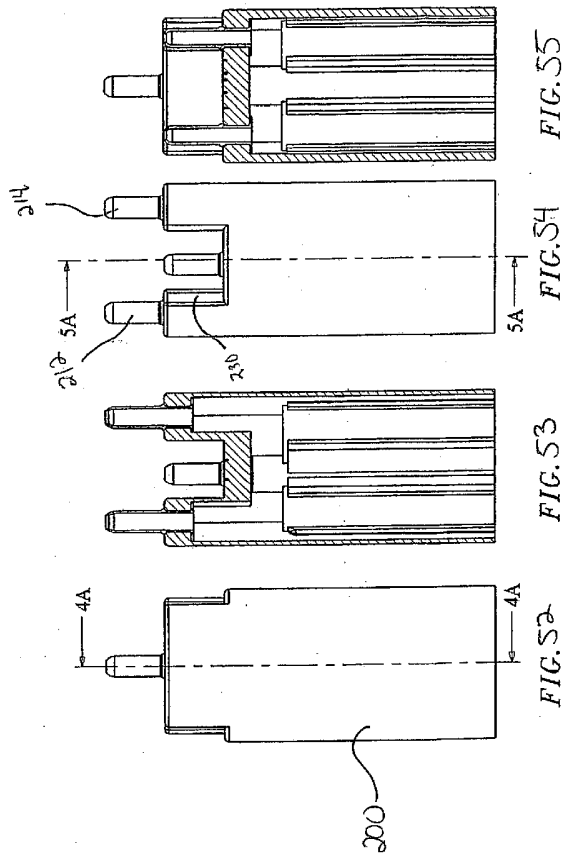


FIG. 51



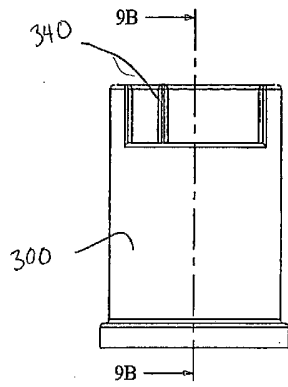


FIG. 56

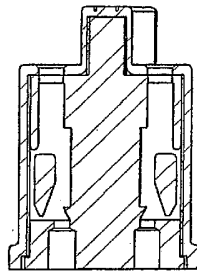


FIG. 57

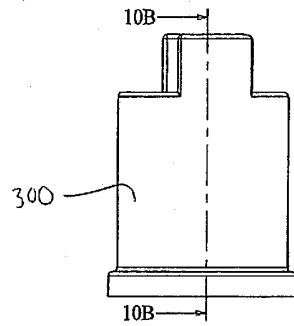


FIG. 58

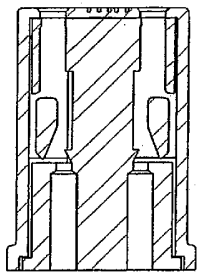


FIG. 59

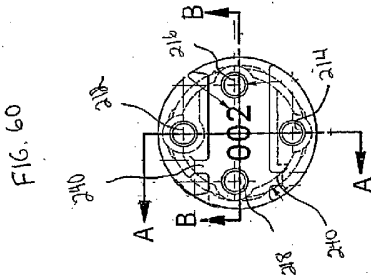
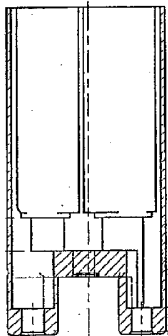


FIG. 61



SECTION A-A

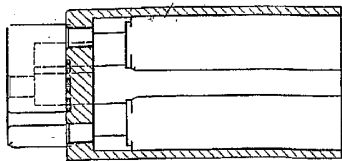


FIG. 63

FIG. 62

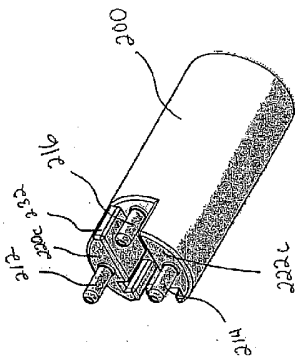
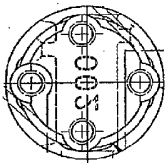


FIG. 64

