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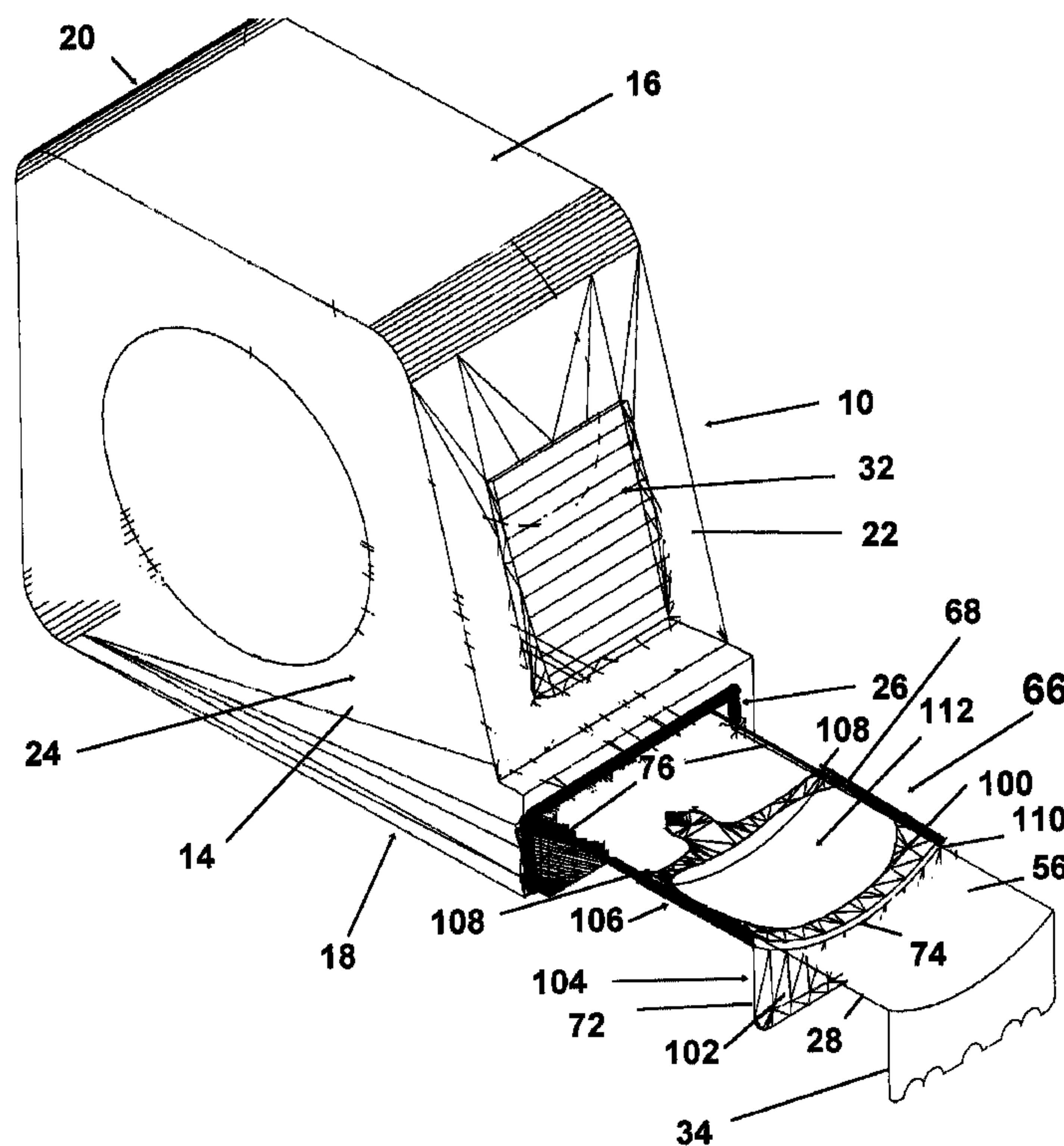
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(54) Titre : PROTEGE-DOIGT COULISSANT POUR RUBANS A MESURER

(54) Title: SLIDING FINGER PROTECTOR FOR TAPE MEASURES



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A sleeve apparatus is shiftably mounted on a graduated tape, of a extensible and retractable measuring tape. The sleeve apparatus facilitates the movement of a tape measure rule blade along an edge of an article, while protecting a guiding index finger from irritation and lacerations which would otherwise be caused by friction against an edge of the article. A fence protects a guiding index finger. The fence portion may include a planar midsection which may be moved in sliding engagement with the article's edge and arcuate end sections positioned at opposite ends of the midsection for protecting the fingers used to compress the rule portion to the edge of the article as the sleeve apparatus is moved along the edge. The sleeve is retractable in to the measuring tape enclosure.

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10 protecting the fingers used to compress the rule portion to the edge of the article as the sleeve apparatus is moved along the edge. The sleeve is retractable in to the measuring tape enclosure.

Title: Sliding Finger Protector for Tape Measures**Field of the Invention:**

- 5 The present invention relates to sleeves, and in particular, to sleeves mounted on the rule blades of tape measures.

Background of the Invention:

- When using a tape measure to guide a knife while cutting drywall, a lather's
10 finger requires some form of protection from irritation and lacerations caused by friction against an edge of a drywall sheet developed while dragging the tape measure along the edge.

- Generally, an index finger is utilized to guide the tape measure along a
15 drywall's edge. It is usually placed under the tape measure's rule blade, while the thumb of the same hand is generally pressed down against the rule blade and the drywall's top edge surface, while the tape measure itself is supported by the same hand. This method is considered necessary by lathers who want to maintain a straight cut while maintaining a tight hold on a knife, which runs
20 adjacent to the distal edge of the tape measure's rule blade, along the surface of drywall being cut.

Despite some solutions available, lathers still commonly wind electric tape around their index finger to prevent lacerations and irritation.

Objects of the Invention:

An object of the present invention is to provide an article adaptable to measuring tapes which provides a solution to prevent irritation and to prevent
5 lacerations on fingers pressed against drywall edges while using tape measures.

It is a related object of this invention to provide an article adaptable to measuring tapes, for the protection of a finger which is guiding a measuring
10 tape, the article being convenient and easy to use.

It is a related object of this invention to provide a measuring tape having a sliding sleeve on its rule blade.

15 In an embodiment, the present invention is advantageous in that the sleeve may be retracted along with the tape measure rule blade on which it is mounted, into the tape measure housing.

Additional objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the
20 detailed description.

Brief Description and Summary of the Invention:

In a broad embodiment, the invention relates to sleeves adapted to mount upon tape measure rule blades. The sleeves comprise a flattened tubular section; the tubular section being adapted to closely fit a tape measure rule blade, wherein the center axis of the tubular section is parallel to the tape measure's rule blade. The tubular section having a fence positioned thereon it, wherein the fence extends downwards and substantially perpendicular from the center axis.

10 In a second broad embodiment, the invention relates to measuring tapes having slidable sleeves on their rule blades; the sleeves having a fence.

In a preferred embodiment the sliding finger protector comprises a sleeve, having an upper side and a lower side, and a first end and a second end. The first end being oriented such that it is closest to the tape measure housing. The second end having a fence extending downwards from the lower side of the sleeve.

In a further and improved embodiment, the sleeve is provided with extension hooks which extend longitudinally from the first end of the sleeve and into the housing of the measuring tape.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a sleeve finger protector adaptable to mount on tape measure rule blades having retaining hooks, so as to restrain the sleeve
5 from travelling a distance along the tape measure rule blade, illustrating one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a tape measure with a tape measure sleeve finger protector mounted on a tape measure's rule blade, the sleeve having
10 retaining hooks, so as to restrain the sleeve from travelling a distance along the tape measure's rule blade, illustrating another embodiment of the invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

In an embodiment of the invention, a sleeve apparatus 66 is shown in FIG. 1. A sleeve 68 having an upper surface 100 and a lower surface 106, a first end 108 and a second end 110, has a transverse aperture 74 to accommodate a rule blade (not shown) to loosely pass through the first end 108 and the
20 second end 110. A fence 72 is preferably positioned at or near the second end 110. The fence 72 is intended to protect a user's index finger (not shown)

positioned behind the fence's 72 inner surface 104. An outer surface 102, of the fence 72, is to be pressed and dragged along an edge of a plaster board or drywall sheet when in use. Therefore the outer surface 102 preferably has a smooth surface.

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Preferably the fence 72 extends substantially perpendicular from the lower surface 106 and extends between 6 mm and 16 mm in length. Optionally, the fence 72 and/or its outer surface 102 may be slightly concave or may include a planar midsection which may be moved in sliding engagement with an article's edge and arcuate end sections positioned at opposite ends of the midsection for protecting fingers used to compress the fence to the edge of an article as the sleeve apparatus is moved along the edge. The sleeve is preferably marginally wider than the width of the measuring tape blade rule. Preferably, the transverse aperture 74 is concave, so that it may accommodate standard tape measure rule blades (not shown) which are commonly concave. Also, preferably, the upper surface 100 of the sleeve 68 has a relatively large perforation 112 through it, such that a user's thumb (not shown) may pass through it and make contact with a rule blade (not shown) which transversely extends through the aperture 74, to stabilize the position of the sleeve 68 on the rule blade (not shown), with the thumb's friction.

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Optionally, the sleeve may also have a pair of retaining hooks 76 attached and extending horizontally from the first end 108, away from the sleeve 68.

Preferably, the sleeve 68 is composed of a relatively thin spring metal or of a polymer with properties similar to that of a spring metal. Optimally, the sleeve 68 needs to be thin enough to pass through a rule blade aperture of a measuring tape (not shown). The body portion of the sleeve is bendably resilient which can be manually squeezed and held in place at a selected measurement indicating position.

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In another embodiment of the invention, as shown in FIG. 2, illustrated is a perspective view of a tape measure 10 having a sleeve apparatus 66 mounted upon a tape measure rule blade 28. The tape measure 10, comprising an enclosure casing 24 defined by two side walls 14, a top wall 16, a bottom wall 18, a rear wall 20 and a front wall 22. The front wall 22 has a blade aperture 26 adjacent to the bottom wall 18. The rule blade 28 is normally retractably stored in a coiled condition within the enclosure casing 24. An inner end of the rule blade 28 is secured within the enclosure casing 24, while an outer end of the rule blade 28 protrudes through and extends outwards from the blade aperture 26. Graduated indicia markings (not shown) are along the

length of the rule blade 28 on the rule blade's top surface 56, so as to function as a measuring scale.

An end hook 34 is attached to the distal edge of the tape measure's rule blade 28. End hooks are commonly found on commercially available measuring tapes. The end hook 34 may assist in stabilizing a marking/cutting tool (not shown), such as a knife, while the knife runs adjacent to the end hook 34, along the surface of drywall being cut or scored. Where the end hook 34 is an "L" or a "T" shape rotated 90 degrees, a portion of the end hook may be fixedly attached to the rule blade, by various means, comprising either rivets, welding, or some adhesive. Preferably, the end hook 34 extends substantially perpendicular from the distal end of the tape measure's rule blade 28 and may extend between 2 mm and 17 mm in depth. It is generally desirable that the lower distal edge of the end hook 34 extends farther from the rule blade 28 than does the fence 72 of the sleeve apparatus 66, to facilitate easy grasping and extension of the tape measure's rule blade 28. Alternatively, if the end hook 34 rises above the rule blade's top surface 56 by at least 2 mm, the end hook extension depth may be otherwise immaterial, so long that it does not extend greater than 14 mm below the rule blade's 28 surface. The end hook is adapted to be normally laid over an edge of a flat item to be measured and/or cut.

It is essential that the extension depth of either the fence 72 or the end hook 34 is long enough so that either the fence 72 or the end hook 34 may not pass through the tape measure's rule blade aperture 26.

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Preferably, the first end 108 of the sleeve is oriented such that it is closest to the tape measure blade aperture 26 from where the rule blade 28 extends outwards.

- 10 When the sleeve apparatus 66 is mounted upon a pre-selected section of a tape measure rule, the retaining hooks 76 may operate to restrain the sleeve from travelling a distance along the tape measure rule, greater than the length of the retaining hooks 76. Optionally, the retaining hooks 76 may be releasably detachable and pass out from the blade aperture 26, when
- 15 necessary. These retaining hooks 76 are especially useful where a user must orient the rule blade 28 in a downward direction, such that gravity would otherwise pull the sleeve 68 down towards the distal end of the rule blade 28. Optimally, the extension length of the retaining hooks 76 would be sized such that the midpoint of the sleeve's 68 top surface 100 may extend from 3 cm to
- 20 5 cm from the blade aperture 26. The variation in extension length of the

retaining hooks 76 may be customized to accommodate various users hands and fingers, whose size varies among lathers.

In operation, upon extending the rule blade 28 to the desired length by
5 grasping the end hook 34, a lock and automatic rewind switch 32 optionally mounted on the front wall 22 of the enclosure casing 24, would be set to the locked position to keep the rule blade 28 fixed to the desired length.

Generally, a right handed lather would grasp the tape measure 10 in the palm
10 of his left hand, with two or three of his fingers gripping the bottom wall 18, positioned such that the lather's index finger may extend to a point underneath the sleeve 68, up against surface 106 and adjacent to the inner wall 104 of the fence 72. The lather's left thumb would press on top of the sleeve surface 100 and the perforated area 112. Then the outer surface 102
15 of the fence 72 would be then pressed against an edge of a sheet of drywall or plaster board, at the distal length to be cut, the rule blade resting on top of the sheet of drywall or plaster board, running perpendicular to the edge surface. A knife (not shown), held in the other hand, would be then positioned adjacent the end hook 34. Pulling the sleeve and the knife towards the
20 oneself, while maintaining sufficient pressure upon the sheet of drywall or plaster board, and while maintaining the knife adjacent to the end hook 34, a

clean and smooth cut results, without any abrasion to the lather's left index finger.

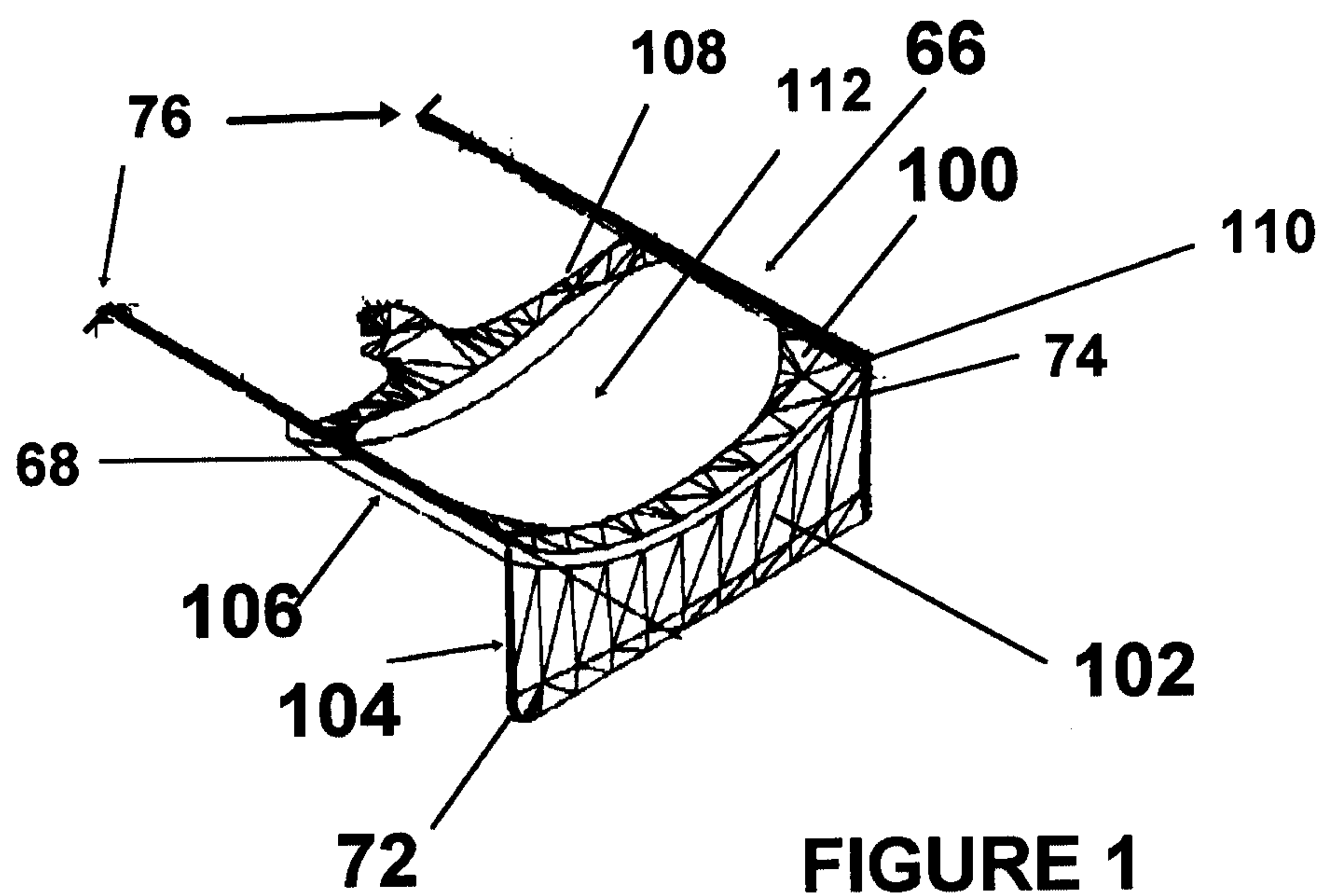
5 Thereafter, switch 32 may be manually operated to retract the rule blade 28 back into the enclosure casing 24, along with the extension hooks 76 and the sleeve 68.

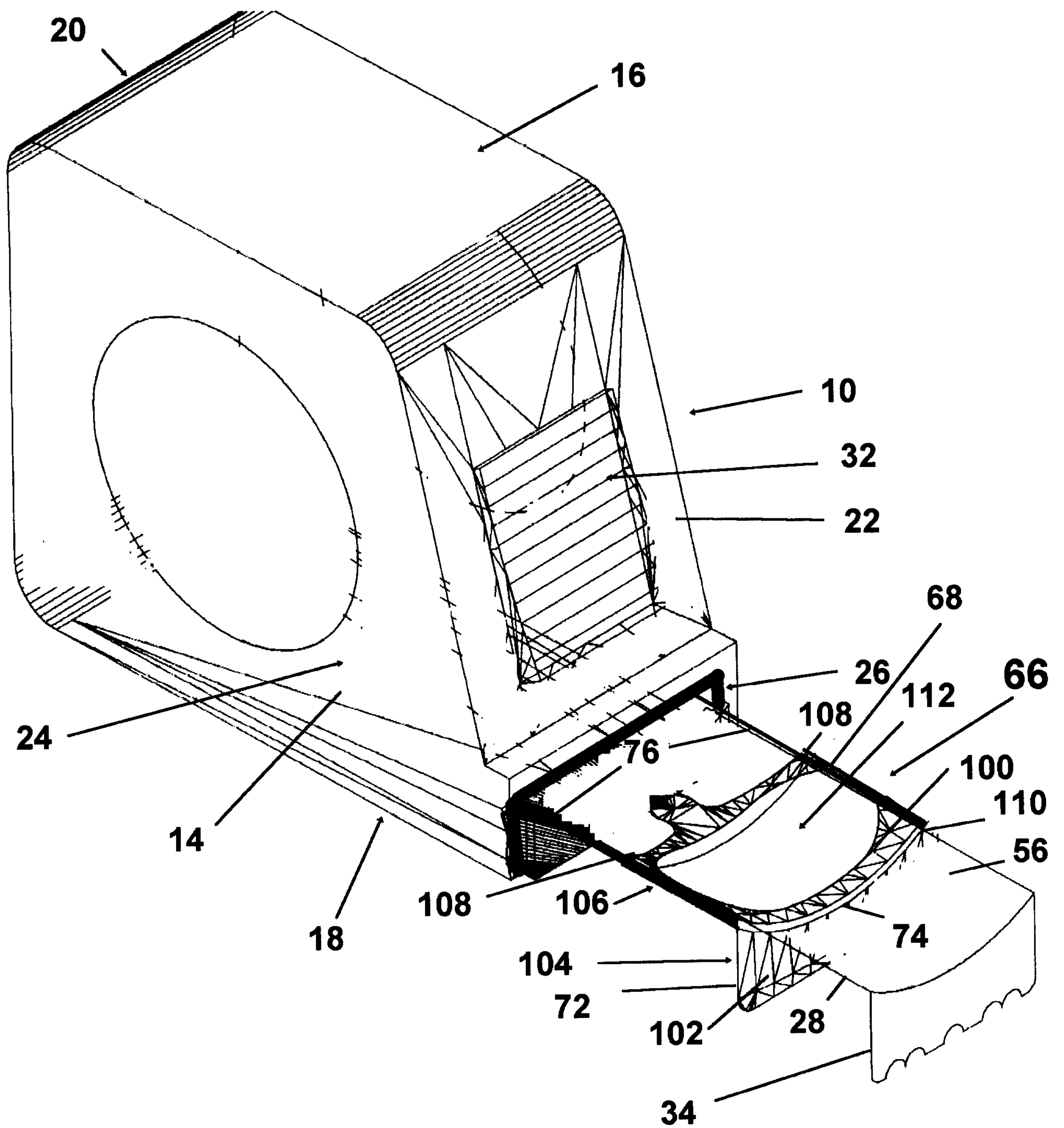
The invention may yield aesthetic visual effects. Decals with indicia may be placed on the sleeve.

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The specific embodiments and examples set forth above are provided to illustrate the invention and are not intended as limiting. Additional embodiments within the scope of the claims will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

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**FIGURE 2**

