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2,243,841

CABINET ACCESSORY

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Fig. 1

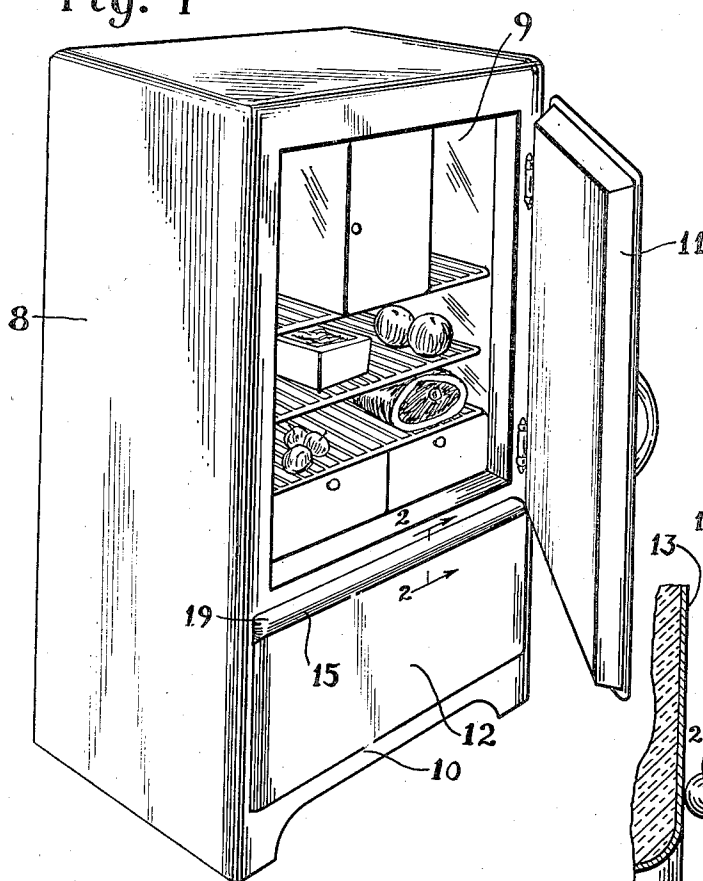


Fig. 2

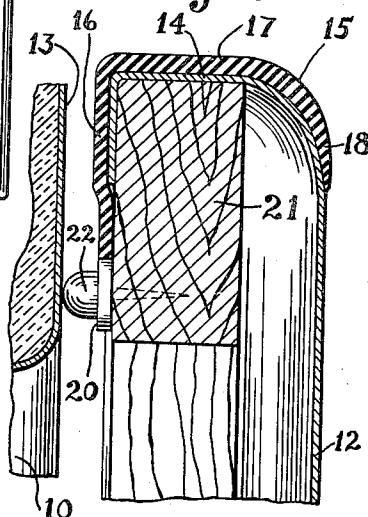
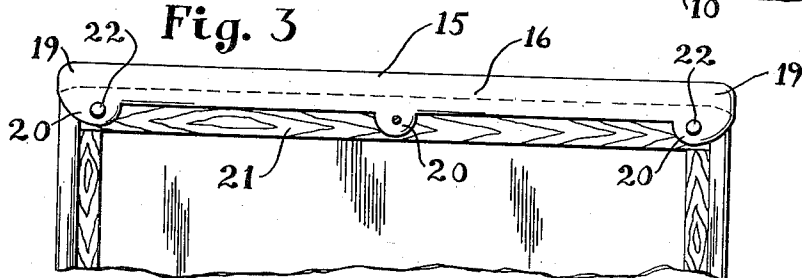


Fig. 3



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CABINET ACCESSORY

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2 Claims. (Cl. 45—137)

The present invention relates to a protective accessory device for use with cabinets having finished surfaces, such as refrigerators or stove cabinets or the like, and it relates more particularly to a device adapted to be readily operatively applied to such cabinets to protect vulnerable portions of their finished surfaces from accidental injury and undue wear.

There are numerous cabinets now on the market and in current use having highly finished outer surfaces which when once injured either cannot be properly repaired or else can only be repaired at relatively prohibitive cost. Included among such articles are refrigerators, stoves, drawer cabinets and other kitchen cabinets constructed from sheet metal and having glazed porcelain finishes, synthetic or ordinary enamel finishes, and the like. In actual use, the finished outer surfaces are extremely vulnerable to damage, and readily become chipped and scratched and marred, particularly when struck by hard objects, as for example by falling dishes or utensils or the like. This is particularly true of outwardly projecting ledge-like cabinet surfaces which extend beyond the main plane of the cabinet face, as for example the ledge-like surface along the upper edge of a cabinet panel or door or drawer whose front surfaces offset outwardly beyond the plane of the adjacent cabinet surface.

Thus, for example in many domestic and commercial refrigerators now on sale and in use, a generally upright cabinet is provided having its inside horizontally divided into two compartments, the upper compartment comprising the refrigerating chamber, and the lower compartment comprising either a food storage chamber or a space for housing the mechanical apparatus forming part of the refrigerator. These two compartments are provided with outwardly movable front access doors which may be hingedly or otherwise associated with the cabinet, and customarily the face of the lower door or panel is offset outwardly from the adjacent front cabinet surface, thereby presenting along the upper edge of said lower door or panel an outwardly projecting ledge adapted to be struck by falling objects. Thus, when the door to the overhead refrigerating compartment is open for the insertion or extraction of dishes or utensils the outwardly projecting ledge along the top edge of the lower panel becomes exposed, and should any dishes or utensils be dropped, they are quite likely to strike this ledge and chip or otherwise irreparably injure the finished surface thereof.

It is the object of the present invention to pro-

vide an accessory device which may be readily applied to the upper edge of an outwardly projecting cabinet panel to protect the same from injury.

For the purpose of illustrating the invention, there is shown in the accompanying drawing a form thereof which is at present preferred, since the same has been found in practice to give satisfactory and reliable results, although it is to be understood that the various instrumentalities of which the invention consists can be variously arranged and organized and that the invention is not limited to the precise arrangement and organization of the instrumentalities as herein shown and described.

In the accompanying drawing, wherein like reference characters indicate like parts,

Figure 1 represents a perspective view of a refrigerator cabinet, comprising one of the many different kinds of cabinets on which the present invention may be employed, shown with a rubber shield constituting one illustrative embodiment of the present invention operatively mounted over the upper edge of the lower protruding panel.

Figure 2 represents a much enlarged sectional view taken on line 2—2 of Figure 1, looking in the direction of the arrows.

Figure 3 represents an enlarged view looking at the rear of the rubber shield illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

The particular refrigerator selected for illustration in the accompanying drawing includes a generally rectangular cabinet 8 having its interior horizontally divided into a main upper refrigerating compartment 9 and a lower compartment 10 which may house the refrigerating machinery or which may constitute a food storage space. A hinged door 11 cooperates with the front opening of the upper refrigerating compartment 9, and access to the space inside the lower compartment 10 may be had by removing the lower panel 12 from its associated opening, either by swinging said panel outwardly if it be hingedly connected to the cabinet, or else by bodily removing the entire panel from the associated opening.

As will be observed from Figure 2, the outer surface of the lower panel 12 is offset outwardly from the adjacent surrounding front surface 13 of the refrigerator, with the rounded ledge-like edge portion 14 extending generally intermediate the two. The exposed outer surface of this lower panel 12, like the rest of the cabinet 8 comes customarily coated with a glazed porcelain or synthetic enamel finish which is subject to chip-

ping when struck by a falling article, such as a dropped food receptacle or the like.

In accordance with the present invention, the upper ledge 14 is covered with an elongated longitudinally resilient protector or shield 15 of length substantially coextensive with the width of the panel 12. This protector or shield 15 may be constructed from any suitable material, preferably from resilient elastic material, as for instance from natural or synthetic rubber, or the like. In the preferred embodiment, the shield 15 is molded to a shape which will most nearly correspond with the rounded contour along and at the corners of upper edge portion 14.

The shield 15 is of channel-like cross-section and includes a relatively thin vertical rear wall 16, a generally horizontal upper wall 17, and a front wall portion 18 which preferably tapers downwardly to a feather edge to merge smoothly with the underlying outer surface of the panel 12; with portions 16, 17 and 18 being integral with each other. At the opposite end portions of the inverted trough-like portion of the shield or protector 15 are provided curved pocket-like corners 19 integral with the rest of the shield and adapted to fit snugly over the upper corners of the panel 12.

The shield or protector may be operatively secured in position along the upper edge portion of the panel 12 in any suitable manner, as for instance by being stretched longitudinally and then snapped or placed over said panel edge portion whereby it will be frictionally held in position, or it may be adhesively secured to the underlying panel surface. Another and preferred manner in which the shield may be secured in position has been illustrated in Figure 3 and will be seen to consist of fastening a series of tabs or projections 20, which are integral with the rear shield-wall 16 and extend downwardly therefrom, directly to the underlying panel metal or to the panel frame member 21 by any suitable fastening means, as for instance by screws or nails or even directly by the corner rubber snubbers 22 which are sometimes provided at the corners of the panel 12. If desired, any combination of the foregoing fastening means may be used. Once the rubber shield of the present invention has been operatively affixed to the upper edge of its associated panel, it will maintain its position thereon, and will not separate itself therefrom in use.

The shield of the present invention may be constructed in a wide variety of colors to match or contrast with the color of the exterior cabinet surface, and will enhance the ornamental appearance of the cabinet to which it is applied.

Once it has been affixed, it may be readily cleaned without removal, and is unobjectionable from a sanitary standpoint.

The word "rubber" where used in the foregoing specification and in the appended claims is intended to comprehend either natural rubber or synthetic or artificial rubber, as for example "Neoprene," "Thiokol," "Duprene" or the like, or other rubber-like materials.

The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential attributes thereof, and it is therefore desired that the present embodiment be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, reference being had to the appended claims rather than to the foregoing description to indicate the scope of the invention.

Having thus described the invention, what is hereby claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent is:

1. A rubber shield for protecting the ledge-like upper edge portion of a protruding cabinet panel comprising an elongated inverted trough-like portion open at the bottom and adapted to be applied to the upper edge portion of said panel and including a rear wall, an upper wall and a front wall generally in juxtaposition with said rear wall, said walls being integral with each other, a pair of opposed pocket-like corner portions at the opposite ends of said trough-like portion integral therewith and adapted snugly to receive the upper corner portions of said panel, and a series of securement tabs extending downwardly from said rear wall and adapted to be permanently fastened to the rear of said cabinet panel by any suitable attachment means, whereby said shield may be generally permanently secured to said panel by means normally concealed from view.

2. A one-piece molded flexible rubber shield for protecting the upper edge portion of a protruding cabinet panel against possible injury from falling objects or the like comprising an inverted channel-like longitudinally resilient portion adapted to be placed over the upper edge portion of said panel, said portion when relaxed being slightly shorter in length than the width of said panel, and a pair of juxtaposed pocket-like corner portions at the opposite ends of said channel-like portion and integral therewith, said pocket-like corner portions being adapted snugly to be drawn down over the opposite upper corner portions of said cabinet panel when said channel-like portion is stretched longitudinally, whereby said shield will be frictionally retained in position.

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