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(54) **Shower booth**

Duschkabine

Cabine de douche

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a shower booth that is so improved as to be particularly ergonomic and compact, ie. with reduced encumbrance.

[0002] Shower booths are generally known to usually have a more or less regular polygonal plan and to comprise one or more access doors of either the sliding or swinging type. The geometry of these booths is anyway quite varied, depending on the particular case, in the still widely unsuccessful effort to mutually conciliate a number of conflicting requirements, which are of a both technical and aesthetical nature and are unvaryingly of paramount importance in the filed of sanitary appliances for the home.

[0003] DE-A-3 310 139 discloses a shower booth with two doors capable of opening outwards, each door having a shaped side border that, when the door is in its closed position, links up with a side wall of the booth.

[0004] The main ones among these requirements of a technical nature relate in particular to the need of providing a highly ergonomic design, which practically means that the shower booth must be comfortable, spacious and conveniently accessible through an easily closable, large aperture, while preferably doing away with the use of multiple doors and/or doors of the type formed by mutually hinged panels. In any case, the access door must be capable of being operated in a practical and effective manner, substantially without any effort on the part of the user.

[0005] On the other hand, it is necessary for the space requirements, ie. the encumbrance, of the shower booth under both static and dynamic conditions to be as reduced as possible. As a result, if the use of swinging doors, which should open outwards, is preferably to be avoided, there are also geometrical and dimensional limitations to the actual length of travel of sliding doors.

[0006] The possibility for the above mentioned clashing requirements to be conciliated is made still more problematic by the need for the shower booth to feature, substantially under all operating and use conditions thereof, a reliable and effective water-tightness, ie. a reliable and adequate sealing effect against water being capable of leaking outwards.

[0007] In short, no one among the various prior-art solutions is known to fully comply with all of the above mentioned conflicting requirements.

[0008] It therefore is a main purpose of the present invention to provide an improved shower booth in which all the drawbacks connected with the prior-art solutions are either done away with or minimized.

[0009] More particularly, it is a purpose of the present invention to provide a shower booth of the above cited kind, which has a particularly ergonomic and low-encumbrance structure under both static and dynamic conditions thereof.

[0010] A further purpose of the present invention is to provide a shower booth of the above cited kind, which has an improved water tightness, ie, an improved water sealing effect.

[0011] A yet further purpose of the present invention is to provide a shower booth of the above cited kind, in which the access aperture is capable of being opened and closed in a particularly easy, effective and safe manner.

[0012] According to the present invention, these aims are reached in an improved shower booth embodying such characteristics as recited in the appended claims.

[0013] The features and advantages of the present invention will anyway be more readily and clearly understood from the description that is given below by way of non-limiting example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

- Figure 1 is a partially cross-sectional top view of a preferred embodiment of the shower booth according to the present invention, with its access door open;
- Figure 2 is a schematical cross-sectional view of the shower booth shown in Figure 1, with its access door closed;
- Figure 3 is a perspective view of the access door of the shower booth shown in Figure 1, with the therewith associated linkage system for the operation thereof.

[0014] With reference to the above cited Figures, the shower booth can be noticed to mainly comprise a base or bottom pan 1, with a water outlet 2, and a side surface being substantially polygonal in its plan, which in the described example of preferred embodiment is in the shape of an irregular trapezium, preferably with at least a rounded-off edge 3.

[0015] In particular, the shower booth comprises a front wall 5 which is in turn formed . by a substantially rectilinear fixed portion 6 and a single closing door 7, a side border of which is so shaped as to define said rounded-off edge 3, beyond which said door links up, under the interposition of at least a sealing gasket 28, with a side wall 4 of the booth.

[0016] In other words, the door 7 normally closes a corresponding access aperture of the booth which in an advantageous manner extends not only in correspondence of the front wall 5, but also in correspondence of a part of the side wall 4, including the edge 3 and, therefore, allowing for a convenient access into the same booth.

[0017] In a preferred manner, the door 7 substantially extends to cover the entire height of the booth and may be made of a transparent, semitransparent, variously coloured and/or reflecting material.

[0018] Furthermore, when in its closed position, the door 7 is in a preferred manner substantially flush with the side surface of the booth, in such a manner as to

reduce encumbrance to a minimum, while making the aesthetics of the same booth much more valuable.

[0019] In addition to that, the door 7 is connected to the fixed portion of the booth by means of at least a linkage system that is adapted to allow for a door opening rotary-translatory motion towards a positive opening extension limit (as shown in Figure 1 and with dashed lines in Figure 2), in which the door 7 is substantially brought into a side-by-side arrangement with and approached externally to the fixed portion 6 of the front wall 5. In particular, the above mentioned opening motion is sufficient to initially bring about a reduced front displacement of the door 7 outwardly, so as to just enable the same door to disengage itself with respect to both the therewith aligned front wall 6 and the therewith linked-up side wall 4. The opening motion can then be easily completed with the door 7 being approached to the wall 6 on a side-by-side arrangement therewith, in such a manner as to involve just a minimum overall encumbrance thereof, under both static and dynamic conditions.

[0020] To this purpose, said linkage system comprises at least a lever 8 that is substantially in the shape of a J, with opposite end portions 9 and 10 thereof that are hinged on to the fixed portion of the booth and a bracket 11 firmly joined to the door 7, respectively.

[0021] In particular, the end portion 9 of the lever 8 is hinged on to a position which is adjacent to the border 13 of the fixed wall 6 delimiting the access aperture, whereas the end portion 10 is hinged on to the door 7 substantially in correspondence of a median portion thereof, in such a manner as to form an adequate lever arm between the above cited end portions 9 and 10. When the door 7 is closed, the J-shaped lever extends substantially horizontally on the rear side of the front wall 5, with a loop-like portion 12 that is capable of substantially accommodating the border 13 during the opening motion of the door, thereby avoiding any mechanical jamming with a minimum encumbrance.

[0022] In a preferred manner, the above cited linkage system comprises a further lever 14 having an end portion 15 hinged on to the fixed portion of the booth (for instance, to an upper cross-member 18) and an end portion 16 hinged on to the door 7 (by means of a bracket 17 attached thereto) at positions that (when the door is closed, as illustrated in Figure 2) are adjacent to and spaced from the end portion 10 of the lever 8, respectively.

[0023] Through a proper sizing of the involved component parts, this allows for a more linear and accurate rotary-translatory motion of the door 7, while in particular ensuring a substantial alignment of the door 7 with the front wall 5, in particular when the same door is in its two most critical positions, ie. the closed and opened one.

[0024] For reasons of minimized encumbrance, the linkage system 8, 14 of the door is preferably arranged in correspondence of the top portion of the shower booth. However, in view of ensuring an accurate, smooth motion of the door 7, without any jamming or similar drawbacks, the door itself is preferably connected to the fixed portion of the booth also through a further linkage system comprising a correspondingly shaped lever 80 (Figure 2), which is fully similar to the afore described lever 8, and situated substantially at the base of the booth. It will of course be appreciated that such a further linkage system may comprise also a lever similar to the afore described lever 14.

[0025] The shaped levers 8 and 80 are preferably hinged on to the fixed portion of the booth, in a position close to the border 13, by means of a vertical transmission rod 19 conferring rigidity and strength to the whole linkage system of the door 7. In view of using the available spaces in an optimum manner and avoiding any possible accidental contact with moving objects, said transmission rod 19 extends inside the booth and is surrounded, substantially over its whole height, by a sheathing profile section 20 that is preferably in the shape of a vertical handle so as to be capable of being conveniently gripped and, therefore, acting as an ergonomic holding facility for the user.

[0026] In a preferred manner, the door 7 is capable of being operated by a bidirectional electric motor 21, which may be situated on top of the booth along with a speed reduction mechanism comprising a gear 22 which normally engages a corresponding elastically supported gear 23 joined to the transmission rod 19, so as to rotate jointly therewith, and displaceable axially in an elastic manner for the reasons that will be described in greater detail further on.

[0027] The motor 21 may be operated by means of two control push-buttons 24, 25, or the like, arranged outside and inside the booth, respectively, for instance in correspondence of the side wall 4.

[0028] When the user wishes to step into the booth, the actuation of the outside push-button 24 will cause the motor 21 to rotate, thereby bringing about the motion of the entire kinematical system formed by the rod 19 and the linkages 8, 14, 80, in such a manner as to translationally move the door 7 into its opened position. Once the user is stepped into the booth, he/she can then push the inside button 25 in view of causing the door to again move into closing.

[0029] When stepping out of the booth, the user can first actuate the push-button 25 to cause the door 7 to open, and the door itself can then be caused to move again into closing by pressing again either the same push-button 25 or the outside push-button 24.

[0030] The electric circuitry needed to determine the above described actuation of the electric motor 21 by means of the push-buttons 24 and 25 is within the capabilities of those skilled in the art, is not a part of the present invention and, therefore, is not dealt with here for reasons of greater simplicity. Furthermore, the push-buttons 24, 25 may be replaced by equivalent means capable of being actuated via a remote control device.

[0031] In all cases, it can be readily appreciated that the actuation of the closing and opening motion of the door 7 occurs in a fully automatic manner and, notwithstanding the considerable size of the same door, does not require any effort by the user. Furthermore, the motor-driven operation of the door 7 allows for the same door to be most advantageously provided with a fully smooth surface, free of handles, grips or the like.

[0032] In order to prevent a possible power failure from making it impossible for the door to be correctly operated, there is provided a safety device comprising two handles 26 and 27, or the like, arranged both outside and inside the booth, respectively, for instance in correspondence of the side wall 4. These handles 26 and 27 are connected via respective flexible cables and associated transmission gears (not shown for reasons of greater descriptive simplicity) to the reduction gear of the electric motor 21, in particular to the elastically supported gear 22. Should a need arise, it will therefore be sufficient for one of said handles 26, 27 (depending on the particular case) to be pulled in order to displace the gear 22 axially so as to temporarily disengage it from the gear 23, in such a manner as to set the drive shaft 19 (along with the linkage system 8, 14, 80) into idling, thereby enabling the door 7 to be opened manually.

[0033] In any case, to the purpose of preventing the door 7 from possibly opening accidentally when water carrying and spraying devices are operating inside the shower booth (for instance, if the user happens to accidentally bump against the door with a certain force), on the door 7 there is attached a plate 29 of a ferromagnetic or similar material, which is adapted to be attracted by an electromagnet 30 mounted on the fixed portion of the booth and operated through a position sensor of the door 7, ie. a device sensing the position of said door.

[0034] For instance, this sensor may comprise a micro-switch, or similar device, connected to and included in the electric circuit provided to energize the electromagnet 30, and adapted to be actuated into closing, ie. making, when the door 7 is closed. Under operating conditions, therefore, when the door 7 is closed the sensor 31 causes the electromagnet 30 to be energized, so that this electromagnet 30 is able to exert on the plate 29, and therefore the door , a substantial force of attraction that keeps the door firmly in its closed position. When the user then wishes to step out of the booth, the actuation of the inside control push-button 25 will first cause the electromagnet 30 to be de-energized and then the motor 21 to be energized, so as to cause the door 7 to open as described earlier in this description.

[0035] As illustrated in Figure 1, however, instead of making use of a micro-switch it is a preferred choice to provide a sensor 31, for instance of a magnetic type, that is controlled directly by the motor 21 and/or the gears 22, 23 and, as a result, indirectly by the position of the door 7.

[0036] Also the electric circuitry needed to determine the above described operation of the electric motor 21 in combination with said interlock device 29, 30 and the sensor 31 is within the capabilities of those skilled in the art, is not a part of the present invention and, therefore, is not dealt with here for reasons of greater simplicity.

[0037] In any case, the above described safety interlock device advantageously prevents the door 7 from being able to open accidentally when water handling and spraying members or parts of the shower booth are in operation, thereby doing away with the risk that such water-handling parts may cause water to be undesirably sprayed or splashed outwards, ie. outside the booth.

[0038] In this connection, at the base of the door 7 there is preferably provided an inner dripping gutter 32 adapted to collect the water falling in correspondence of the inner surface of the same door and convey said water inwards in the base pan 1 by means of at least an appropriately protruding shaped channel 33. This occurs at least when the door 7 is substantially closed and substantially open, ie, in its most critical positions as far as the possibility for falling water to drip outside the booth. It may be readily appreciated that, if said channel 33 is protruding inwards to a sufficient extent, the above cited function of collecting and conveying dripping water towards the base pan 1 of the shower booth can be actually performed when the door 7 is in each position throughout the opening travel thereof.

[0039] It will be appreciated that the afore described shower booth may be subject to a number of modifications and variants without departing from the scope of the present invention as defined by the claims.

Claims

1. Shower booth comprising a base pan (1) and a side surface being substantially polygonal in its plan, with a front wall (5) which is in turn formed by a substantially rectilinear fixed portion (6) and a single door (7) capable of opening outwards and adapted to close a corresponding access aperture, **characterized in that** the door (7) has a shaped side border (3) that, when the door (7) is in its closed position, defines an edge of the booth beyond which the door (7) links up with a side wall (4) of the same booth, in which the door (7) is connected to the booth by means of at least a linkage system (8, 80) adapted to allow for a rotary-translatory motion of the door between said closed position, in which is lies substantially flush with the side surface of the booth, and an open position in which the door (7) is substantially adjacent to said fixed portion (6), closely on the side thereof, thereby avoiding any mechanical jamming with a minimum dynamic encumbrance thereof.

2. Shower booth according to claim 1, **characterized in that** said linkage system comprises at least a lever (8; 80) that, on a side thereof, is hinged on to

the booth in a position (9) that is adjacent to a border (13) of said fixed wall (6) delimiting the access aperture and, on the other side thereof, is hinged on to the door (7), in which said lever is so shaped as to feature a loop-like configuration (12) adapted to substantially accommodate said border (13) during the opening motion of the door (7).

3. Shower booth according to claim 2, **characterized in that** said linkage system comprises at least a further lever (14) adapted to ensure a substantial alignment of the door (7) with said front wall (5) during said rotary-translatory motion.

4. Shower booth according to claim 2, **characterized in that** said shaped lever (8; 80) is hinged on to the booth by means of a vertical rod (19) that extends inside the booth and is surrounded, substantially over its whole height, by a sheathing profile section (20) in the shape of a vertical grip.

5. Shower booth according to claim 2, **characterized in that** said shaped lever (8; 80) is hinged on to the booth by means of a transmission rod (19) that is adapted to be actuated rotatably, in order to open and close said door (7), by an electric motor (21) that is operable through control means (24, 25), or the like, provided outside and inside the booth, respectively.

6. Shower booth according to claim 5, **characterized in that** said motor (21) is connected to said rod (19) via transmission means (22, 23) that are normally engaging each other and are capable of being disengaged from each other by the actuation of either a first or a second lever (26, 27), or the like, provided outside and inside the booth, respectively.

7. Shower booth according to claim 5, **characterized in that** it further comprises electromagnetic means (29, 30) adapted to exert on the door (7) such a force of attraction as to ensure that said door is firmly kept, ie. locked in said closed position thereof.

8. Shower booth according to claim 7, **characterized in that** said electromagnetic means (29, 30) are energized by position sensor means (31) in response to said door (7) being closed, and are adapted to be de-energized by means of said control means (24, 25).

9. Shower booth according to claim 1, **characterized in that** substantially at the base of the door (7) there is provided a gutter (32) adapted to collect the water falling in correspondence of the inner surface of the same door and convey said water inwards in said base pan (1), at least when the door (7) is substantially closed and substantially open, by means of at least a protruding channel (33).

Patentansprüche

1. Duschzelle mit einem Bodenbecken (1) und einer im Grundriss im wesentlichen polygonalen Seitenfläche, sowie mit einer Vorderwand (5), welche ihrerseits aus einem im wesentlichen geradlinigen Festteil (6) und einer einzigen, sich nach außen öffnenden Tür (7) besteht, welche dazu geeignet ist, eine entsprechende Eintrittsöffnung zu schließen, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die Tür (7) einen geformten Seitenrand (3) aufweist, welcher dazu geeignet ist, bei sich in ihrer Schließstellung befindender Tür eine Zellenkante festzulegen, über welche sich die genannte Tür (7) an eine Seitenwand (4) derselben Zelle anschließt, wobei die Tür (7) mit der Zelle durch mindestens ein Gelenksystem (8, 80) verbunden ist, mit dessen Hilfe die Tür (7) mit einer kombinierten Drehungs- und Translationsbewegung von der genannten Schließstellung, in der sie im wesentlichen flächenbündig mit der Seitenfläche der Zelle ist, zu einer Offenstellung, in der die Tür (7) am genannten Festteil (6) im wesentlichen Seite an Seite anliegt, so verstellbar ist, daß mechanisches Kanten und Hemmen bei niedrigem dynamischen Raumbedarf ausgeschlossen ist.

2. Duschzelle nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das genannte Gelenksystem mindestens einen Hebel (8; 80) umfasst, welcher auf einer Seite an der Zelle an einer Stelle (9), die an einer die Eintrittsöffnung der Zelle festlegenden Kante (13) der genannten Festwand (6) anliegt, und auf der anderen Seite an der Tür (7) drehbar, d.h. beweglich befestigt ist, wobei der genannte Hebel mit einer Krümmung (12) ausgestaltet ist, welche im wesentlichen dazu geeignet ist, die genannten Kante (13) bei der Öffnungsbewegung der Tür (7) aufzunehmen.

3. Duschzelle nach Anspruch 2, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das genannte Gelenksystem mindestens einen weiteren Hebel (14) umfasst, welcher im wesentlichen dazu geeignet ist, eine Ausfluchtung der Tür (7) mit der genannten Vorderwand (5) während der genannten rotations-translatorischen Bewegung zu sichern.

4. Duschzelle nach Anspruch 2, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** der genannte krümmartig geformte Hebel (8; 80) an der Zelle mit Hilfe von einem sich innenseitig in die Zelle erstreckenden und von einem in Form eines senkrechten Handgriffs gestalteten und als Hülle dienenden Profilteil (20) im wesentlichen über seine ganze Höhe umgegebenen Vertikalstab (19) drehbar gelagert ist.

5. Duschzelle nach Anspruch 2, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** der genannte krümmartig geformte Hebel (8; 80) an der Zelle mit Hilfe von einem Treibstab (19) drehbar gelagert ist, welcher durch einen, mit Hilfe von außen- bzw. innenseitig an der Zelle angeordneten Bedienungsmitteln (24, 25) oder dgl. zum Schließen und Öffnen der genannten Tür (7) betätigbaren Elektromotor (21) drehbar antreibbar ist.

6. Duschzelle nach Anspruch 5, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** der genannte Elektromotor (21) mit Hilfe von Übertragungsmitteln (22, 23) mit dem genannten Treibstab (19) verbunden ist, welche normalerweise in Eingriff miteinander stehen und durch Betätigung eines ersten oder eines zweiten außen- bzw. innenseitig an der Zelle angeordneten Hebels (26, 27) oder dgl. außer Eingriff bringbar sind.

7. Duschzelle nach Anspruch 5, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** sie ferner elektromagnetische Mittel (29, 30) umfasst, die dazu geeignet sind, auf die Tür (7) eine solche Anziehungskraft auszuüben, dass sie sicher in ihrer Schließstellung festgehalten wird.

8. Duschzelle nach Anspruch 7, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** die genannten elektromagnetischen Mittel (29, 30) durch Stellungssensoren (31) auf das Schließen der Tür (7) ansprechend in Erregung gebracht und durch Betätigung der genannten Bedienungsmittel (24, 25) enterregbar sind.

9. Duschzelle nach Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** im wesentlichen am Boden, d.h. unten an der Tür (7) eine Rinne (32) vorgesehen ist, welche dazu geeignet ist, mindestens bei im wesentlichen geschlossener und im wesentlichen geöffneter Tür (7) das im Bereich der Innenfläche derselben Tür abtropfende, d.h. fallende Wasser aufzufangen und in das genannte Bodenbecken (1) mittels mindestens eines herausragenden Kanals (33) hineinzuleiten.

Revendications

1. Cabine pour douche comprenant une cuvette de fond (1) et une surface latérale dont le plan est essentiellement polygonal, avec une paroi frontale (5) qui est à son tour formée par une partie fixe (6) essentiellement rectiligne et une seule porte (7) pouvant être ouverte à l'extérieur et apte à fermer une ouverture d'accès correspondante, **caractérisée en ce que** la porte (7) a un bord latéral façonné (3) qui, lorsque la porte est dans sa position de fermeture, définit une arête de la cabine, au-delà de laquelle la porte (7) se raccorde avec une paroi latérale (4) de la même cabine, la porte (7) étant jointe à la cabine au moyen d'au moins une articulation (8, 80) qui est apte à permettre un mouvement de rotation-translation de la porte entre ladite position de fermeture, dans laquelle elle est essentiellement au fil de la surface latérale de la cabine, et une position d'ouverture dans laquelle la porte (7) est essentiellement adjacente à ladite partie fixe (6), l'une à côté de l'autre, de façon telle à éviter tout coincement mécanique avec un encombrement dynamique réduit.

2. Cabine pour douche selon la revendication 1, **caractérisée en ce que** ladite articulation comprend au moins un levier (8 ; 80) qui d'un côté est fixé d'une façon articulée à la cabine dans une position (9) qui est adjacente à un bord (13) de ladite paroi fixe (6) délimitant l'ouverture d'accès et, de l'autre côté, est fixé d'une façon articulée à la porte (7), ledit levier étant façonné avec une anse (12) qui est apte à recevoir essentiellement ledit bord (13) pendant le mouvement en ouverture de la porte (7).

3. Cabine pour douche selon la revendication 2, **caractérisée en ce que** ladite articulation comprend au moins un autre levier (14) qui est apte à assurer un alignement substantiel de la porte (7) avec ladite paroi frontale (5) pendant ledit mouvement de rotation-translation de la porte.

4. Cabine pour douche selon la revendication 2, **caractérisée en ce que** ledit levier façonné (8; 80) est fixé d'une façon articulée à la cabine par l'intermédiaire d'une barre verticale (19) qui s'étend à l'intérieur de la même cabine et est entourée, essentiellement sur toute sa hauteur, par un profilé de revêtement (20) façonné sous forme de poignée verticale.

5. Cabine pour douche selon la revendication 2, **caractérisée en ce que** ledit levier façonné (8; 80) est fixé d'une façon articulée à la cabine par l'intermédiaire d'une barre de transmission (19) apte à être entraînée en rotation, pour ouvrir et fermer ladite porte (7), par un moteur électrique (21) pouvant être actionné au moyen de moyens de commande (24, 25), ou moyens semblables, disposés respectivement à l'extérieur et à l'intérieur de la cabine.

6. Cabine pour douche selon la revendication 5, **caractérisée en ce que** ledit moteur électrique (21) est connecté à ladite barre de transmission (19) au moyen de moyens de transmission (22, 23) qui sont normalement engagés entre eux et sont désengageables en actionnant un premier ou un deuxième levier (26, 27), ou moyens semblables, disposés respectivement à l'extérieur et à l'intérieur de la cabine.

7. Cabine pour douche selon la revendication 5, **caractérisée en ce que** elle comprend en outre des moyens électromagnétiques (29, 30) qui sont aptes à exercer sur la porte (7) une force d'attraction qui en assure le blocage dans ladite position de fermeture.

8. Cabine pour douche selon la revendication 7, **caractérisée en ce que** lesdits moyens électromagnétiques (29, 30) sont excités par des moyens détecteurs de position (31) en réponse à la fermeture de la porte (7) et sont aptes à être désexcités au moyen desdits moyens de commande (24, 26).

9. Cabine pour douche selon la revendication 1, **caractérisée en ce qu**'une gouttière (32) est pourvue essentiellement à la base de la porte (7) qui est apte à recueillir l'eau tombant en correspondance de la surface intérieure de la même porte et à la canaliser vers l'intérieur de ladite cuvette de fond (1) de la cabine, au moins lorsque la porte (7) est essentiellement fermée et essentiellement ouverte, au moyen d'au moins un canal faisant saillie (33).

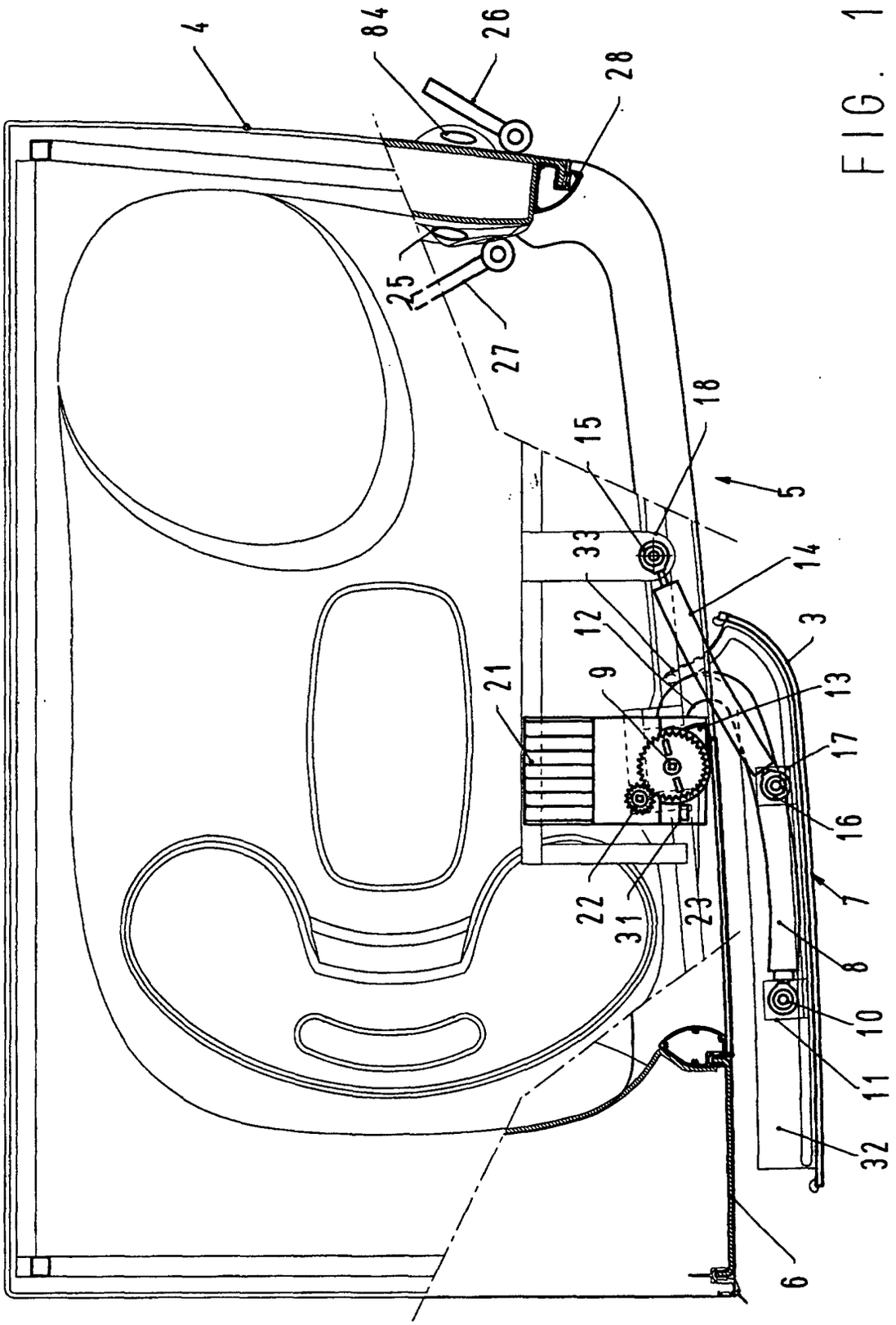

FIG. 1

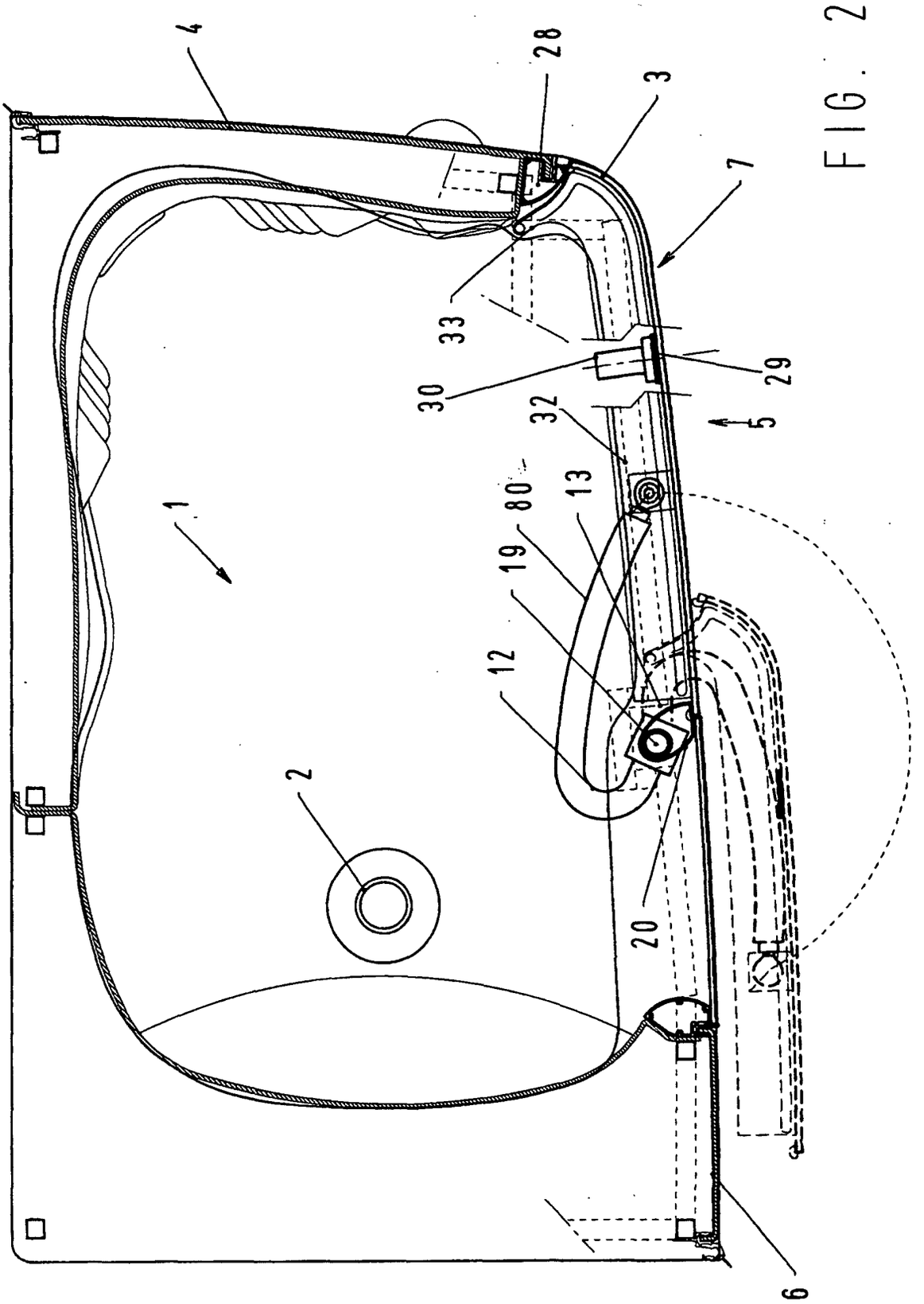

FIG. 2

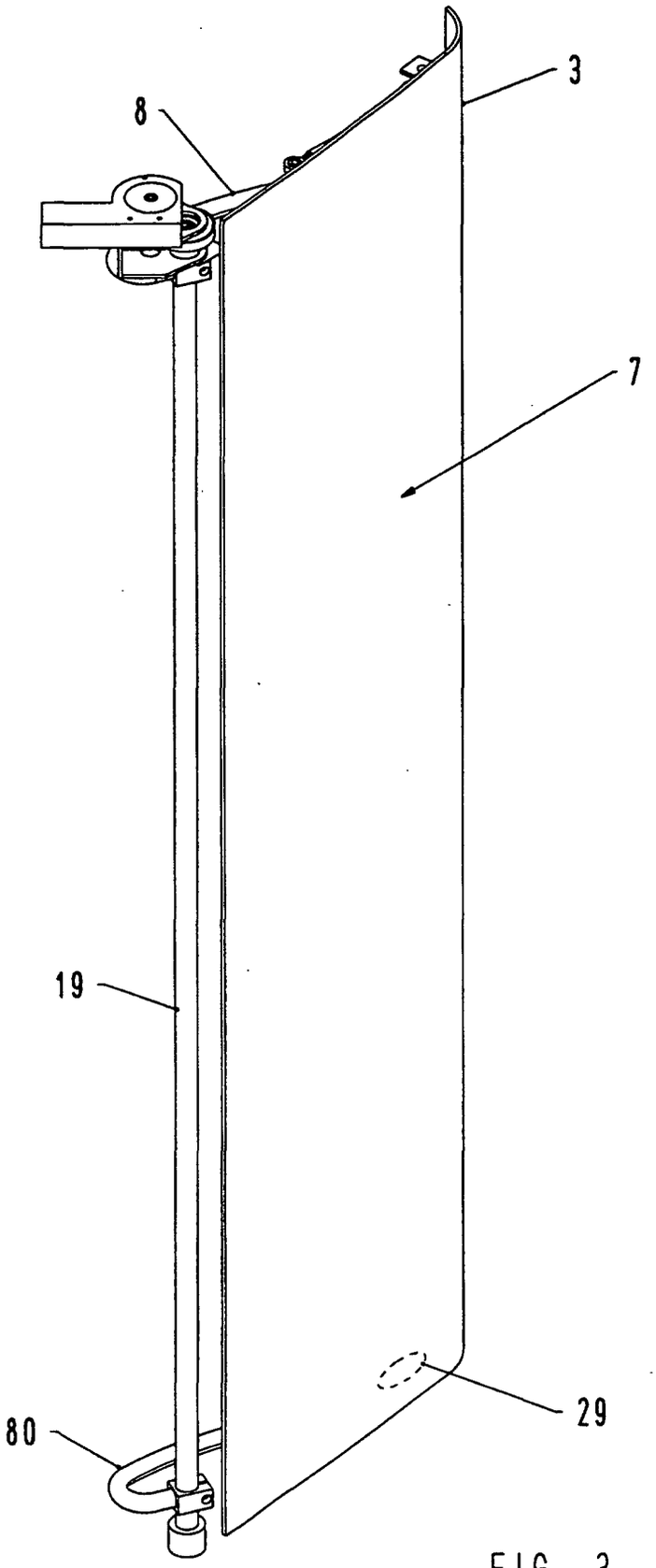

FIG. 3