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(54) Title: THE COFFEE PLUG

(57) Abstract: An inexpensive to manufacture plug for drinking holes in containers or container lids that consists of a plug, a means for retaining such plug, and a handle for inserting and removing the plug. The plug may be made of edible material and the handle may be of such size and shape to allow for advertisement or sponsorship. In the preferred embodiment, the plug has a flange for retaining the plug that allows for easy, repeated removal and insertion while still retaining a proper seal against spillage.
For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.
THE COFFEE PLUG
by
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BACKGROUND

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.78(a)(4) this application claims priority based upon the provisional application number 60/490,815 with the assigned filing date of 7/29/03.

The present invention is novel in its simplicity. It is well known that in today’s hectic times, food and beverages are consumed not in the home, but in the car, subway, bus, train, office, or literally, on the run. The problem is this: containers that hold beverages tend to spill; either through acceleration, deceleration, cornering, or just plain carelessness. Many of these beverages are hot and can cause serious injury to humans or damage to nearby furniture or equipment if spilled. Many attempts have been conceived to prevent this spillage through the use of container lids that limit the drinking hole size or by placing a small plastic type material over the hole. These methods, while in most cases, prevent large spills, still allow for some sort of leakage. Another method previously used to prevent spillage has been through the use of elaborate, non-disposable, and expensive valve type apparatuses. The present invention overcomes these limitations: it is disposable, and in one embodiment edible. Inexpensive, can be easily removed and replaced, prevents all leakage, and in another embodiment it can provide for sponsorship or advertising for promotional purposes to help defer the any cost this invention provides to the consumer.

SUMMARY

The present invention is directed to a device that satisfies the need of preventing the spilling of the contents of a container. The plug having features of the present invention comprises at least one handle, at least one plug, and at least one means for retaining the plug in the container or container lid. The invention is also novel in that it allows for repeated insertion and removal, may be edible, and in one embodiment, the handle is shaped for the use of advertisement or sponsorship.

These and other features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description, appended claims, and accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 shows a view of how the invention is inserted, using the example of the Whale Tail model
Fig. 2 is a side elevation view of the invention in use
Fig. 3 is a top view of a disposable cup lid and sipping hole
DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is extremely simple and eloquent in its design and implementation. Figure 1 graphically illustrates the relationship between the present invention 1, in one of its embodiments, and its insertion in a container lid hole 5 to prevent spillage. Figure 2 shows the present invention 1 inserted into a container lid 6. Figure 3 showing a top view of the invention 5.

Figure 4 shows the preferred embodiment of the present invention. The plug 4, the retaining flange 3 and the handle 2. In the embodiment in Figure 4, the handle 2 is that of a whale tail, but the handle could be an infinite number of embodiments. Figure 5 shows a top view relationship of the plug, flange and handle.

Figure 6 shows the present invention seals a container lid and prevents leaks. The lid hole 3 in the container lid 6 is completely sealed by the plug of the present invention 4, while the flange 3 firmly retains the plug in the lid 6. The handle 2 allows the present invention to be firmly grasped for insertion or removal.

Figures 7 through 20 show various embodiments of the handle in use for advertising and sponsorship purposes, although the limitation of designs is endless.

While the preferred embodiment has been described above and is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, there is no intent to limit the scope of the invention to this or any other particular embodiment.
CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A plug for lids which comprises:
   (a) at least one handle means;
   (b) at least one means for retaining said plug, whereby such plug can be removed
   and reinserted.

2. The plug as recited in claim 1, in which the handle means comprises:
   (a) at least one handle in the form of various shapes that can be used for
   advertising means.

3. The plug as recited in claim 2 where said plug is composed of:
   (a) an edible composition.

4. The plug as recited in claim 3 whereby:
   (a) said plug fits in a hole approximately 11mm in length and 5mm in width.

5. A plug for beverage container lids which comprises:
   (a) at least one handle means;
   (b) at least one means for retaining said plug, whereby such plug can be removed
   and reinserted.

6. The plug as recited in claim 4, in which the handle means comprises:
   (a) at least one handle in the form of various shapes that can be used for
   advertising means.

7. The plug as recited in claim 4 where said plug is composed of:
   (a) an edible composition.

8. The plug as recited in claim 6 whereby:
   (a) said plug fits in a hole approximately 11mm in length and 5mm in width.

9. A plug for containers that prevents spillage which comprises:
   (a) at least one handle means;
   (b) at least one means for retaining said plug, whereby such plug can be removed
   and reinserted.

10. The plug as recited in claim 8, in which the handle means comprises:
    (a) at least one handle in the form of various shapes that can be used for
        advertising means.

11. The plug as recited in claim 9 where said plug is composed of:
    (a) an edible composition.
12. The plug as recited in claim 10 whereby:
   (a) said plug fits in a hole approximately 11mm in length and 5mm in width.