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(54) **PRE-CUT PACKAGED STABILIZER**

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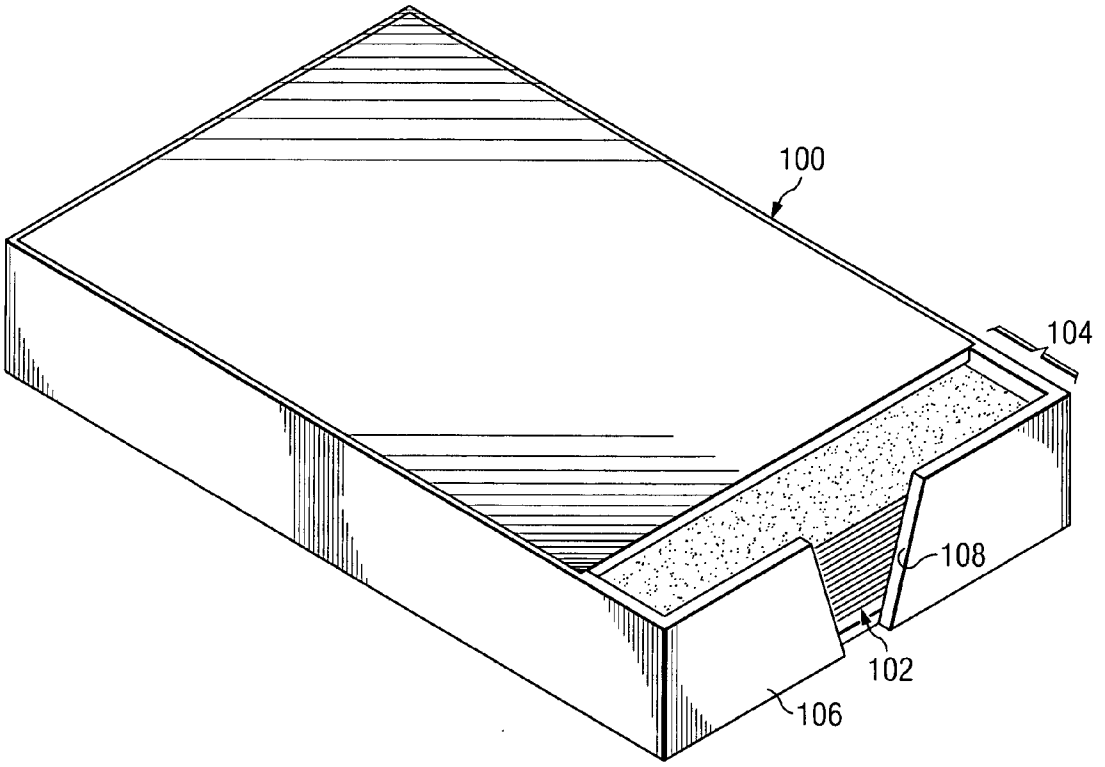
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention is directed towards providing a dispenser mechanism enclosing pre-cut stabilizer sheets for use with sewing/embroidery machines. Any of a variety of types and weights of stabilizer material known and/or available, including but not limited to tear-away, wash-away, heat-away or cut-away, may be pre-cut and packaged in the dispenser for convenient access. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer sheets permit convenient packaging of a plurality of stabilizer sheets in uniform sizes pre-cut to fit a variety of embroidery hoop dimensions. The packaging permits access to individual sheets of the pre-cut stabilizer material in an easy manner.



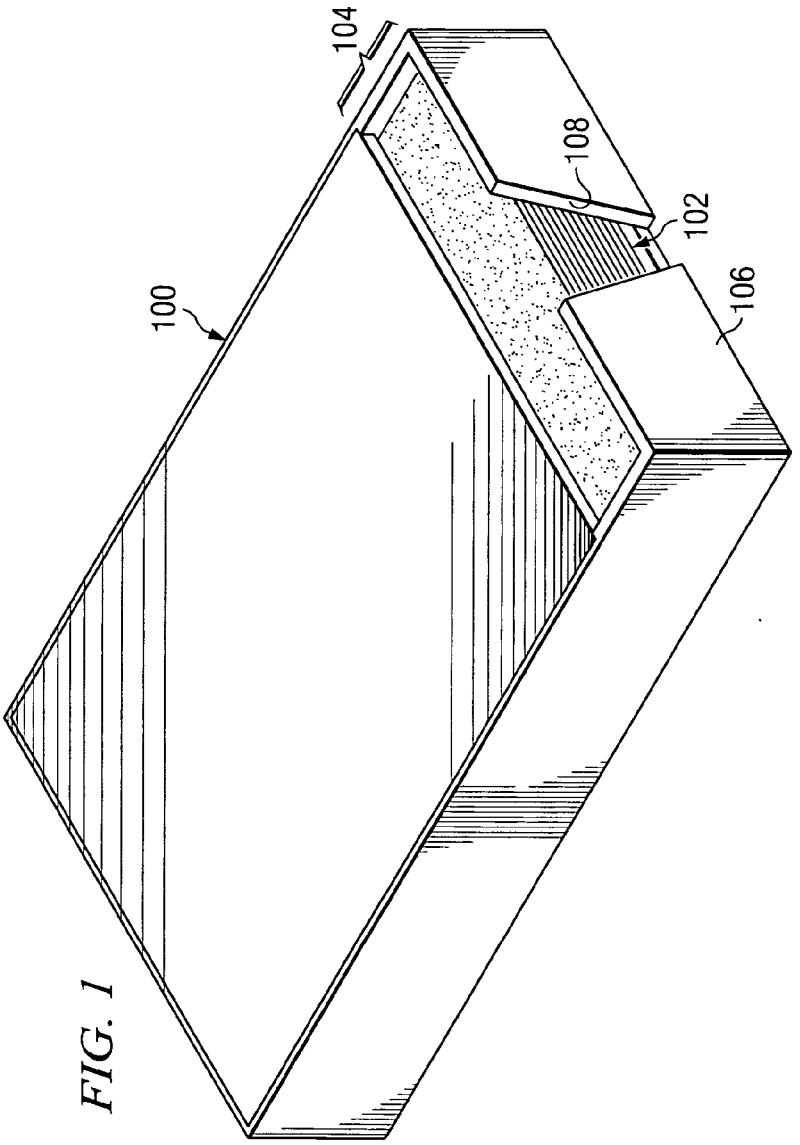


FIG. 1

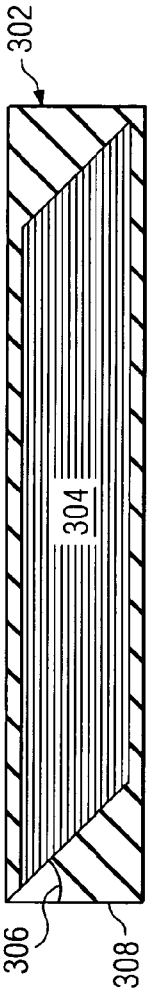


FIG. 3

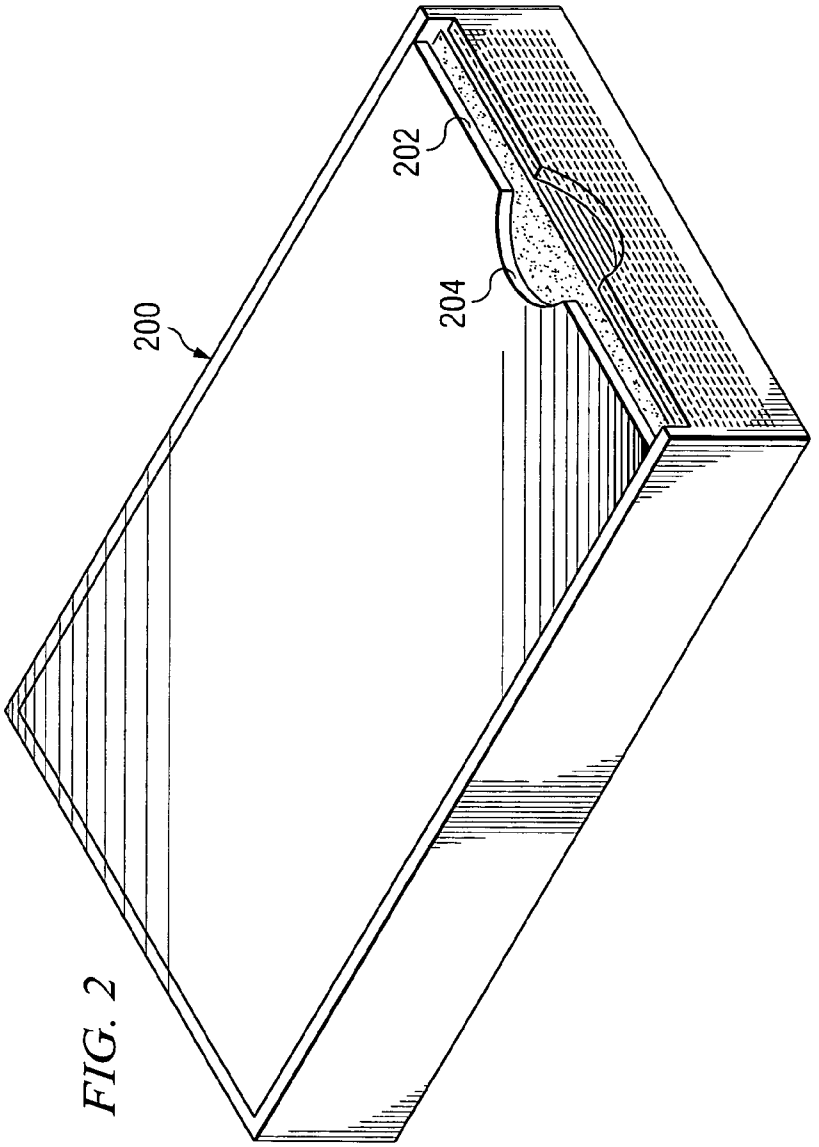


FIG. 2

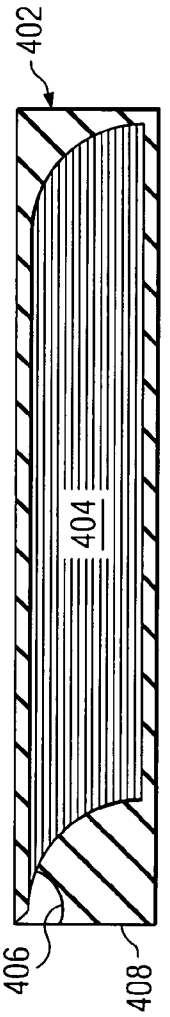


FIG. 4

PRE-CUT PACKAGED STABILIZER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Technical Field

[0002] The present invention relates generally to pre-cut stabilizer sheets for use with sewing/embroidery machines and packaging for such sheets.

[0003] 2. Description of Related Art

[0004] Embroidery is the process of creating a decorative design or pattern on a piece of fabric or other item by either hand-sewing or machine needlework. Stabilizers are generally used during the embroidery process to assist in stabilizing and/or providing support to fabric or other items being embroidered. Stabilizer material supports fabric under the stress of dense and multi-directional stitching. Stabilizers are typically used in conjunction with an embroidery hoop to hold fabric as flat and inflexibly as possible. Upon completion of the sewing/embroidery process, stabilizer material may be removed from the fabric using either a cut-away, tear-away, heat-away, or wash-away method.

[0005] Stabilizer material is currently packaged and available on rolls. The width of these rolls is made to accommodate the various embroidery hoop sizes. However, to use the stabilizer material for a particular hoop, one must cut a piece of stabilizer from the roll in roughly the size of the particular hoop to be used.

[0006] This cutting process requires a work space of sufficient size to accommodate the cutting process due to the size of the stabilizer rolls. Time must also be expended to measure and cut the stabilizer material to an appropriate size for a particular embroidery hoop. In addition, excess pieces of stabilizer material, too small for future use, may be generated during the cutting process. For example, if a piece of stabilizer material is inadvertently cut to the incorrect size, either too large or too small for a particular hoop size, the result would be wasted stabilizer material.

[0007] Therefore, it would be advantageous to have a mechanism that allows for dispensing pre-cut sheets of stabilizer material to save space, time and materials.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention is directed towards providing a dispenser mechanism enclosing pre-cut stabilizer sheets for use with sewing/embroidery machines. Any of a variety of types and weights of stabilizer material known and/or available, including but not limited to tear-away, wash-away, heat-away or cut-away, may be pre-cut and packaged in the dispenser for convenient access. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer sheets permit convenient packaging/provision of a plurality of stabilizer sheets in uniform sizes pre-cut to fit a variety of embroidery hoop dimensions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0010] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view showing a box dispenser for pre-cut stabilizer sheets in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

[0011] **FIG. 2** is another perspective view showing a box-like dispenser for pre-cut stabilizer sheets in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

[0012] **FIG. 3** is a vertical sectional view showing the pre-cut stabilizer sheets placed inside the package dispenser in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention; and

[0013] **FIG. 4** is another vertical sectional view showing the pre-cut stabilizer sheets placed inside the package dispenser in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0014] The present invention is directed towards packaging pre-cut stabilizer sheets for use with sewing and/or embroidery machines. The pre-cut stabilizer sheets may be any of a variety of types and weights of stabilizer material known and/or available, including but not limited to tear-away, wash-away, heat-away or cut-away.

[0015] With reference now to the figures, **FIG. 1** depicts a perspective view showing a package for pre-cut stabilizer sheets in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In this illustrative example, the package is formed in the general shape of rectangular box **100** to enclose stack of pre-cut stabilizer sheets **102**. The pre-cut stabilizer sheets are stacked one on top of another, in a flat, non-interfolded configuration inside the dispenser package. In one embodiment, a cardboard bottom insert could be placed in the bottom of the dispenser, beneath the stabilizer sheets, to raise the stack of sheets in closer proximity to the dispenser opening.

[0016] The dispenser package is a box that has top, bottom, end, and side walls. The box is provided with a notch or slot opening **104** in the top wall located at front end **106** of the package. Additional access opening **108** forming a V-shaped opening located centrally in the front wall of the dispenser and contiguous with the notch or slot opening in the top wall may be provided to permit additional access to individual stabilizer sheets by fingers and/or thumb. In one embodiment, an opening is formed by removal of at least on of the top, bottom, end, or side walls of the dispenser, the missing element forming an opening to facilitate removal of pre-cut stabilizer sheets.

[0017] The dimensions of the package dispenser may be varied and/or customized to accommodate stabilizer sheets pre-cut to a variety of sizes adapted to suit various hoop sizes or embroidery applications. Furthermore, the pre-cut stabilizer material may be cut in uniform size to fit one or more specific and/or standard embroidery hoop sizes. For example, in a preferred embodiment, the pre-cut stabilizer sheets are 9 inches long and 7.5 inches wide. These pre-cut stabilizers are enclosed in a box that is generally corrugated with walls that are 9.5 inches long; 8 inches wide and 1.75 inches deep. In another preferred embodiment, the pre-cut stabilizer sheets are 12 inches long and 9 inches wide. These stabilizers are enclosed in a box that is generally corrugated with walls that are 12.5 inches long; 9.5 inches wide and 1.75 inches deep.

[0018] Pre-cut stabilizer sheets may be either cut sheets or stabilizer sheets perforated along one or more rows that may be torn into multiple stabilizer sheets. Pre-cut stabilizer may include stabilizers of any weight, thickness, or type. For example, pre-cut packaged stabilizer may be any of the known and/or available types of stabilizer, including but not limited to the following: tear-away, cut-away, heat-away, and wash-away.

[0019] Pre-cut stabilizer may be composed of materials that include, but are not limited to, the following materials: nylon, nylon blend, polyvinyl alcohol (PVA), polyvinyl alcohol blend, polyolefin, polyolefin blend, polyester, polyester blend, cellulosic, cellulosic blend and/or any combination thereof. The material from which the dispenser is made may be any of paper, cardboard, plastic, card stock, wood, wood products, corrugated box material and/or any combination thereof.

[0020] With reference now to **FIG. 2**, another perspective view shows a package for pre-cut stabilizer sheets in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In this example, container **200** is generally in the shape of a rectangular box to enclose the pre-cut stabilizer sheets. Although the container may be of any shape that may accommodate housing the stabilizer sheets, container **200** has a top, bottom, end and side walls. Container **200** also has notch or slot opening **202** marginally defined by perforations or the like which extend horizontally through the front and top wall portion of the package. In the particular embodiment shown, opening **200** centrally widens into oval shape **204** to permit easy access to individual stabilizer sheets.

[0021] With reference now to **FIG. 3**, a vertical sectional view of packaging **302** showing pre-cut stabilizer sheets **304** placed inside the packaging box in a linear fanned manner is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention. A package insert or other fill material may optionally be inserted inside the dispenser package at the front and back portions of the package to maintain the linear slant arrangement of stabilizer sheets inside the dispenser package. Individual pre-cut stabilizer sheets may be removed through opening **306** provided in front side **308** of the container.

[0022] With reference now to **FIG. 4**, another vertical sectional view of the packaging box **402** showing the pre-cut stabilizer sheets **404** placed inside the box in a curved fanned manner is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention. A package insert or other fill material may optionally be inserted inside the dispenser package at the front and back portions of the package to maintain the curved arrangement of stabilizer sheets inside the dispenser package. Individual stabilizer sheets may be removed through opening **406** provided in front side **408** of the container.

[0023] It is important to note that while the present invention has been described in the context of a box-like package for pre-cut stabilizer sheets, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that pre-cut stabilizer sheets are capable of being distributed in a variety of packaging and a variety of forms and that the present invention applies equally regardless of the particular type of package actually used to distribute pre-cut stabilizer sheets.

[0024] The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

What is claimed is:

1. A pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser comprising:

a plurality of pre-cut stabilizer sheets; and

a dispenser for enclosing the pre-cut stabilizer sheets.

2. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the dispenser comprises the following elements: top, bottom, end, and side walls and an opening to facilitate removal of pre-cut stabilizer sheets.

3. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 2, wherein the opening is marginally defined by perforations.

4. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 2, wherein the opening is one of a notch or slot opening to facilitate removal of pre-cut stabilizer sheets.

5. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 2, wherein the opening is an oval or round shaped opening to facilitate removal of pre-cut stabilizer sheets.

6. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 2, wherein the opening is a notch or slot shaped opening located in the top wall of the dispenser and contiguous with a V shaped opening centrally located in the front side of the dispenser.

7. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 2, wherein the opening is a notch or slot shaped opening that centrally widens into an oval or circular shape.

8. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 2, wherein the opening is formed by removal of at least a portion of at least one of the top, bottom, end, or side walls of the dispenser, wherein the removal forms an opening to facilitate removal of pre-cut stabilizer sheets.

9. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-cut stabilizer sheets are arranged inside the dispenser in a linear fanned manner.

10. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-cut stabilizer sheets are arranged inside the dispenser in a curved fanned manner.

11. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-cut stabilizer sheets are of uniform size.

12. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the stabilizer sheets are perforated along one or more rows to facilitate separating the stabilizer sheets into multiple sheets.

13. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-cut stabilizer sheets comprise a type of tear-away stabilizer material.

14. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-cut stabilizer sheets comprise a type of cut-away stabilizer material.

15. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-cut stabilizer sheets comprise a type of heat-away stabilizer material.

16. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-cut stabilizer sheets comprise a type of wash-away stabilizer material.

17. The pre-cut packaged stabilizer dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-cut stabilizer sheets are composed of at least one of the following: polyolefin, polyolefin blend, polyester, polyester blend, cellulosic, cellulosic blend, nylon, nylon blend, polyvinyl alcohol and polyvinyl alcohol blend.

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