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(54) **CONTAINER ASSEMBLY**

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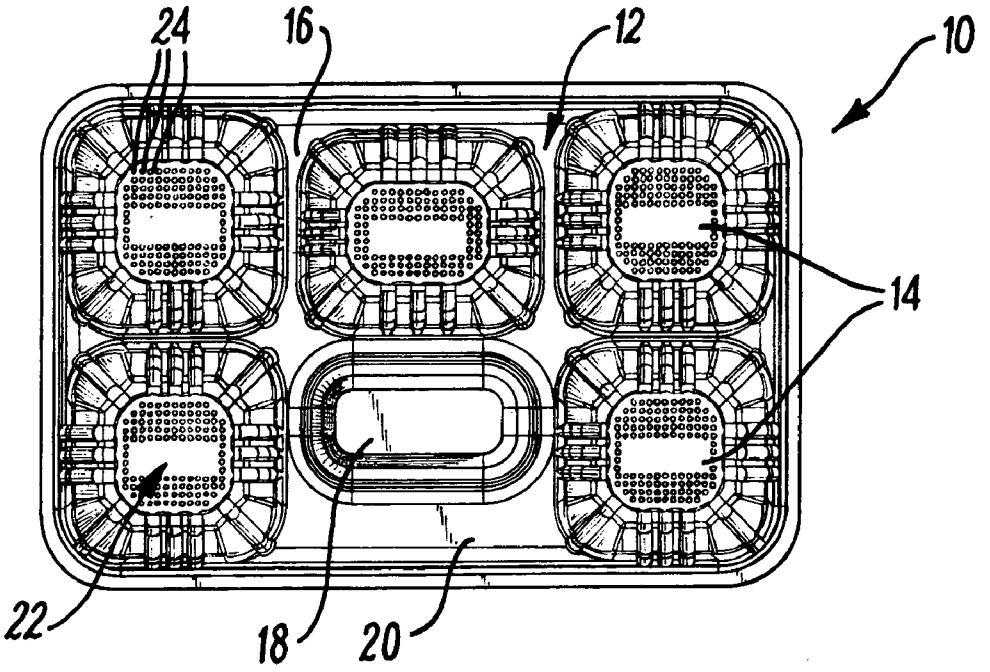
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A container assembly (**10**) for receiving medical waste such as used swabs. The assembly (**10**) includes a body (**12**) which defines five in use open topped main compartments (**14**), each for receiving medical waste, and a transparent lid (**26**) beatable on the body in a shut condition to close the main compartments, (**14**) whilst permitting their contents to be viewed.



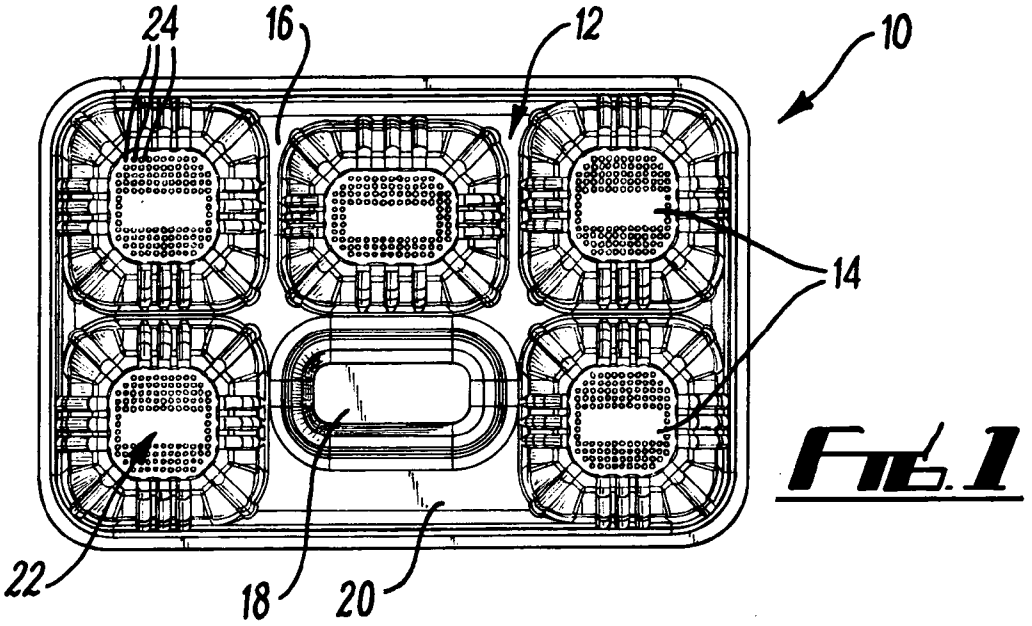


FIG. 1

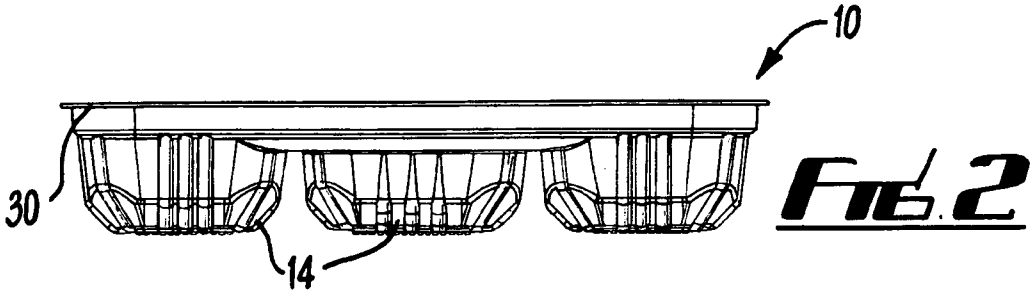


FIG. 2

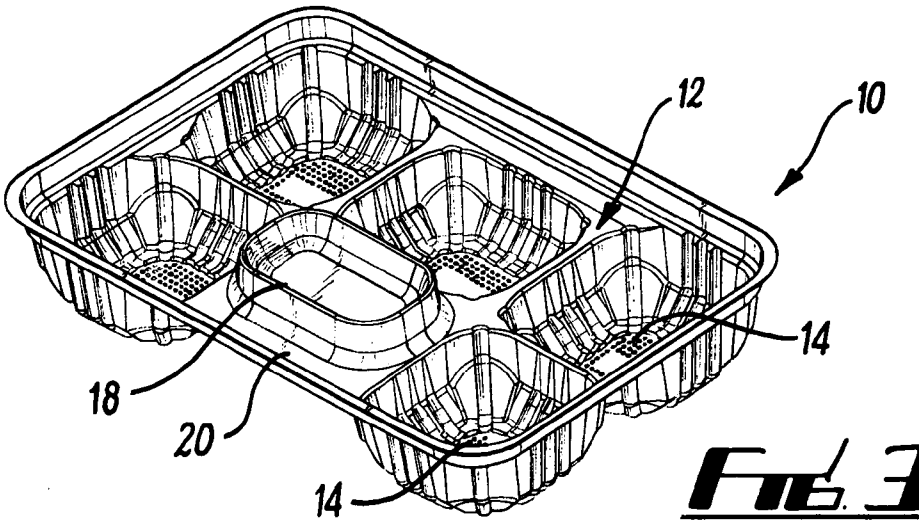


FIG. 3

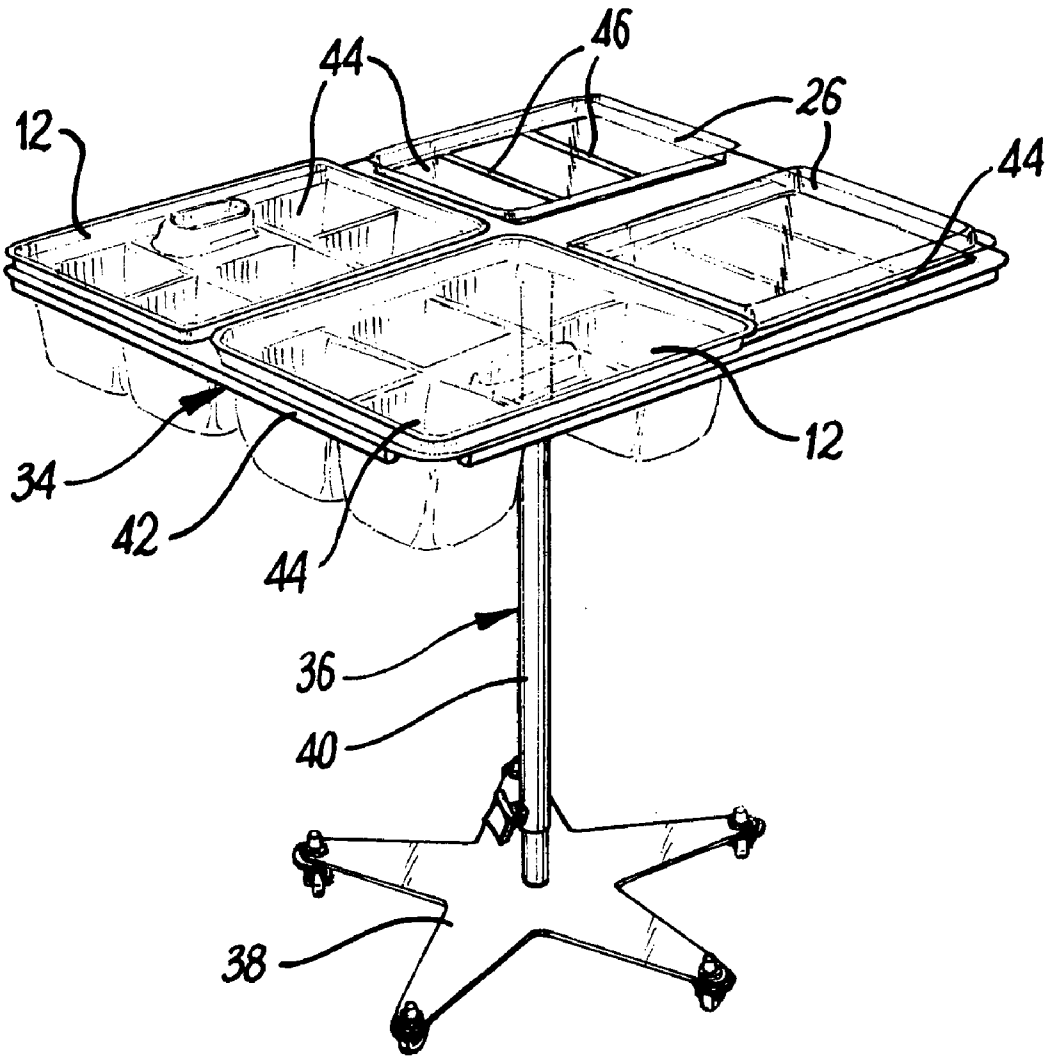


FIG. 4

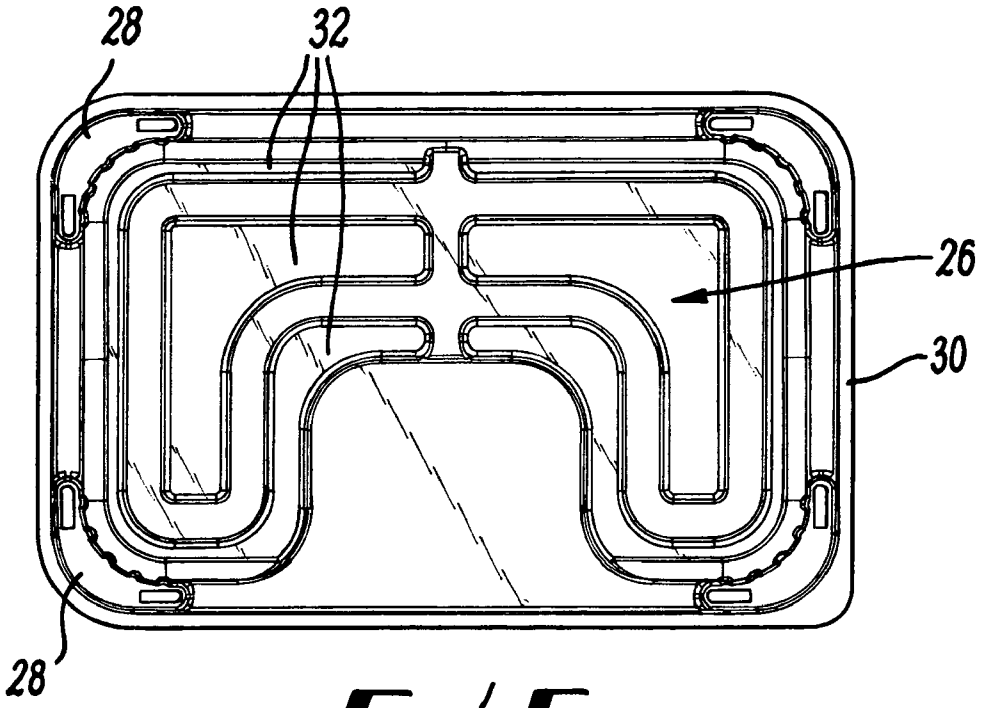


FIG. 5

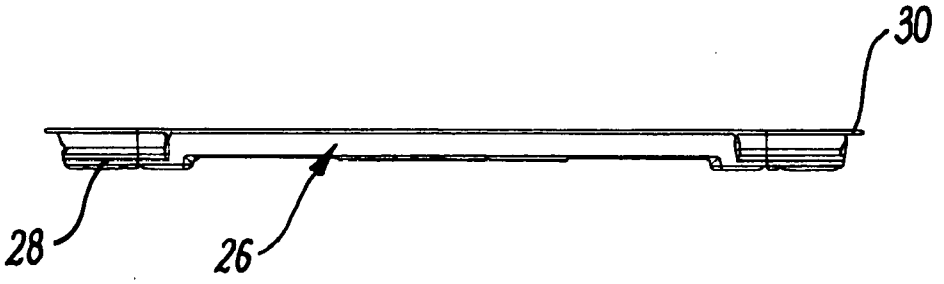


FIG. 6

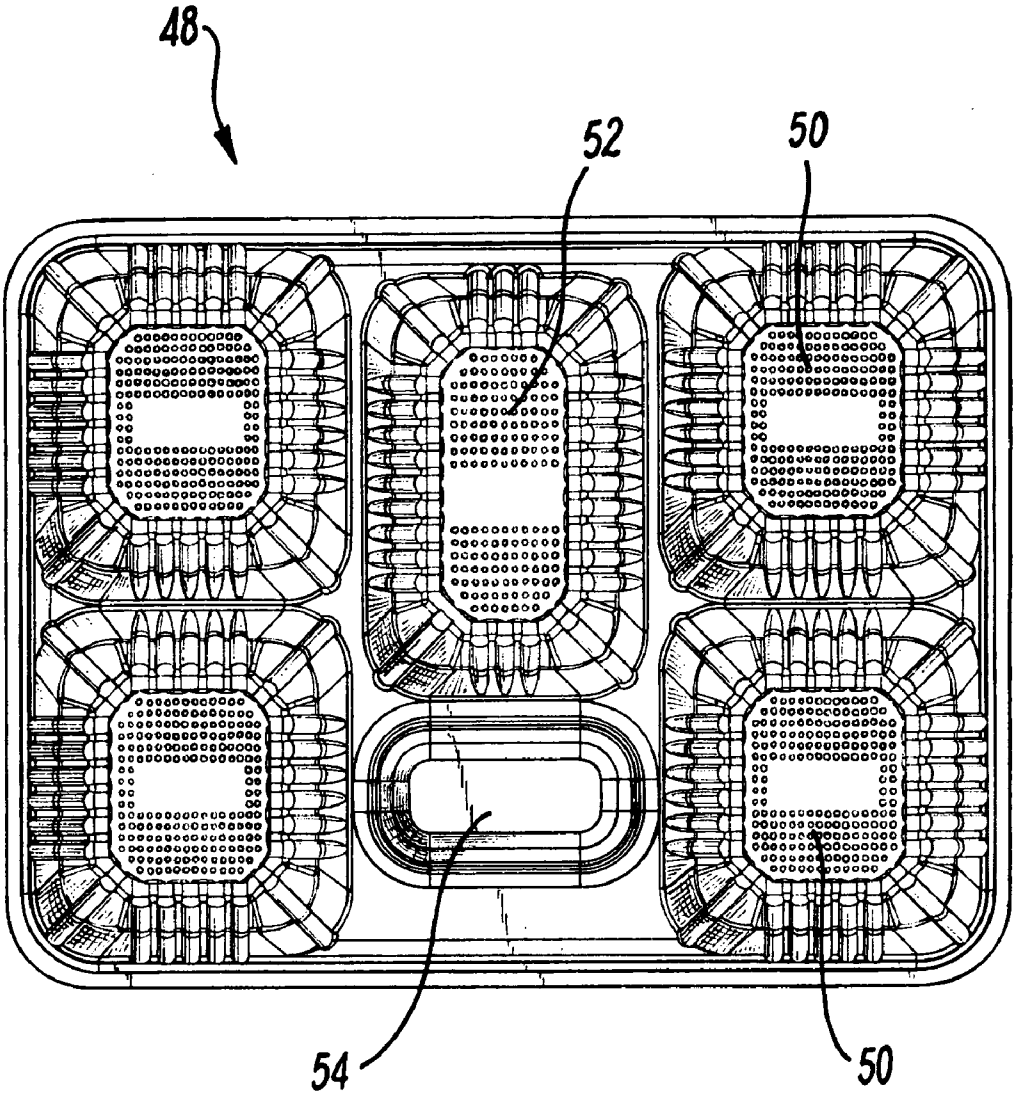


FIG. 7

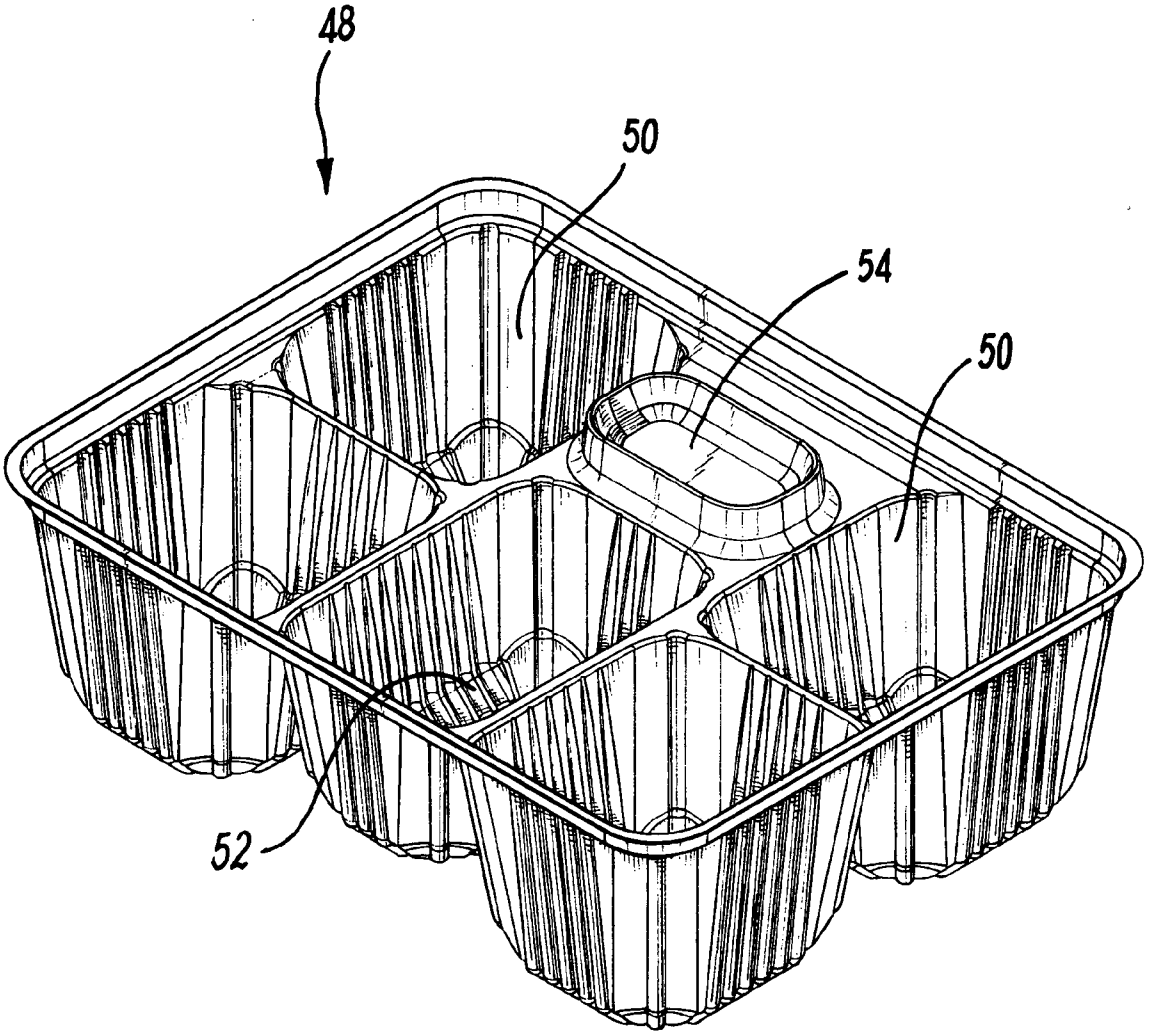


FIG. 8

CONTAINER ASSEMBLY

[0001] This invention concerns container assemblies, and particularly but not exclusively such assemblies for receiving medical waste.

[0002] When carrying out medical operations such as surgical operations it is often required to provide a container to receive medical waste such as swabs. In such procedures it is important to ensure that all foreign material is removed from the body. Accordingly, it is important that the waste can be checked to ensure that all foreign materials have been placed in a waste container.

[0003] With swabs for instance, it is conventional for these to be provided in fives, and it is therefore desirable to be able to see that all five swabs have been used and are now clear of a patient. Also such swabs are often packed or tied in fives, and it is also important to ensure that any packaging or ties has not been left in the body.

[0004] According to the present invention there is provided a container assembly for receiving medical waste such as used swabs, the assembly including a body which defines a plurality of in use open topped main compartments, each for receiving medical waste, and a lid locatable on the body in a shut condition to close the main compartments whilst permitting their contents to be viewed.

[0005] The body may also define an ancillary open topped compartment for receiving additional waste material, with the contents of the ancillary compartment being visible when the lid is in a shut condition.

[0006] The body may also define a label area upon which information can be provided, the label area being visible when the lid is in a shut condition.

[0007] A liquid retaining formation may be provided in the base of the main compartments. The liquid retaining formation may comprise a plurality of capillary passages.

[0008] The body may be formed of a material which when incinerated at a required temperature substantially leaves no residue.

[0009] The body may be formed of a plastics material and may be formed of APET (amorphous polyethylene terephthalate).

[0010] The body may be stackable with other such bodies.

[0011] Snap fit formations may be provided on the lid and/or body to enable the lid to be retained on the body.

[0012] The lid may include an area upon which information can be entered.

[0013] The lid may be made of a transparent material.

[0014] The assembly may also include support apparatus for supporting the body in position to receive material in the compartments.

[0015] The support apparatus may include a bracket member engageable with the body. The bracket member may be engageable with the underside of the body and may be engageable around a perimeter of the body. The support apparatus may include a plurality of bracket members, and the support apparatus may be integrally formed of metal. The support apparatus may be mountable on a ground engaging stand.

[0016] Embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:—

[0017] FIG. **1** is a diagrammatic plan view of part of a container assembly according to the invention;

[0018] FIG. **2** is a diagrammatic side view of the part of the assembly of FIG. **1**;

[0019] FIG. **3** is a diagrammatic perspective view of the part of the component of FIG. **1**;

[0020] FIG. **4** is a perspective view from above of the part of the assembly of FIG. **1** being supported by a support apparatus;

[0021] FIG. **5** is a plan view of a lid usable with the part of FIG. **1**;

[0022] FIG. **6** is a side view of the lid of FIG. **5**;

[0023] FIG. **7** is a similar view to FIG. **1** but of a part of a second container assembly according to the invention;

[0024] FIG. **8** is a perspective view from above of the part of FIG. **7**.

[0025] FIGS. **1** to **6** show a first container assembly **10** suitable for receiving swabs or other waste material during an operation. The assembly **10** has a body **12** which defines five open topped main compartments **14**. The main compartments **14** taper gently downwardly, and extend below a substantially planar support part **16**. The support part **16** is rectangular with four square main compartments one at each corner, and a rectangular main compartment between two of the outer main compartments **14**.

[0026] Provided between the other two corner main compartments **14** is a smaller shallower ancillary compartment **18**. Adjacent the ancillary compartment **18** is a recessed area **20** which can be written on or can receive a label.

[0027] A liquid retaining formation **22** is provided in the base of each of the main components **14**. The formation **22** comprises a plurality of capillary passages **24** which could for instance extend to a depth of around 1 mm.

[0028] FIGS. **5** and **6** show a lid **26** mountable on the body **12** to close same. The lid **26** includes a snap fit formation **28** on each corner for engagement with a lip **30** provided around the perimeter of the support part **16**. The part of the lid **26** which overlies the recessed area **20** is clear such that any material provided in the area **20** can readily be read through the lid **26** which is formed of a transparent material. The lid **26** also comprises a plurality of strengthening ribs **32**. The body **12** and lid **26** are formed of a transparent APET (amorphous polyethylene terephthalate) plastics material.

[0029] FIG. **4** shows a support apparatus **34** which can support up to four bodies **12**. The support apparatus **34** includes a ground engaging stand **36**. The stand **36** includes a wheeled base **38** with a height adjustable upright **40**. The upright **40** mounts a support part **42** which four rectangular openings **44**, each of which can slidingly receive a body **12** with a rim of the support part **16** engaging around the edge of the opening **44**. Two spaced support bars **46** extend across each opening **44**, and locate between respective compartments **16** on a body **12**. In FIG. **4** two bodies **12** are being supported in respective openings **44**, with their lids **26** resting across the other two openings **44**.

[0030] In use, the or each body **12** is mounted on the Support apparatus **34**. When swabs are used they are generally supplied with five swabs tied in a string. The string can be undone and placed in the ancillary compartment **18**. The swabs are then used and each swab is placed in a respective one of the compartments **14**. The liquid retaining formations **22** substantially retains any blood or other body fluids within the respective compartment **14**.

[0031] If required a patient's name or other details can be written in the recessed area **20**, or a label could be applied thereto. Once all the swabs have been used, the lid **26** can be

fitted on the body **12**, and a readily visual indication is provided that all five swabs have been removed as has the string. If required information can be written or applied onto the lid **26**.

[0032] The used body **12**, can then be disposed of, generally by incineration. With incineration at a required temperature, the APET will burn off substantially leaving no ash, and providing combustion products of carbon dioxide and water.

[0033] FIGS. **7** and **8** show a second container assembly **48** which is similar to the first container assembly but includes deeper main compartments **50**. The middle main compartment **52** is rectangular in plan view to provide a required volume whilst providing sufficient space for the ancillary compartment **54**,

[0034] There are thus described container assemblies which provide for a number of advantageous features. The bodies can be stacked together before use and then used on a support apparatus. The body and lid permit a visual indication to readily be provided that all of the appropriate materials have been located therein. The bodies can readily be labelled and the liquid retaining formations help to reduce the danger of spillage of liquid. The use of APET substantially prevents hazardous emissions due to burning of the assembly bodies, whilst substantially providing no ash and therefore no residue which requires emptying from an incinerator.

[0035] Various modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the invention. For instance the bodies may take a different form and could have a different number of compartments as required by particular situations. A different support arrangement could be provided for the bodies. A different lid arrangement could also be used.

[0036] Whilst endeavouring in the foregoing specification to draw attention to those features of the invention believed to be of particular importance it should be understood that the Applicant claims protection in respect of any patentable feature or combination of features hereinbefore referred to and/or shown in the drawings whether or not particular emphasis has been placed thereon.

1. A container assembly for receiving medical waste such as used swabs, the assembly including a body which defines a plurality of in use open topped main compartments, each for receiving medical waste, and a lid locatable on the body in a shut condition to close the main compartments whilst permitting their contents to be viewed.

2. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which the body also defines an ancillary open topped compartment for receiving additional waste material, with the contents of the ancillary compartment being visible when the lid is in a shut condition.

3. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which the body also defines a label area upon which information can be provided, the label area being visible when the lid is in a shut condition.

4. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which a liquid retaining formation is provided in the base of the main compartments.

5. An assembly according to claim **4**, in which the liquid retaining formation comprises a plurality of capillary passages.

6. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which the body is formed of a material which when incinerated at a required temperature substantially leaves no residue.

7. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which the body is formed of a plastics material.

8. An assembly according to claim **7**, in which the body is formed of APET (amorphous polyethylene terephthalate).

9. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which the body is stackable with other such bodies.

10. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which snap fit formations are provided on the lid and/or body to enable the lid to be retained on the body.

11. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which the lid includes an area upon which information can be entered.

12. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which the lid is made of a transparent material.

13. An assembly according to claim **1**, in which the assembly also includes support apparatus for supporting the body in position to receive material in the compartments.

14. An assembly according to claim **13**, in which the support apparatus includes a bracket member engageable with the body.

15. An assembly according to claim **14**, in which the bracket member is engageable with the underside of the body.

16. An assembly according to claim **14**, in which the bracket member is engageable around a perimeter of the body.

17. An assembly according to claim **14**, in which the support apparatus includes a plurality of bracket members.

18. An assembly according to claim **13**, in which the support apparatus is integrally formed of metal.

19. An assembly according to claim **13**, in which the support apparatus is mountable on a ground engaging stand.

20-21. (canceled)

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