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[54]	CABINET HAVING A KICK PLATE ASSEMBLY			
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	312/250	, 214, 253, 138, 198, 296; 248/343.1		
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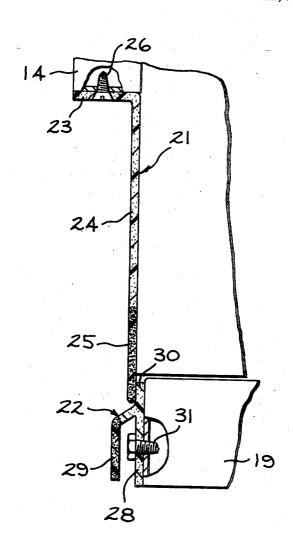
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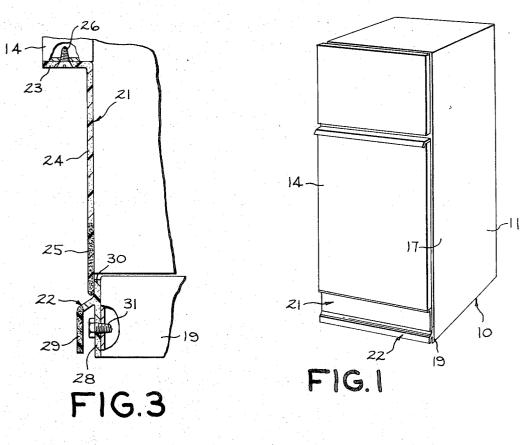
Primary Examiner—James T. McCall Attorney—George C. Atwell et al.

[57] ABSTRACT

Improved construction for a kick plate assembly in the toe kick area at the lower front of a cabinet such as a compacting appliance. An outwardly movable carrier housed within the cabinet extends substantially close to the bottom of the cabinet such that its lower portion moves outwardly through the toe kick area. The assembly includes a downwardly extending skirt portion mounted at the lower edge of the cabinet's front appearance panel. The skirt portion terminates short of the lower edge of the cabinet, and the lower edge of the cabinet has a strip mounted thereacross adapted to blend with the skirt portion. The skirt portion slightly overhangs the upper edge of the strip whereby the toe kick area beneath the panel is uniformly covered when the panel is in its closed position.

13 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures





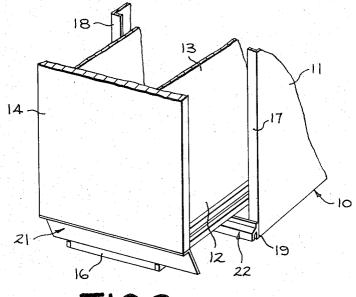


FIG.2

CABINET HAVING A KICK PLATE ASSEMBLY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to cabinet structures and in particular to the structure of the toe kick area 5 of an appliance cabinet.

Household kitchen cabinets have been traditionally provided with a slightly recessed toe kick area along the front bottom edge thereof, whereby a person utilizing the countertop surface of the cabinet or engaged in 10 tained. The skirt is preferably constructed of a flexible storing items in overhead storage areas is less likely to strike the toes against the cabinet and can stand closer in a more comfortable position than would be possible if the cabinet's vertical front extended directly to the floor surface. Manufacturers of major kitchen appli- 15 ances have sought to incorporate such a recessed area into the front of appliance cabinets to provide the same advantages to the user and to blend the appliance cabinet front esthetically with adjacent storage cabinets. Recessed toe kick areas are commonly provided on 20 free standing ranges, dishwashers, refrigerators, and even laundry appliances.

Household refuse compactors point up a problem that could be encountered in any cabinet structure wherein it is desirable to have internal structure 25 adapted to be movable outwardly through the front of the cabinet and also through the toe kick area. In a currently popular form of domestic refuse compacting appliance, a refuse receptacle is adapted to slide relative to a compacting ram between a compacting position 30 and an outward unloading position. It is advantageous to support the bottom of the receptacle against the cabinet bottom so that compaction forces are not translated through to other relatively weaker cabinet components. Further, having the bottom of the receptacle 35 close to the bottom of the cabinet provides increased storage area within the receptacle, particularly as compared to that which would be obtainable if the receptacle bottom were disposed on the level of the upper edge of the toe kick area. In one form of refuse compactor, disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 3,628,841, the refuse receptacle is a deep drawer which is movable through a front wall opening of the compactor cabinet, and the cabinet is provided with a hinged kick plate that pivots outwardly and downwardly toward the floor surface in 45 front of the cabinet when the drawer is drawn outwardly to the loading position. This assembly requires that means be be provided for biasing the kick plate back to its vertical position when the drawer is moved back to the compacting position within the cabinet. It also requires that the lower end of the drawer, which is not covered by the drawer's front appearance panel, be exposed to view during the drawer loading opera-

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to the need for a comparatively simple and less expensive means for providing a toe kick area with a kick plate at the lower front edge of a cabinet, particularly where the cabinet includes means therein adapted to be movable outwardly through the front of the cabinet and directly through the toe kick area.

More specifically, the present invention provides, in 65 a cabinet having a front wall including an openable front panel, a kick plate assembly defining a lowermost portion of the front wall that comprises at least upper

2

and lower separable members. The upper member is in the form of a skirt depended downwardly from the lower edge of the cabinet's front panel. The skirt does not extend downwardly as far as the lower front edge of the cabinet. A stationary strip, the lower member, is mounted across the front lower edge of the cabinet. When the openable front panel is returned to its closed position the skirt overlaps the upper edge of the strip whereby an esthetically pleasing arrangement is atmaterial that will temporarily deflect upon encountering an obstruction such as the toes of a person standing in front of the cabinet. The strip affixed to the lower edge of the cabinet and constituting the lower or bottom member of the kick plate assembly preferably includes a forwardly extending apron portion that overhangs and conceals the means for attaching the strip to the cabinet.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a compacting appliance cabinet having a front lower end toe kick assembly in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a cut-away view of the lower front portion of the compacting appliance first shown in FIG. 1, here showing carrier means of the appliance moved outwardly to a loading position; and

FIG. 3 is a view in vertical section showing the preferred form of the elements of the kick plate assembly of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED **EMBODIMENT**

In FIGS. 1 and 2, there is shown a refuse compacting appliance 10 including a cabinet 11 having movable carrier means which may be a drawer 12. The drawer 12 includes a box-like open top receptacle 13 having a front appearance panel 14 attached thereto. It will be noted that the receptacle 13 comprises a lower end portion or receptacle bottom 16 that extends downwardly below the lower edge of the appearance panel 14. The cabinet structure also has sidewalls 17 and 18 and a cabinet bottom or platform 19. The drawer 12 is adapted to be manually pulled outwardly from a compacting position within the cabinet 10 to a loading position wherein the open top of the receptacle is exposed for depositing refuse therein.

With reference to FIG. 3, it will be seen that the general toe kick area below the lower edge of the appearance panel 14 is occupied by a kick plate assembly including an upper member of panel skirt 21 and a lower member or stationary strip 22. The upper member 21 preferably comprises a sheet of vinyl having an outwardly turned upper end portion 23, an intermediate vertical portion 24, and a lower end portion 25. The lower end portion 25 is preferably formed to be relatively softer and more flexible than the remainder of the upper member 21 and is adapted, when in the position shown in FIG. 3, to overlap the upper edge of the lower assembly member 22. The upper member 21 is mounted to the downwardly facing surface of appearance panel 14 by mounting means such as screws 26.

FIG. 3 also shows that the lower member of the kick plate assembly, the strip 22, comprises a major generally vertically extending portion 28, a forwardly, downwardly projecting integral portion or apron 29, and an upwardly extending edge 30 that is overlapped by the 3

lower edge of the upper member 21. The strip 22 is fixedly mounted to the vertical front surface of the platform 19 by means which may be in the form of screws 31. It should be noted that the strip 22 is preferably formed from vinyl and that the projecting portion 29 thereof is substantially of a softer and more yieldable composition than the remainder of the strip 22. The projecting portion 29 projects outwardly just beneath the lower edge of the portion 25 of the upper member 21, and then turns downwardly so that the lowermost 10 part thereof is substantially parallel to the major vertical portion 28 of the member 22 and is spaced apart therefrom as shown clearly in FIG. 3. The fact that the outer end of the projecting portion 29 is of a softer more yieldable material than the remainder of the 15 member 22 provides a shock absorbing surface and also facilitates mounting of the strip 22 in its installed position. The projecting portion 29 can be manually turned upwardly temporarily to place the attaching screws into position. Thereafter, the projecting portion 20 portion. will assume its normal position and serve to conceal the screw heads from view.

As shown in FIG. 1, both the upper member 21 and the lower member 22 of the toe plate assembly extend transversely across the front of the cabinet 11. While 25 the upper member 21 is preferably adapted to be yieldable, whereby it will temporarily flexibly deform upon encountering any obstruction during movement of the panel 14, it is particularly preferred that the lower portion 25 thereof merge with the upper portion 24 along 30 a generally longitudinal line and the lower portion 25 is relatively more flexible than the upper portion 24. Further, it is preferred that the upper member 21 be adapted to normally extend slightly downwardly and drawer 12 is in its outward position, whereby closing the drawer 12 will result in the lower edge of the upper member 21 contacting the strip 22 such that the upper member 21 is caused to assume the generally vertical position shown in FIG. 3. The latter functional arrange- 40 ment assures that the upper member 21 will not tend to flap outwardly away from the lower member 22, from material aging, after the cabinet has been in use for a long period of time.

- 1. In a cabinet having a front wall including an openable front panel normally disposed across an opening in the front wall, a recessed toe kick area defining a lowermost portion of the front wall, a kick plate assembly occupying the recessed toe kick area comprising at 50 least upper and lower separable members, and the upper member being extended downwardly from the front panel and movable therewith.
- 2. The invention of claim 1 wherein the assembly upper member overlaps the lower member when the 55 front panel is disposed in its closed position.
- 3. The invention of claim 1 wherein the upper member is adapted to temporarily flexibly deform.
- 4. The invention of claim 1 wherein the kick plate assembly, when the panel is in its closed position, occu- 60 a lower member fixedly mounted to the cabinet adjapies a recessed position relative to the panel.
 - 5. The invention of claim 1 wherein the upper mem-

ber comprises upper and lower portions merging along a generally longitudinal line, and the lower portion is relatively more flexible than the upper portion.

6. The invention of claim 1 wherein the upper member is adapted to normally extend generally vertically downwardly from the lower edge of the panel when the panel is in its closed position, and to extend slightly rearwardly generally toward the cabinet when the panel is in its open position, and the upper member being adapted to assume its generally vertical disposition in response to contacting the lower member when the panel is returned to its closed position.

7. The invention of claim 1 wherein the lower member comprises a major generally vertically disposed portion and an integral outwardly, downwardly projecting portion, the integral portion being disposed to conceal the lower edge of the major portion.

8. The invention of claim 7 wherein the lower edge of the integral portion is spaced apart from the major

9. The invention of claim 7 wherein the integral portion projects outwardly from the major portion along a longitudinal line located downwardly from the upper edge of the major portion.

10. The invention of claim 1 wherein the lower member is provided with fastening means fixing it to the cabinet, and the integral portion overhangs and thereby conceals the fastening means.

11. The invention of claim 1 wherein the lower member comprises a major generally vertically disposed portion and an integral outwardly downwardly projecting portion, and the latter portion is relatively more flexible than the major portion.

12. In a cabinet having a front wall, carrier means disinwardly at a slight angle, as shown in FIG. 2, when the 35 posed normally within the cabinet and movable outwardly to an exposed position, an appearance panel across the front of the cabinet and normally concealing the carrier means, the lower edge of the appearance panel being disposed upwardly from the lower edge of the cabinet whereby a recessed toe kick area is defined below the panel lower edge, a kick plate assembly in the recessed toe kick area comprising a skirt extending downwardly from the lower edge of the panel, the carrier means having a depth such that the lower portion 45 thereof is disposed below the level of the skirt, and the skirt being adapted to be yieldable upon encountering an obstruction during opening movement of the panel.

13. In a refuse compactor comprising a cabinet with a receptacle for receiving refuse, means for movably supporting the receptacle for selective movement between a normal position rearwardly of the front of the cabinet and a loading position forwardly of the cabinet front, a toe kick area at the lowermost portion of the cabinet front, a bottom portion of the receptacle extending to below the top of the toe kick area whereby movement of the receptacle to the loading position is through the toe kick area, a kick plate assembly disposed in said toe kick area comprising an upper member adapted to move outwardly with the receptacle and cent the lower edge thereof.