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M. J. ALLEN

3,386,071

PAINT GUARD

Filed April 1, 1966

Fig. 1.

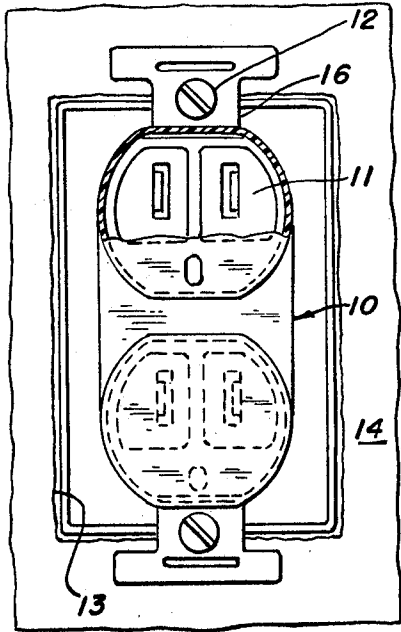


Fig. 2. Fig. 3.

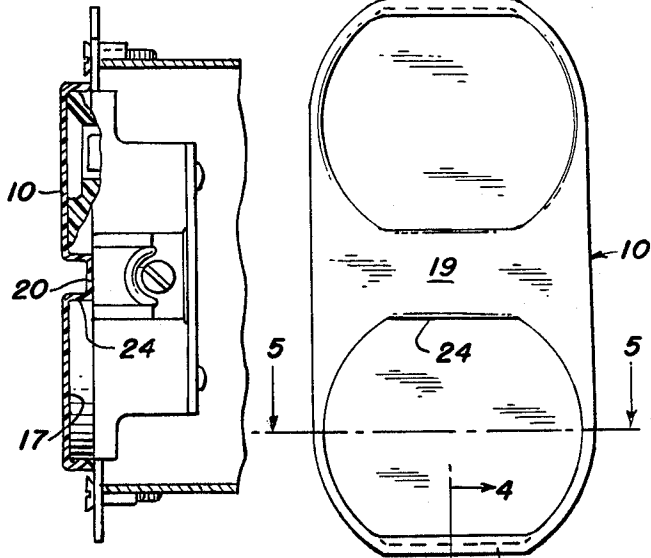


Fig. 4.

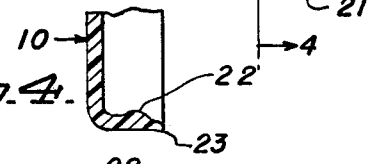


Fig. 5.

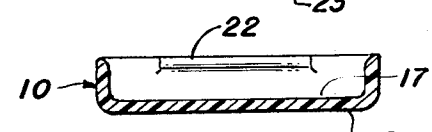
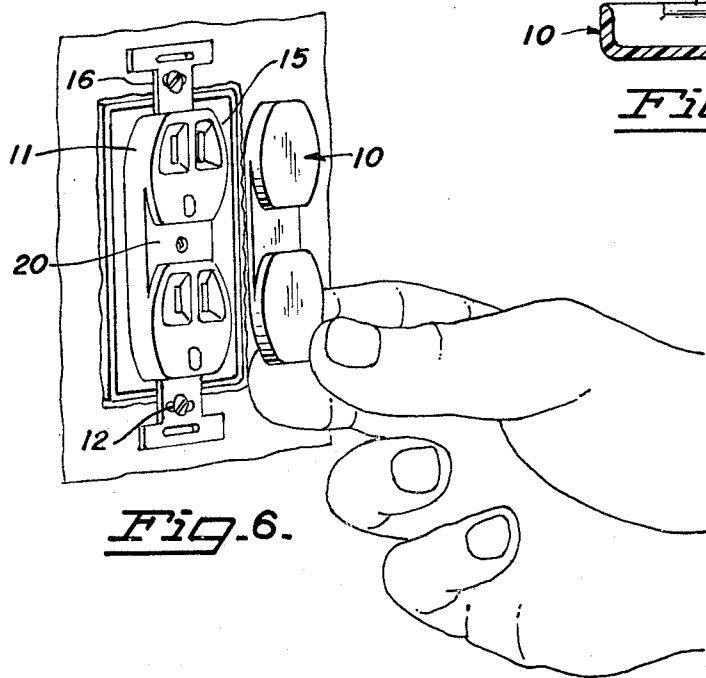


Fig. 6.



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3,386,071

PAINT GUARD

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A protective cover for use as a paint shield for an electrical outlet having a pair of socket members. A pair of cover members of elastomeric material are formed with recesses congruent with the shape of the sockets and are integrally joined by an imperforate planar section. A lip is formed on the inner wall of each cover member to grip the socket for retaining the cover in position over the outlet.

This invention relates to a temporary cover plate or shield for electrical outlets and switches.

In painting the interior walls of houses and buildings a large amount of labor heretofore was lost in attempting to avoid electrical outlets or switches so as to paint neatly around them. Even with experienced painters these efforts were often not fully successful and such outlets or switches become spattered with paint. This, in turn, required either added cleanup time or, in some cases, replacement of the outlet.

A major object of the present invention is to provide an expendable cover that can be quickly and easily placed on a conventional electrical outlet to cover and seal it during painting, and then be easily removed after the painting has been completed.

Another more specific object of my invention is to provide a removable paint cover or guard that is adaptable for use on the conventional two socket electrical outlet of the type commonly used in homes and buildings and further to provide such a cover guard having a unique construction that enables it to be installed easily with a small force, thereby requiring a simple snap-on like action. As described more fully below, this action in my cover guard results from unique portions which cause it to deflect slight and thereby grip the protruding socket members of the outlet being protected thereby forming an effective seal. Once installed, it will remain firmly in place until intentionally removed, and therefore it can be used with equal effectiveness whether the painting is done with a brush, a roller or a spray gun.

Still another object of my invention is to provide a temporary cover for an electrical outlet that is strong, durable and thus reusable, and yet one that is particularly well adapted for ease and economy of manufacture.

Other objects, advantages and features of my invention will become apparent from the following detailed description of one embodiment thereof presented in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 112.

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a view in elevation showing a cover guard embodying principles of the present invention when installed on a two socket electrical outlet, a portion of the end of the guard is broken away and shown in section;

FIG. 2 is a view in side elevation and in section of the cover guard;

FIG. 3 is a somewhat enlarged planned view of the cover guard shown in FIGS. 1 and 2;

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary view in section taken along lines 4—4 of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a view in section taken along lines 5—5 of FIG. 3; and

FIG. 6 is a view showing the cover guard as it is being installed.

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With reference to the drawings, FIGS. 1 and 2 show a cover guard 10 embodying the principles of the present invention as it appears when attached in place on a conventional two socket electrical outlet 11. The latter is normally held in place by a pair of screws 12 in an opening 13 of a wall 14 that is being painted. With the cover guard in place as shown a painter can proceed to paint the wall area including the electrical outlet 11 either with a brush, roller or spray gun without being concerned with getting paint on the outlet. The cover guard when in place grips the outlet firmly so that it cannot be inadvertently moved from its protective position by hard brush or roller strokes.

The outlet 11, as shown, has two spaced apart substantially elliptical socket portions 15 that protrude outwardly from the outlet base having attaching flanges 16 at opposite ends thereof. The cover guard 10 is formed with a pair of recesses 17, both having a shape similar to and therefore adapted to fit over the socket portions 15. As shown in the slightly enlarged FIG. 3, the recesses 17 are formed by end portions 18 of the cover guard 10 that project above an interconnecting planar portion 19. This latter portion is adapted to fit flush against the outlet base 20 that interconnects the socket portions 15 when the cover guard is installed in place. In plan form this planar portion 19 has parallel side edges that are tangential to the ends of the end portions 18 forming the recesses.

The cover guard 10 is preferably molded from a suitable inexpensive material which is substantially rigid yet resiliently flexible so that it can deform slightly when installed. Various well-known plastic materials will suffice for this purpose, or a relatively hard form of natural or synthetic rubber can be used.

As stated above, the recesses 17 formed by the end portions 18 are very similar in shape to the outlet socket portions 15 so that when in place, the cover guard fits snugly around them. At each end of the cover guard 10 is a straight wall section 21 which is adapted to fit adjacent to the flat surface of a protruding socket portion 15. In accordance with an important feature of the present invention these wall sections are both constructed in a unique manner that solves the problem of keeping the cover guard in place even though it may be engaged by brushes or rollers during painting. In FIGS. 4 and 5, portions of one end 18 of the cover guard are shown in section to illustrate this wall construction in greater detail. In essence each wall section 21 has an inner bead or bulge 22 that extends along its length. This bulge is spaced upwardly from the lower edge 23 of the wall section and from its thickest point it tapers progressively to a relatively sharp edge. It will be noted that the outer surface of the wall section 15 near this sharp edge is flared outwardly a slight amount. The function of the wall sections 21 and their bead portions 22 can be readily understood with reference to FIG. 2. On the end portions of the cover guard the distance between the inner surface of the bead 22 at its thickest point and the surface of the opposite wall 24 is slightly less than the overall width, that is, the distance between opposite straight walls of the socket portion 15. However, the distance between the flared out edge 23 and the wall surface 24 is slightly greater than the aforesaid overall width of the socket portion 15. Thus, when the cover guard is installed, the end edges 23 fit slightly over the end walls of the socket portions and when a small force is applied to the cover guard, these end walls are cammed outwardly by the bead portions 22 which interfere slightly with the socket portions. This causes an outward flexing of the end wall sections 21 which results in a gripping action by both of the end portions 18 of the outlet socket.

The aforesaid operation of my cover guard as it is installed is illustrated in FIG. 6. As shown, it may be

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gripped initially at one end and applied directly to the outlet sockets. A slight pressure will cause it to hold an initial position in place and then a small tap will cause the necessary end wall flexing and press the cover guard fully into its proper position with the cover end portions flush against the protruding socket portions. No tools are required for this procedure or for its removal after the painting has been completed, a small force under the edge of the cover guard being sufficient to affect its removal.

To those skilled in the art to which this invention relates, many changes in construction and widely differing embodiments and applications of the invention will suggest themselves without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The disclosures and the description herein are purely illustrative and are not intended to be in any sense limiting.

I claim:

1. A protective cover for an electrical outlet having spaced socket members comprising a pair of cover mem-

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bers of elastomeric material each having a recess of a shape congruent with the outer portion of a socket member, an imperforate planar section integral with said cover members and of a length to space the cover members over the socket members, and means in each of the recesses for gripping a socket member to retain the cover member thereon, said gripping means comprising a lip on a wall of the recess.

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