

Seal for a sawing machine for separating electronic components and sawing machine provided with such a seal

The invention relates to a seal for a sawing machine for separating electronic components and to a sawing machine for separating electronic components, comprising:
5 at least one rotatable saw-blade placed in a housing and a product holder displaceable over the upper part of the saw-blade, wherein the housing is provided on the upper side with a slot-like opening for admitting at least the part of the product holder holding the electronic components into the housing in displaceable manner.

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Sawing/separating of the electronic components is a process wherein use is generally made of cooling liquid and wherein fragments such as sawdust are released. This results in a process which causes contamination which is undesirable some distance from the sawing process. The saw-blade which rotates (at high speed) and the product holder can
15 therefore be enclosed with a protective housing. A problem here is that it must be possible to move the product holder relative to the saw-blade; it must after all be possible to move the held electronic components along the upper part of the rotating saw-blade such that saw cuts are formed at precisely determined positions. The housings applied according to the prior art are open on the upper side to allow passage
20 of the product holder. In practice however, this still causes contamination of the surrounding area by cooling liquid and sawing waste.

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The object of the present invention is to provide an improved sawing machine and a seal with which the contamination occurring heretofore during separation of electronic components can be reduced or even prevented.

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The invention provides for this purpose a seal for a sawing machine for separating electronic components, comprising: an elongate form-retaining holder, a flexible, elongate expandable body connected to the form-retaining holder and sealing a space
medium-tightly, a pressure source for a medium connecting to the space sealed by the flexible expandable body, wherein the elongate expandable body is provided with a strengthened elongate edge which lies clear of the form-retaining holder. The flexible, elongate expandable body can be inflated such that the strengthened elongate edge is urged a relatively great distance from the form-retaining holder. An entry to the space in

which the separating process takes place can thus be better shielded from the surrounding area. The strengthened elongate edge can here be urged against another part of a protective housing, although it is also possible for a displaceable holder to be moved along the strengthened elongate edge. The strengthened edge provides here for a robust construction; the expandable body is after all less likely to be damaged if it is engaged on the strengthened elongate edge than if it is engaged on a more flexible part of the expandable body.

The seal preferably takes a dual form such that it comprises two opposite flexible, elongate expandable bodies which are supported by two elongate, form-retaining holders which are placed at a mutual distance such that the strengthened elongate edges of the flexible, elongate expandable bodies connect to each other in an expanded state. By applying two opposite flexible, elongate expandable bodies which connect to each other a relatively wide slot can also be sealed and an improved seal is created. The reason for the improved sealing is that, when an object is moved through a slot having an elongate expandable body on either side thereof, it will also be possible for a flexible connection of the expandable body to the object to occur on two sides, resulting in a better sealing than if a slot is provided on only one side with an elongate expandable body.

It is found in practice to be no problem to manufacture longer seals with a length of for instance 0.8 meter or more in this way. In a practical embodiment the elongate, form-retaining holder is embodied as a profile part, for instance an extruded profile.

For a good contact of specifically the strengthened elongate edge with the surrounding area, the edge desirably protrudes from the elongate expandable body. The cross-section through the strengthened elongate edge perpendicularly of the longitudinal on the side directed toward the flexible part of the elongate expandable body can advantageously be provided with a substantially rounded form. When the strengthened elongate edge is pressed (locally) inward, the flexible part will thus be easily able to lie closely against the strengthened elongate edge, wherein the flexible part of the expandable body being forced outward (with an increased chance of damage) when the strengthened edge is pressed inward is countered. Another advantage of the rounded construction is that the seal can be compressed over a relatively great distance and with relatively limited

resistance. It is found possible in practice to achieve good results (compressibility, durability, robustness, resistance) if the elongate expandable body is manufactured from an elastomer such as TSE (thermoset elastomer) or a (natural) rubber, for instance with a hardness > 60 Shore. Other flexible materials can however also be applied for this purpose.

In order to allow an object to make contact in simple manner with the flexible, elongate expandable body with strengthened elongate edge, it is advantageous for the body to be provided on at least one of the end surfaces with a chamfered contact surface.

It can also be advantageous to provide the pressure source for a medium with an intelligent control with which the pressure (liquid pressure or gas pressure) can be regulated, optionally subject to determined ambient and process conditions. If a pressure gauge or flow meter also connects to the space sealed by the flexible expandable body, leakage from the seal can thus also be detected or other conditions of use detected (pressure check or flow measurement), as a result of which the intelligent control can then optionally intervene. Possible leakage of the seal can be monitored in a continuous or intermittent manner by means of checking the pressure or the flow of the medium in/to the elongate expandable body or at the pressure source.

The present invention also provides a sawing machine of the type stated in the preamble, the slot-like opening of which can be closed by a seal as described above. In an advantageous embodiment variant the displaceable product holder is carried here on the upper side by a rotatable shaft, which shaft is provided at the position of the seal with at least one guide roller connecting to the seal. With such a sawing device the advantages can be realized as already described above with reference to the seal according to the present invention; these advantages in relation to the sawing device are also included here by way of reference. The seal makes it possible to prevent significant quantities of cooling liquid present during the sawing process exiting the sawing device and contaminating the surrounding area. Fragments, gases and dust released during the sawing can also be collected in controlled manner by means of the present invention. This results in a reduced contamination of the surrounding area, with all the associated advantages for process control of other operations and/or processes taking place in the same production space, but also in improved working conditions for process operators.

The immediate safety interests of the operators are also served by the present invention; the present sawing machine will after all be able to contain the remainders of a shattered saw-blade.

- 5 In a more specific embodiment the rotatable shaft is provided with at least two guide rollers connecting to opposite seals. These guide rollers limit the resistance with which the rotatable shaft can be moved along the seals, with all the resulting advantages, such as for instance more accurate positioning and decreased energy consumption. The seal can be mounted on a fold-away housing plate so that the entry to the housing with the
- 10 saw-blade (or saw-blades, since sawing machines with more than one saw-blade also form part of the present invention) can be easily enlarged. In structural terms the connection of the pressure source to the flexible, elongate expandable body must of course be taken into account here; this connection must be embodied (for instance by means of a deformable connecting conduit) such that the necessary freedom of
- 15 movement is imparted to the flexible, elongate expandable body.

- For still further improvement in the sealing of the space with the saw-blade, it is possible for the product holder to be provided on the side thereof admitted into the housing with a splash plate extending substantially parallel to the seal. Smaller openings
- 20 between the elongate expandable body and the displaceable product holder (particularly where the two come together) are also shielded even better with such a splash plate.

- The present invention will be further elucidated on the basis of the non-limitative exemplary embodiments shown in the following figures. Herein:
- 25 figure 1 is a schematic perspective view of a sawing device according to the present invention;
- figure 2 is a perspective view of a cross-section through the seal according to the present invention;
- figure 3 is a perspective view of a displaceable product holder of a sawing device
- 30 according to the present invention; and
- figure 4 is a perspective detail view of the co-action of a seal according to the present invention with a displaceable product holder of a sawing device.

Figure 1 is a schematic view of a sawing machine 1 with a housing or space 2 shown cut-away in which is disposed a saw-blade 4 rotatable as according to arrow P_1 by means of a drive 3. Situated close to saw-blade 4 is a nozzle 5 with which a liquid 6 is applied to saw-blade 4. Space 2 is sealed on the upper side by two covers 7 which can be pivoted away as according to arrows P_2 . Present between the two covers 7 is a gap sealable by means of two flexible, elongate expandable bodies 8, 9 directed toward each other. The elongate expandable bodies 8, 9 are further elucidated with reference to figure 2. A shaft 10 is displaceable between the two elongate expandable bodies 8, 9, this shaft 10 forming part of a product holder 11 with which electronic components 12 to be sawn can be held by means of a gripper plate 13 to which an underpressure is usually applied. Product holder 11 is displaceable at least rotatably (arrow P_3) and in linear direction (arrow P_4) such that the required saw-cuts can be made for the purpose of separating electronic components 12. Further shown in this figure is that space 2 is provided on one side with an entry 14 for passage of product holder 11 with electronic components 12 such that product holder 11 can set down separated electronic components 12 outside space 2 and can pick up electronic components 12 yet to be separated. The two elongate expandable bodies 8, 9 are provided at the position of entry 14 with a positioning opening 15 so that shaft 10 can be carried easily between the two elongate expandable bodies 8, 9.

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Figure 2 shows a cross-section of the two elongate expandable bodies 8, 9 which are each arranged individually on one of the two covers 7. The elongate expandable body 8 is mounted on an elongate, form-retaining holder 20 and is provided with a strengthened elongate edge 21, in this case of circular cross-section, which lies free of form-retaining holder 20. The elongate form-retaining holder 20 is formed such that the strengthened elongate edge 21 can be pushed inward over some distance without the elongate expandable body 8 herein protruding or running a greater risk of being damaged. Unnecessary damage to elongate expandable body 8 is also prevented because the strengthened elongate edge 21 is rounded on the side facing toward elongate expandable body 8. Elongate expandable body 9 is mounted on an elongate form-retaining holder 22 and is likewise provided with a strengthened elongate edge 23. Elongate expandable body 9 is in an inflated, protruding state. For the purpose of elucidation the elongate expandable bodies 8, 9 are shown in this figure in the two most extreme states, i.e. the fully pressed inward and fully extended states. For the purpose of developing a medium

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pressure in elongate expandable body 9 pressure is applied in elongate expandable body 9 by means of a schematically shown pressure source 24 through a conduit 25 and via connection 26.

5 Figure 3 shows a displaceable product holder 30 of a sawing device as shown schematically in figure 1. A pair of roller elements 32 are arranged parallel to a shaft 31 of product holder 30 such that they will engage on the strengthened elongate edges 21, 23 of the seal as described for instance with reference to figure 2. Roller elements 32 decrease the frictional resistance with which product holder 30 can be displaced relative
10 to seals 8, 9 and facilitate positioning of the displaceable product holder 30 relative to the strengthened elongate edges 21, 23. Product holder 30 is further provided with a gripper plate 33 for holding electronic components (not shown here). A shielding plate 34, also referred to as a splash plate, is moreover situated between roller elements 32 and gripper plate 33. This shielding plate 34 is present to shield small openings between
15 product holder 30 and the strengthened elongate edges 21, 23 of seals 8, 9 where they come together (see figure 4 herefor). Drying strips 35, with which the electronic components and gripper plate 33 can be blown dry, are further also arranged under shielding plate 34. The product holder is assembled such that roller elements 32, shielding plate 34 and drying strips 35 do not co-rotate when gripper plate 33 rotates.

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Finally, figure 4 shows a view of the co-action of a seal as shown in figure 2 with the displaceable product holder 30 of figure 3. In addition to the roller elements 32 disposed vertically parallel to shaft 31 of product holder 30, horizontally placed roller elements 40 can here also be seen which likewise engage on the strengthened elongate edges 21, 23. The limited openings 41, 42 between the strengthened elongate edges 21, 23 close to
25 displaceable product holder 30 are clearly shown. The strengthened elongate edges 21, 23 are urged apart by product holder 30 and are limited in their flexibility such that some distance is required before the pressure in elongate extendable bodies 8, 9 urges elongate edges 21, 23 back together again. Shielding plate 34 of figure 3 is arranged to
30 limit passage of contamination through these openings 41, 42.

Claims

1. Seal for a sawing machine for separating electronic components, comprising:
 - an elongate form-retaining holder,
 - 5 - a flexible, elongate expandable body connected to the form-retaining holder and sealing a space medium-tightly,
 - a pressure source for a medium connecting to the space sealed by the flexible expandable body,wherein the elongate expandable body is provided with a strengthened elongate edge
10 which lies clear of the form-retaining holder.
2. Seal as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the seal takes a dual form such that it comprises two opposite flexible, elongate expandable bodies which are supported by two elongate, form-retaining holders which are placed at a mutual distance such that
15 the strengthened elongate edges of the flexible, elongate expandable bodies connect to each other in an expanded state.
3. Seal as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** the elongate, form-retaining holder is a profile part.
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4. Seal as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the strengthened elongate edge protrudes from the elongate expandable body.
5. Seal as claimed in claim 4, **characterized in that** a cross-section through the
25 strengthened elongate edge perpendicularly of the longitudinal on the side directed toward the flexible part of the elongate expandable body has a substantially rounded form.
5. Seal as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the
30 elongate expandable body is manufactured from an elastomer such as TSE or from a (natural) rubber.

6. Seal as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the flexible, elongate expandable body with strengthened elongate edge is provided on at least one of the end surfaces with a chamfered contact surface.
- 5 7. Seal as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the pressure source for a medium is provided with an intelligent control.
8. Seal as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** a pressure gauge or flow meter connects to the space sealed by the flexible expandable body.
- 10 9. Sawing machine for separating electronic components, comprising:
- at least one rotatable saw-blade placed in a housing, and
 - a product holder displaceable over the upper part of the saw-blade,
- wherein the housing is provided on the upper side with a slot-like opening for admitting
- 15 at least the part of the product holder holding the electronic components into the housing in displaceable manner, **characterized in that** the slot-like opening can be closed by a seal as claimed in any of the foregoing claims.
10. Sawing machine as claimed in claim 9, **characterized in that** the displaceable
- 20 product holder is carried on the upper side by a rotatable shaft, which shaft is provided at the position of the seal with at least one guide roller connecting to the seal.
11. Sawing machine as claimed in claim 10, **characterized in that** the rotatable shaft is provided with at least two guide rollers connecting to opposite seals.
- 25 12. Sawing machine as claimed in any of the claims 9-11, **characterized in that** the seal is carried by a fold-away housing plate.
13. Sawing machine as claimed in any of the claims 9-12, **characterized in that** the
- 30 product holder is provided on the side thereof admitted into the housing with a splash plate extending substantially parallel to the seal.