# CONTAINER WITH ADHESIVE LABEL WITH ADHESIVE FREE AREA

The present invention relates to a container of consumer goods comprising an adhesive label. The container of the present invention finds particular application as a container for elongate consumer good items, such as smoking articles.

Smoking articles such as cigarettes and cigars are commonly packaged in rigid hinge-lid containers comprising a box and a lid connected to the box about a hinge line extending across a back wall of the container. Such hinge-lid containers are typically constructed from one-piece laminar cardboard blanks. In use, the lid is pivoted about the hinge line to open the container and so gain access to a bundle of smoking articles housed in the box.

The bundle of smoking articles housed in the box is commonly wrapped in an inner liner, or package, of metallised paper, metal foil or other flexible sheet material. To access the bundle of smoking articles within the inner liner, a consumer should remove a pre-perforated upper portion of the inner liner upon first opening of the hinge-lid container.

It is also known to enclose consumer goods, for example a bundle of smoking articles, in a resealable substantially airtight wrapper. The wrapper including the consumer goods may be inserted in a hinge-lid container.

For example, EP-A-0 944 539 discloses a hinge-lid pack of smoking articles in which the smoking articles are provided in a sealed enclosure of a layer of barrier material having an access aperture defined therein. The access aperture is covered by a cover layer with a permanently tacky surface, which can be engaged with the layer of barrier material to reseal the enclosure after the first opening. A frame against which the cover layer may be pressed is provided in the sealed enclosure between the smoking articles and the layer of barrier material.

WO-A-2008/142540 discloses a hinge-lid pack of smoking articles in which the smoking articles are enclosed in an inner package with an extraction opening closed by a cover flap that is fixed to the inner package using non-dry adhesive applied to the underside of the cover flap. In one embodiment, an outer surface of a bottom tab of the cover layer is glued permanently and non-removably to an inner surface of the front wall of the lid so that opening and closing of the lid simultaneously also opens and closes the cover flap. In this embodiment, the cover flap forms an S-shaped fold when opening the lid of the hinge-lid pack. The term “S-shaped” is used to refer to a shape that has the form of a curve with one inflexion point.

Due to the S-shape of the cover flap, at a specific angle during opening and closing of the lid, a portion of the cover layer may undesirably come into contact with another portion of the cover layer or with the lower edge of the lid front wall. As both portions of the cover layer have a non-dry re-stick adhesive the portions can stick together and affect the closing of the lid.

It is an object of the present invention to avoid this disadvantage of the prior art pack.

According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a container for consumer goods. The container comprises an outer housing, wherein the outer housing comprises a box, and a lid hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the container. An inner package of consumer goods is provided within the outer housing comprising an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed. An adhesive label is provided covering the access opening of the inner package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the inner package. The adhesive label is at least partially releasably affixed to the inner package by a resealable adhesive provided on a first area of the inner surface of the adhesive label, extending about at least the lower periphery of the access opening of the inner package. A second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the inner surface of the front wall of the lid of the outer container. A third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label disposed between the first and second areas is substantially free of adhesive.

By providing such an adhesive label, a container with a resealable inner package may be provided that enables the container to be closed more easily. The container may be closed more easily because the adhesive label does not adhere to itself, or the inner surface of the lid, during opening or closing. In addition, a more securely sealed inner package may be provided because the resealable adhesive portion of the provided adhesive label only adheres to the inner package, and thus may be sealed effectively a plurality of times.

The height of the third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is preferably at least about 1 mm. Preferably, the height of the third area is at least about 2 mm, more preferably at least about 3 mm. The height of the second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is preferably at least about 3 mm. Preferably, the height of the second area is at least about 4 mm, more preferably at least about 6 mm.

Preferably, the width of the third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is at least about 90 percent of the width of the access opening of the inner package. More preferably, the width of the third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is substantially equal to or greater than the width of the access opening of the inner package. Yet more preferably, the width of the third area is substantially equal to the width of the adhesive label. The width of the third area may be varied to change the force required to open the container. A narrower third area increases the force required to open the container, and therefore may provide a better seal between the adhesive label and the inner package. However, decreasing the width of the third area may increase the force required to close the container since the adhesive label may contact, and partially adhere to the inner surface of the lid.

Preferably, the height of the third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is substantially equal to or less than the height of the second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label. The second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label may be positioned

on the inner surface of the lid such that when the lid is in the open position the third area substantially free of adhesive extends to or beyond the lower edge of the lid. By arranging the relative dimensions and positions of the adhesive label as aforementioned an adhesive label is provided that does not adhere to the inner surface of the lid, and thus a container is provided that is more easily closed.

According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a container for consumer goods. The container comprises an outer housing comprising a box, and a lid hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the container. An inner package of consumer goods is provided within the outer housing comprising an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed. An adhesive label is provided covering the access opening of the inner package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the inner package. The adhesive label is at least partially releasably affixed to the inner package by a resealable adhesive provided on a first area of the inner surface of the adhesive label extending about at least the lower periphery of the access opening of the inner package, a second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is substantially free of adhesive, and wherein a first area of the outer surface of the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the inner surface of the front wall of the lid of the outer container. The second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label and the first area of the outer surface of the adhesive label at least partially overly each other.

This reduces the forces between the backside of the first area of the outer surface and the resealable adhesive provided on the first area of the inner surface. By providing such an adhesive label, a container with a resealable inner package may be provided that enables the container to be closed more easily. The container may be closed more easily because the adhesive label does not adhere to itself, or the inner surface of the lid, during opening or closing. In addition, a more securely sealed inner package may be provided because the resealable adhesive portion of the provided adhesive label only adheres to the inner package, and thus may be sealed effectively a plurality of times.

Preferably, in the second aspect of the present invention, the area of the second area of the adhesive label is between 100 percent and about 50 percent of the area of the first area of the outer surface of the adhesive label. Advantageously, where the second area is smaller than the first area, the adhesive label has a smaller tendency to detach from the lid when the container is opened. The height of the second area of the inner surface may be at least about 1 mm, preferably at least about 2 mm, and more preferably at least about 3 mm. The height of the first area of the outer surface of the adhesive label may be at least about 3 mm, preferably at least about 4 mm, and more preferably at least about 6 mm.

The adhesive label provided, in the first and second aspects of the present invention, for sealing the access portion over the access opening comprises a resealable adhesive, such that

the label can be removed from a surface of the inner package and reattached a number of times. This allows for repeated opening and closing of the inner package in order to access the consumer goods individually. The resealable adhesive on the adhesive label will preferably provide sufficient adhesion for the label to be reattached at least as many times as there are consumer goods within the inner package. This enables a consumer to open and reseal the inner package until the package is empty.

Suitable resealable adhesives are known to the skilled person and a wide variety of adhesives are commercially available from a number of suppliers. The selection of a suitable adhesive may depend upon the material forming the inner package to which the adhesive label is sealed or resealed during use.

The adhesive label preferably comprises an adhesive free surface area, wherein this adhesive free surface area corresponds in size to the access opening in the inner package. When the lid is in the closed position with the adhesive label sealed to the inner package, this adhesive free surface area covers the access opening in the inner package. This will prevent dust or small particles, for example tobacco shorts or other residue from the consumer goods within the package, from adhering to the adhesive label. This may happen, for example, if the adhesive label comes into contact with the consumer goods within the inner package.

In an alternative embodiment to having an adhesive free area corresponding in size to the access opening in the inner package, in the first and second aspects of the present invention, the access aperture of the inner package is defined by one or more lines of weakness in the inner package. The one or more lines of weakness define an access portion of the inner package. By providing the inner package with a defined access portion the inner package may be more securely sealed before the first opening of the container. This may increase the storage life of the consumer goods contained within the container. More preferably, the adhesive label comprises a further area of the inner surface of the adhesive label permanently affixed to the access portion of the inner package bounded by the one or more lines of weakness. The access portion of the inner package is preferably partially separated from the remainder of the inner package along the one or more lines of weakness on first opening of the lid of the outer housing such that the access portion of the inner package remains attached to the remainder of the inner package during subsequent opening and closing of the lid of the outer housing. The resealable adhesive provided on the first area of the inner surface of the adhesive label may extend about substantially the entire periphery of the access portion of the inner package.

Preferably, in the first and second aspects of the present invention, the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the inner package, at least partially. More preferably, the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the inner package by a connection portion extending about substantially the entire periphery of the adhesive label. The connection portion is connected to

the adhesive label along an edge of the adhesive label adjacent an edge of the access portion. Preferably, the connection edge is located towards the back of the top of the inner package.

Preferably, in the first and second aspects of the present invention, the container further comprises an inner frame within the inner package. More preferably, the inner frame is a U-shaped inner frame having a front wall and a pair of opposed side walls. Alternatively, the inner frame may be provided between the container and the inner package. Advantageously, an inner frame with a large surface area increases the structural strength of the container. The increased structural strength provided by the inner frame allows a secure closing of the adhesive label. This is particularly advantageous for subsequent closing operations when the container is no longer full. The term "U-shaped" is used to refer to a shape that comprises three parts, wherein the first and the third part are parallel to each other and extend into the same direction perpendicular to the second part.

Where the inner frame is provided between the container and the inner package, the inner frame may comprise a cover layer wherein the surface structure of the cover layer is selected such that substantially no adhesive is transferred from the adhesive label to the cover layer when the adhesive label is attached to the cover layer of the inner frame. For example, the inner frame may comprise a cover layer of laminated polyethylene terephthalate (PET). The cover layer may be transparent or metallised. Preventing the transfer of adhesive from the label to the inner frame has the advantage that dust or small particles, for example so called "tobacco shorts", will not attach to the inner frame.

Preferably, the inner package is formed of metal foil or metallised paper. The inner package material may be formed as a laminate of a metallised polyethylene film, and a liner material. The liner material may be a supercalendered glassine paper. In addition, the inner package material may be provided with a print-receptive top coating.

Preferably, the consumer goods are smoking articles. However, the container may be suitable for a variety of consumer goods, such as confectionary, dry foodstuff or the like.

As used herein, the terms 'front', 'back', 'upper', 'lower', 'top', 'bottom' and 'side', refer to the relative positions of portions of containers according to the invention and components thereof when the container is in an upright position with the lid of the outer housing in the closed position and the hinge line at the back of the container. When describing containers according to the present invention, these terms are used irrespective of the orientation of the container being described. The back wall of the container is the wall comprising the hinge line.

The term "hinge line" refers to a line about which the lid may be pivoted in order to open the container. A hinge line may be, for example, a fold line or a score line in the panel forming the back wall of the container.

The term "longitudinal" refers to a direction from bottom to top or vice versa. The term "transverse" refers to a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.

As used herein, the term "height" refers to the dimension of the respective portion of the adhesive label measured in the longitudinal direction when the adhesive label is affixed to the inner package. The term "width" refers to the dimension of the respective portion of the adhesive label measured in the transverse direction when the adhesive label is affixed to the inner package.

The container is preferably a rectangular parallelepiped comprising two wider walls spaced apart by two narrower walls.

The container may be formed from any suitable materials including, but not limited to, cardboard, paperboard, plastic, metal, or combinations thereof. Preferably, the outer housing are each formed from one or more folded laminar cardboard blanks and preferably, the cardboard has a weight of between about 100 grams per square metre and about 350 grams per square metre.

As described above, containers according to the invention may be in the shape of a rectangular parallelepiped, with right-angled longitudinal and right-angled transverse edges. Alternatively, the container may comprise one or more rounded longitudinal edges, rounded transverse edges, bevelled longitudinal edges or bevelled transverse edges, or combinations thereof. For example, the container according to the invention may comprise, without limitation:

- One or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall, and/or one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the back wall.

- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall, and/or one or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the back wall.

- One longitudinal rounded edge and one longitudinal bevelled edge on the front wall, and/or one transverse rounded edge and one transverse bevelled edge on the back wall.

- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall and one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front wall.

- Two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on a first side wall or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the second side wall.

Where the container comprises one or more bevelled edge, preferably the bevelled edge has a width of between about 1 mm and about 10 mm, preferably between about 2 and about 6 mm. Alternatively, the container may comprise a double bevel formed by three parallel creasing or scoring lines that are spaced such that two distinct bevels are formed on the edge of the container.

Alternatively, the container may have a non-rectangular transversal cross section, for example polygonal such as triangular or hexagonal, semi-oval or semi-circular.

Containers according to the invention find particular application as packs for elongate smoking articles such as, for example, cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos. It will be appreciated that through appropriate choices of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention

may be designed for different numbers of conventional size, king size, super-king size, slim or super-slim cigarettes. Alternatively, other consumer goods may be housed inside the container.

Through an appropriate choice of the dimensions, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold different total numbers of smoking articles, or different arrangements of smoking articles. For example, through an appropriate choice of the dimensions, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold a total of between ten and thirty smoking articles.

The smoking articles may be arranged in different collations, depending on the total number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in a single row of six, seven, eight, nine or ten. Alternatively, the smoking articles may be arranged in two or more rows. The two or more rows may contain the same number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: two rows of five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten; three rows of five or seven; or four rows of four, five or six. Alternatively, the two or more rows may include at least two rows containing different number of smoking articles to each other. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: a row of five and a row of six (5-6); a row of six and a row of seven (6-7); a row of seven and a row of eight (7-8); a middle row of five and two outer rows of six (6-5-6); a middle row of five and two outer rows of seven (7-5-7); a middle row of six and two outer rows of five (5-6-5); a middle row of six and two outer rows of seven (7-6-7); a middle row of seven and two outer rows of six (6-7-6); a middle row of nine and two outer rows of eight (8-9-8); or a middle row of six with one outer row of five and one outer row of seven (5-6-7).

Containers according to the present invention may hold smoking articles of the same type or brand, or of different types or brands. In addition, both filterless smoking articles and smoking articles with various filter tips may be contained, as well as smoking articles of differing length (for example, between about 40 mm and about 180 mm), diameter (for example, between about 4 mm and about 9 mm). In addition, the smoking articles may differ in strength of taste, resistance to draw and total particulate matter delivery. Preferably, the dimensions of the container are adapted to the length of the smoking articles, and the collation of the smoking articles. Typically, the outer dimensions of the container are between about 0.5 mm to about 5 mm larger than the dimensions of the bundle or bundles of smoking articles housed inside the container.

The length, width and depth of containers according to the invention may be such that, in the closed lid position, the resultant overall dimensions of the container are similar to the dimensions of a typical disposable hinge-lid pack of twenty cigarettes.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a height of between about 60 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a height of between about 70 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the height is measured from the bottom wall to the top wall of the container.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a width of between about 12 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a width of between about 70 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the width is measured from one side wall to the other side wall of the container.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a depth of between about 6 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a depth of between about 12 mm and about 25 mm wherein the depth is measured from the front wall to the back wall of the container (comprising the hinge between box and lid).

Preferably, the ratio of the height of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 3 to 1 and 5 to 1

Preferably, the ratio of the width of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 2 to 1 and 3 to 1.

Preferably, the ratio of the height of the lid back wall to the height of the box back wall of the outer sleeve is between about 0 to 1 (lid located at the top edge of the container) to about 1 to 1, more preferably, between about 1 to 5 and about 1 to 10, most preferably, between about 1 to 6 to about 1 to 8.

Preferably, the ratio of the height of the lid front wall of the outer sleeve to the height of the box front wall of the outer sleeve is between about 1 to 0 (lid covering the entire front wall) to about 1 to 10, more preferably, between about 1 to 1 and about 1 to 5, most preferably, between about 1 to 2 and about 1 to 3.

Where the container comprises smoking articles, the container may further comprise waste-compartments (for example for ash or butts) or other consumer goods, for example matches, lighters, extinguishing means, breath-fresheners or electronics. The other consumer goods may be attached to the outside of the container, contained within the container along with the smoking articles, in a separate compartment of the container or combinations thereof.

The exterior surfaces of containers according to the invention may be printed, embossed, debossed or otherwise embellished with manufacturer or brand logos, trade marks, slogans and other consumer information and indicia.

Once filled, containers according to the invention may be shrink wrapped or otherwise over wrapped with a transparent polymeric film of, for example, high or low density polyethylene, polypropylene, oriented polypropylene, polyvinylidene chloride, cellulose film, or combinations thereof in a conventional manner. Where containers according to the invention are over wrapped, the over wrapper may include one or more a tear tapes. In addition, the over wrapper may be printed with images, consumer information or other data.

The invention will be further described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a representation of a container according to the invention;

Figure 2 shows a side view of the container shown in Figure 1 with the lid in the open position;

Figure 3 shows a side view of the container shown in Figure 1 with the lid in the closed position;

Figure 4 shows the inner surface of an adhesive label used in a container according to the invention;

Figure 5 shows the outer surface of the adhesive label shown in Figure 4;

Figure 6 shows a side view of a further container according to the invention, with the lid in the open position;

Figure 7 shows a side view of the further container, with the lid in the closed position;

Figure 8 shows the inner surface of an adhesive label used in the further container; and

Figure 9 shows the outer surface of the adhesive label shown in Figure 8.The hinge lid container 100 shown in Figure 1 is a rectangular parallelepiped and comprises a lower box 102 and an upper lid 104 that is hinged to the box 102 along a hinge line extending substantially horizontally along the back wall of the container 100. Figure 1 shows the container with the hinge lid 104 in an open position. A bundle of cigarettes (not shown) is housed in the box 102 of the container 100. The bundle is wrapped in an inner package 106, described in more detail below. The overall size and construction of the box 102 and lid 104 of container 100 are substantially the same as that of a standard hinge lid cigarette pack.

The box 102 has a box front wall, a box left side wall, a box right side wall, a box back wall, and a box bottom wall. The upper side of the box 102 is open, to provide an upper opening through which the cigarettes can be removed.

When the container in the upright position is open, the cigarettes contained in the box 102 may be removed from the upper end of the container 100.

The lid 104 has a lid front wall, a lid left side wall, a lid right side wall, a lid back wall and a lid top wall. When the container 100 is closed, the free edges of the walls of the lid 104 abut the free edges of the walls of the box 102 along a line of abutment. In the closed position, the walls of the lid 104 therefore form extensions of the corresponding walls of the box 102 to define the walls of the container 100.

An inner frame (not shown) is mounted within the inner package 106 of the container 100. The inner frame comprises an inner frame front wall, an inner frame left side wall and an inner frame right side wall which are connected to the inner surface of the inner package front wall, inner package left side wall and inner package right side wall, respectively. The inner frame front wall includes a rectangular cut out at the top free edge, in order to facilitate removal of the cigarettes from the box 102. The rectangular cut out substantially corresponds to a front

wall portion of the access opening in the inner package. The walls of the inner frame extend above the upper edges of the box 102.

Prior to first opening, the container 100 is wrapped in an outer wrapper (not shown) formed of a transparent film, in the conventional manner.

The inner package 106 includes a cut-out through which the cigarettes can be removed. When the inner package of cigarettes is in place within the box the cut out is positioned at the open, upper end of the box 102.

A rectangular, self-adhesive label 108 is attached to the outer surface of the inner package so that the label 108 covers the cut-out defining the access opening in the inner package 106. The free end 110 of the label 108 is permanently affixed to a portion of the inner surface of the lid 104. The label 108 includes a resealable adhesive area 112 on the inner surface of label 108, which overlies a portion of the inner package substantially around the periphery of the access opening. When the lid is in the closed position the resealable adhesive area 112 forms a seal between the adhesive label 108 and the inner package 106.

In addition, the label 108 is sealed to the inner package at the upper, back edge of the inner package using a strip of permanent adhesive. This provides a hinge line about which the adhesive label can be pivoted in order to open and close the inner package.

In order to access the cigarettes within the inner package, the hinge lid is moved from the closed position to the open position shown in Figure 1. As the lid is moved from the closed position, the label 108 is pealed from the inner package 106 since the free end 110 of the label 108 is permanently affixed to the lid, thereby uncovering the access opening in the inner package through which one or more cigarettes can be removed.

Figure 2 shows a side view of the container 100 with the lid 104 in the open position. As described above, the label 108 is permanently affixed using adhesive 200 to the inner surface of the lid 104 substantially adjacent the lower edge of the lid. The portion 202 located adjacent the permanent adhesive portion 200 is substantially free of adhesive. The adhesive free portion is provided to prevent the adhesive label from adhering to the inner surface of the lid in the region of the lower edge of the lid. By preventing the adhesive label from adhering to the lid the container may be opened, and closed, more easily.

Figure 3 shows a side view of the container 100 with the lid 104 in the closed position. As can be seen, the portion 200 of the adhesive label permanently affixed to the inner surface of the lid is folded by substantially 180 degrees away from the inner package. The adhesive label 108 is shown affixed to the inner package 106.

Figure 4 shows the adhesive label 108. The portion 200 is provided with a permanent adhesive so that the lower edge of the adhesive label can be permanently affixed to the inner surface of the lid 104 as described above. The portion 202 is substantially adhesive free, and is located adjacent the permanent adhesive portion 200. Alternatively, the portion 200 may be

adhesively neutralised to ensure that it does not adhere to the inner surface of the lid. The resealable adhesive portion 112, described above, is shown surrounding the periphery of portion 400. The resealable adhesive portion 112 is adapted to resealably adhere to the inner package around the access opening to provide a sealed inner package. The portion 400 is provided with permanent adhesive adapted to permanently affix the adhesive label to an access portion of the inner package. The access portion is, before the first opening of the container, connected to the inner package by lines of weakness, such as perforations, creasing lines or scoring lines. Specifically, the lines of weakness are provided on the left side, right side, and lower side of the access opening when the container is viewed from the front with the lid at the top. The adhesive label is permanently attached to the access portion such that on first opening of the container the access portion is separated from the inner package along the lines of weakness, but remains attached to the inner package along a hinge line formed at the back top corner of the inner package.

Figure 5 shows the outer surface of the adhesive label 108. As can be seen the surface 500 is adhesive free.

In this embodiment, the height of the adhesive free portion is less than the height of the permanent adhesive portion 610. The height of the adhesive free portion is about 3 mm, and the height of the permanent adhesive portion is about 4 mm. The relative dimensions of the adhesive free portion and the permanent adhesive portion of the adhesive label are such that the resealable adhesive portion does not contact the inner surface of the lid when the lid is in the open position. In addition, the relative dimensions are such that the resealable adhesive portion provides a seal with the area surrounding the access portion of the inner package.

The container 600 shown in Figure 6 is similar in construction to the container 100 shown in Figures 1 to 3 as described above. The container 600 has a box 602, and a lid 604 that is hinged to the box 602 along a hinge line extending substantially horizontally along the back wall of the container 600. However, the inner package 606 is provided with an alternative adhesive label 608. In this alternative, a portion 610 of the outer surface of the adhesive label 608 is permanently affixed to the inner surface of the lid 604. A portion 612 of the inner surface of the adhesive label 608 is substantially free of adhesive. In a similar way to the adhesive free portion 202 provided on adhesive label 108 as described above, the adhesive free portion 612 is provided so that the adhesive label does not adhere to itself when the lid is in the open position. The container can therefore be opened and closed more easily.

Figure 7 shows a side view of the container 600 with the lid 604 in the closed position. As can be seen in this alternative embodiment, the portion 610 of the adhesive label permanently affixed to the inner surface of the lid is not folded relative to the inner package. The adhesive label 108 is shown releasably affixed to the inner package 606.

Similarly to the container 100 described above, an inner frame (not shown) is mounted within the inner package 606 of the container 600. The inner frame comprises an inner frame front wall, an inner frame left side wall and an inner frame right side wall which are connected to the inner surface of the inner package front wall, inner package left side wall and inner package right side wall, respectively. The inner frame front wall includes a rectangular cut out at the top free edge, in order to facilitate removal of the cigarettes from the box 602. The rectangular cut out substantially corresponds to a front wall portion of the access opening in the inner package. The walls of the inner frame extend above the upper edges of the box 602.

Prior to first opening, the container 600 is wrapped in an outer wrapper (not shown) formed of a transparent film, in the conventional manner.

The inner package 606 includes a cut-out through which the cigarettes can be removed. When the inner package of cigarettes is in place within the box the cut out is positioned at the open, upper end of the box 602.

Figure 8 shows the adhesive label 608. The portion 612 is substantially adhesive free, and is located adjacent the lower edge of the adhesive label 608. Alternatively, the portion 612 may be adhesively neutralised to ensure that it does not adhere to itself when the lid is in the open position. The resealable adhesive portion 800 is shown surrounding the periphery of portion 802. The resealable adhesive portion 800 is adapted to resealably affix the adhesive label to the inner package 606 around the access opening to provide a sealed inner package. The portion 802 is provided with permanent adhesive adapted to permanently affix the adhesive label to an access portion of the inner package. The access portion is, before the first opening of the container, connected to the inner package by lines of weakness, such as perforations. Specifically, the lines of weakness are provided on the left side, right side, and lower side of the access opening when the container is viewed from the front with the lid at the top. The adhesive label is permanently attached to the access portion such that on first opening of the container the access portion is separated from the inner package along the lines of weakness, but remains attached to the inner package along a hinge line formed at the back top corner of the inner package.

Figure 9 shows the outer surface of the adhesive label 608. As can be seen, the permanent adhesive portion 610 is provided at the lower edge of the outer surface of the adhesive label. The remainder 900 of the outer surface of the adhesive label the surface is adhesive free.

In the alternative embodiment, the height of the adhesive free portion is less than the height of the permanent adhesive portion 610. The height of the adhesive free portion is about 3 mm, and the height of the permanent adhesive portion is about 6 mm. The relative dimensions of the adhesive free portion and the permanent adhesive portion are such that the

elastic properties of the adhesive label material prevent the resealable adhesive portion from contacting itself when the lid is in the open position.

The containers 100 and 600 may be filled and assembled using conventional apparatus and methods, modified to include the step of applying the adhesive label 108, 608 over the access opening of the inner package 106, 606.

**CLAIMS:**

1. A container for consumer goods comprising:

an outer housing comprising:

a box; and

a lid hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the container;

an inner package of consumer goods within the outer housing comprising an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed; and

an adhesive label covering the access opening of the inner package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the inner package,

wherein the adhesive label is at least partially releasably affixed to the inner package by a resealable adhesive provided on a first area of the inner surface of the adhesive label extending about at least the lower periphery of the access opening of the inner package, and wherein a second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the inner surface of the front wall of the lid of the outer container; and

wherein a third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label disposed between the first and second areas is substantially free of adhesive.

2. A container according to claim 1, wherein the height of the third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is at least about 1 mm.

3. A container according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the width of the third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is at least about 90 percent of the width of the access opening of the inner package.

4. A container according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the width of the third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is substantially equal to or greater than the width of the access opening of the inner package.

5. A container according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the height of the third area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is substantially equal to or less than the height of the second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label.

6. A container for consumer goods comprising:

an outer housing comprising:

a box; and

a lid hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a back wall of the container;

an inner package of consumer goods within the outer housing comprising an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed; and

an adhesive label covering the access opening of the inner package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the inner package,

wherein the adhesive label is at least partially releasably affixed to the inner package by a resealable adhesive provided on a first area of the inner surface of the adhesive label extending about at least the lower periphery of the access opening of the inner package, a second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label is substantially free of adhesive, and wherein a first area of the outer surface of the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the inner surface of the front wall of the lid of the outer container; and

wherein the second area of the inner surface of the adhesive label and the first area of the outer surface of the adhesive label at least partially overly each other.

7. A container according to claim 6, wherein the area of the second area of the adhesive label is between 100 percent and about 50 percent of the area of the first area of the outer surface of the adhesive label.

8. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the access aperture of the inner package is defined by one or more lines of weakness in the inner package.

9. A container according to claim 8, wherein the adhesive label comprises a further area of the inner surface of the adhesive label permanently affixed to the portion of the inner package bounded by the one or more lines of weakness.

10. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the first area of the inner surface of the adhesive label extends about substantially the entire periphery of the access opening of the inner package.

11. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the adhesive label is partially permanently affixed to the inner package.

12. A container according to claim 11, wherein the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the inner package by a connection portion extending about substantially the entire periphery of the adhesive label, wherein said portion is connected to the adhesive label along an edge of the adhesive label adjacent an edge of the access portion.

13. A container according to any of the preceding claims, further comprising an inner frame within the inner package.

14. A container according to claim 13, wherein the inner frame is a U-shaped inner frame comprising a front wall and a pair of opposed side walls.

15. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the consumer goods are smoking articles.