

SPRAYHEAD WITH NOZZLES MADE BY BORING**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The invention relates to a spray head for producing a liquid mist and preferably for extinguishing fire, the spray head comprising a frame, an inlet and a passage leading to at least one nozzle with an opening including a first boring and a second boring, the first boring comprising a first diameter and the second boring a second diameter. The spray head nozzle is, when driven, intended to provide mist, i.e. small droplets when pressure is exerted in the nozzle.

Spray heads capable of generating mist are known in the art. For example, US 5944113 discloses such a spray head.

In order to be able to spray mist with small droplets from known nozzles, the known spray head nozzles comprise openings into which various mechanical obstacles are arranged. Such a mechanical obstacle may be, for example, a rotating body, a stationary particularly shaped locking part, a helical spring etc.

When such obstacles are used a considerable drawback is that they reduce the efficiency of the spray head. This means that a fairly high effect is needed to provide a desired type of spray.

Said obstacles in the nozzles also mean that the structure of the nozzles and spray heads become fairly complicated. The nozzles are difficult to produce and they are supported in specific nozzle housings mounted into the frame of the spray head. Consequently the production costs of the spray head increase.

US 5881958 discloses a nozzle for discharging a mixture of a finely dispersed mist-like fluid. In order to achieve a homogeneously dispersed mixture throughout the spray pattern, the nozzles comprise recessed surfaces which cause fluid jets to produce negative pressure regions inwardly of a forward end surface of the nozzle tip. These recessed surfaces require dedicated machining due to their configuration.

US 2813753 discloses a nozzle for producing a mist. The nozzle comprises passageways which terminate in respective recesses which are inclined at an angle with respect to the corresponding passageways. The recesses have a small length/diameter -ratio which in combination with said inclination makes it impossible - even with high pressures - to produce a di-

rected mist spray with a high momentum. US 2813753 discloses three mechanisms in order to produce mist. The first mechanism is to let water to flow asymmetrically from a small passageway against a wall of a recess at the periphery of the nozzle; the second mechanism is to have small converging passageways to discharge against each other; and the third mechanism is to have a small passageway to discharge at high pressure against a recess without hitting the recess. The two first mechanisms enable to create mist at relatively low pressure, but the mist has low momentum even if pressure is increased. The third mechanism produces mist only if pressure is high.

The invention relates also to a method for forming a block of material a nozzle of a spray head for producing a liquid mist.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a spray head which can be produced very economically and does not comprise said drawbacks and which despite the drawbacks is able to spray fine mist from its nozzle or nozzles.

In order to achieve said object the spray head of the invention is characterized by a combination in which

- the first boring has a diameter that is 0.1 to 0.9 times the diameter of the second boring,

- the length of the first boring is 0.25 to 15 times the diameter of the first boring,

- the length of the second boring is approximately 1 to 15 times the diameter of the second boring, and

- the first boring and the second boring are at least essentially aligned and the frame comprises a main channel, from which said nozzle diverges at an angle from the main channel so that flow of medium along the first boring and the second boring is at an angle in relation to the general flow in the main channel.

It is practically impossible to give any exact numerical definition on said alignment, because it depends on so many parameters, such as length and diameter of the first and the second boring, the principle, however, in the present invention being that the direction of the second boring must not deviate so much from the direction of the first boring that the flow of medium from the first boring hits the wall of the second boring. Preferably the second boring is longer than the first boring in order to have the flow of medium from the first

boring to hit the wall of the second boring.

According to a preferred embodiment the diameter of the first boring is approximately 0.3 to 5 mm. The diameter of the second boring is preferably not more than about 50 mm. As for the formation of mist a particularly advantageous effect is obtained by arranging the first boring at an angle in relation to the medium flow in the main channel of the nozzle. A wider angle generally provides mist with smaller droplets, i.e. a better result in view of the mist formation.

The preferred embodiments of the invention are disclosed in the attached claims 2 to 22.

The invention is based on the astounding observation that mist including very small droplets can be produced at relatively low pressures by using two essentially aligned borings, said borings being arranged after one another (in the direction of flow of fluid), without having to place mechanical obstacles into the nozzle/nozzles of the spray head, when the nozzles are dimensioned as indicated in the attached claims. Very significant for the invention is that a high pressure is not necessarily needed in order to produce the mist, but the mist can be produced with a relatively low pressure, typically from about 10 bar upwards. The medium is immediately composed of very small droplets as it flows out of the nozzle.

An essential advantage of the spray head is that it comprises a high efficiency, whereby a fairly low effect is sufficient for producing a mist-like spray with very small droplets. This means that a fire extinguishing installation provided with the spray heads of the invention may comprise a drive source and additional components which are smaller and considerably less expensive than the ones known. This is particularly important in surroundings where a limited and fairly minimal effect is available. Another essential advantage is that the construction and the fabrication of the spray head can be very simple. The nozzle borings can be simply drilled into the head. The number of components in the spray head can be drastically reduced. For example, in a sprinkler with a slidable spindle and a few nozzles and a heat-releasing ampoule, the number of components can be reduced from approximately 40 to 8 without having any negative effects on the function and safety of the spray head. In its simplest form the spray head may consist of only a single part. The structure of the spray head frame may be particularly simple and separate nozzles from the frame are not needed. The fact that no nozzles are needed means that the

production costs for the spray head remain considerably lower than for the known spray heads providing mist.

The method for forming from a block of material a nozzle of a spray head for producing a liquid mist comprises the steps of:

5 - forming in the block of material a first, inlet part of the nozzle by drilling a first boring of a first diameter in the block;

 - forming in the block of material a second, outlet part of the nozzle by drilling a second boring of a second diameter in the block, said borings communicating with and being at least essentially aligned with each other;

10 wherein the first diameter is smaller than the second diameter such that there is a variation of the diameter of the nozzle at the junction of the first boring and the second boring whereby on passage of liquid through the nozzle from the inlet part to the nozzle part the liquid is formed into a mist.

15 The preferred embodiments of the method are disclosed in the attached claims 24 to 29.

 The method of the present invention enables very easy and fast fabrication of a nozzle.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

20 In the following the invention is described in greater detail with reference to the attached drawing, in which

 Figure 1 is a side view showing a first preferred embodiment of the spray head of the invention,

25 Figure 2 is a cross-section showing the spray head in Figure 1 following line II - II in Figure 1,

 Figure 3 shows an enlarged detail of the spray head in Figure 1,

 Figures 4 to 6 show a second, third and fourth preferred embodiment of the spray head of the invention,

30 Figure 7 show a fifth preferred embodiment of the spray head of the invention in an inactive position,

 Figure 8 shows the spray head in Figure 7 in an active position, and

 Figure 9 is a cross-section showing the spray head in Figure 7 following line IX - IX in Figure 3.

35 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

 Figure 1 and 2 is a cross-sectional side view, and a sectional top

view respectively, showing a spray head of the invention. The spray head comprises a frame 1 with an inlet 2. A main channel of the spray head is indicated by reference numeral 7. Six identical openings 3 comprising a first cylindrical boring 4 and a second cylindrical boring 5 are bored in the frame 1.

5 These borings 4, 5 which can be manufactured very easily form the nozzles 6 of the spray head. The borings 4, 5 can simply be drilled into the frame 1 by two cylindrical drill bits or alternatively by a single, stepped cylindrical drill bit. The latter alternative produces always two coaxial borings, whereas the first alternative enables to produce also such borings that not necessarily are co-axial.

10 The length s of the first boring 4 is 0.25 to 15 times the diameter d of the first boring. Preferably s is 0.5 to 10 and most preferably 1 to 5 times d , in which case a high efficiency is obtained.

15 The first boring 4 has a smaller diameter d than the diameter D of the second boring. The diameter d is 10 to 90 % of D . Preferably the diameter d is 10 to 80 % of D and most preferably 20 to 70 % of D . The diameter d is preferably within the range of 0.5 to 2.5 mm and most preferably within 0.5 to 1.5 mm. By having said small dimensions of the first boring 4, a strongly turbulent liquid through the boring 4 already at relatively low pressures. The more inclined the first boring 4 in relation to the main channel 7, the more turbulent becomes the flow in the first boring. A diameter interval typically ranging from about 0.3 to about 5 mm can still be considered to provide good results, but when the diameter d remains beneath about 0.3 mm there is a risk of the jet being blocked by dirt etc. A large diameter d renders the mist formation more difficult if the pressure in the nozzle is not high. A large diameter d in combination with a preferably low pressure does typically not provide mist as a result.

25 The length S of the second boring 5 is about 1 to about 15, and preferably 1 to 10 times the diameter D thereof. A particularly good result is obtained when S is 1 to 5 times D . When the diameter D of the second boring 30 5 is about 50 mm at the most, a good result is obtained for most applications. However, exceptionally the diameter D may exceed 50 mm.

The turbulent medium flow from the first boring 4 expands immediately at the discharge end thereof into mist which hits the wall of the second boring 5.

35 It is crucial for the invention that the length S of the second boring 5 is long enough in order that the turbulent flow from the first boring 4 hits the

wall of the second boring along a certain minimum length. Therefore, preferably, the length S of the second boring 5 is greater than the length s of the first boring 4.

Figure 1 shows that the direction of the openings 3 is at an angle in relation to the main channel 7 of the spray head. This means that the medium flow, for example the flow of water-based extinguishing medium, in the boring 4 is at an angle θ in relation to the direction of the medium flow in the main channel 7. The angle θ is preferably between 10 and 90 degrees and most preferably 10 to 80 degrees, but may be up to approximately 120 degrees for some applications. The wider the angle θ the better the mist formation, but the penetration of the mist from the separate nozzles is reduced.

Figure 3 is an enlarged view of the nozzle 6 in Figure 1.

Figure 4 illustrates another preferred embodiment of a spray head of the invention. The embodiment deviates from the one in Figure 1 by a further nozzle 6'b being arranged above the nozzle 6'a (which can be considered to correspond with the nozzle 6). The geometry and the dimensioning of the nozzle 6'b correspond with those previously provided for the nozzles 6'a and 6. The nozzles 6'b and 6'a are parallel or may be diverging up to 45 degrees. An advantage with the further nozzle 6'b is that it substantially improves the penetration in comparison with a situation where no such further nozzle is present. The penetration improves (becomes stronger) because the mist-like sprays from the nozzles 6'a and 6 are sucked against each other, and a uniform forceful mist spray is obtained.

Figure 5 illustrates a third embodiment of a spray head of the invention. The embodiment deviates from the one in Figure 1 by comprising an air channel 15'' that leads from an opening 16'' in the frame to the second boring 5''. The air channel 15'' ends up in the boring 5'' by means of an opening 17''. The opening 17'' of the air channel 15'' is close to a transition 45'' between the first and the second borings. The diameter of the air channel 15'' is, for example, 0.5 to 1.5 times the diameter of the second boring 5''. The air channel 15'' considerably improves the penetration of the mist spray from the nozzle 6''. The air channel does not, however, considerably affect the droplet size in the mist. In the Figure the air channel 15'' is vertically directed downwards, but can be considered to be directed in other ways in relation to the main direction (spray direction) of the nozzle 6''; the opening should, however, be an opening which is in contact with air (or gas) outside the spray head. The

air channel 15" can also be considered to extend upwards from the boring 5".

Figure 6 illustrates a fourth preferred embodiment of a spray head of the invention. The embodiment deviates from the one in Figure 1 by comprising a liquid channel 18" that extends from an opening 17" in the wall of the boring 5" to an opening 16" in the passage 7". The liquid channel 18" runs by means of an opening 17" in the boring 15". The opening 17" of the liquid channel 18" is close to the transition 45" between the first and the second borings but need not be positioned there. The diameter of the liquid channel 18" is, for example, 0.5 to 1.5 times the diameter of the first boring 4". The liquid channel 18" considerably improves the penetration of the mist spray from the nozzle 6". However, the liquid channel does not really affect the drop size of the mist. In the Figure the liquid channel 18" is horizontal but can also be considered to be placed at different angles in relation to the main direction (spray direction) of the nozzle 6"; the opening 16" should, however, have a fluid connection with the passage 7". The liquid channel 18" can also be considered to extend upwards from the boring 5".

Figures 7 to 9 show a fifth preferred embodiment of a spray head of the invention. The spray head comprises an inlet 2", a frame 1" and a number of nozzles 6"a, 6"b. The structure and the dimensioning of the nozzles 6"a, 6"b correspond with those of the nozzles 6 in Figure 1. The same measurements therefore hold true for the borings 4" and 5" as for the borings 4 and 5. The preferred embodiment in Figures 7 to 9 deviates from the one in Figure 1 and 2 by the spray head comprising a spindle 8" and a release means 9" that explodes or melts in heat, for example, a glass ampoule. In this case, a sprinkler is concerned, owing to the release means 9".

The spindle 8" is slidably arranged in an air channel 7" in the nozzle frame 1". In Figure 7 the sprinkler is in a standby mode. The glass ampoule 9" is intact and the spindle 8" closes a channel 7"a between the inlet 2" and the main channel 7". The spindle 8" comprises a channel 14" that leads to a nozzle 6"b at the lower end of the sprinkler. The channel 14" connects the nozzle 6"b with the main channel 7". A connection between the channel 14" and the inlet 2" does not exist when the sprinkler is in the standby mode; the connection is opened when the spindle slides down into the position shown in Figure 8. The geometry of the nozzle 6"b is similar to the one of nozzle 6"a; the dimensions are only slightly smaller. Therefore the internal geometry and dimensioning of the borings 4"b and 5"b are identical to

those of the borings 4'''a and 5'''a. The ampoule 9''' is supported at the top against the nozzle 6'''b.

The spindle 8''' comprises a wider piston-like portion 11''' that supports the piston on the channel 7'''. The piston-like portion 11''' comprises
 5 three through bores 3'''. When the spray head is in the position shown in Figure 8, medium may flow from the inlet 2'' through the borings 3''' towards the top of the spindle 8''' and out from the spray head. By means of the borings 3''' a favourable effect can be achieved on the penetration of the spray from the nozzle 6'''b.

10 If the ampoule 8''' in Figure 7 explodes, the spindle 8''' slides into the position shown in Figure 8 and the channel 7'''a is opened. Here the connection between the inlet 2''' and the nozzles 6'''a, 6'''b and the boring 3''' remains open and extinguishing medium may flow from the nozzles. When the spindle 8''' is in the position shown in Figure 8, a space 5'''c is formed be-
 15 neath the boring 3''' between the lower part of the spindle and the nozzle frame 1, said space having the same function as the borings 5'''a and 5'''b, i.e. the space 5'''c allows a nozzle 6'''c having the same structures and dimensioning as the nozzles 6'''a and 6'''b to be formed. It is obvious that in the piston-like part 11''' borings having the same geometry as the borings 3'''a and 3'''b, i.e. borings comprising a boring with a larger diameter in addition to
 20 a boring with a smaller diameter, can be made instead of the borings 3'''.

The embodiment in Figures 7 to 9 can preferably comprise nozzles according to Figure 4 to 6, i.e. nozzles arranged one after the other, or nozzles including an air channel or a liquid channel in order to improve the penetration.

25 Figures 1 and 3 to 7 clearly indicate that the transition between the first borings 4, 4'a, 4'b, 4'', 4''', 4'''a, 4'''b and the second borings 5, 5'a, 5'b, 5'', 5''', 5'''a, 5'''b in the openings 6, 6'a, 6'b, 6'', 6''', 6'''a, 6'''b is beveled i.e. the second boring has a truncated conical end surface, cf. the transition 45 in Figure 3, for example. The angle in the bevel may vary. It should also be ob-
 30 served that a bevel is not necessarily needed at all, in which case the angle and the transition from the smaller boring to the larger boring is 90 degrees. This applies not only to the embodiment shown in Figure 3, but also to the other embodiments.

35 The invention has above been described only with reference to examples. It is therefore pointed out that the details of the invention may deviate within the scope of the attached claims in many ways from the examples. In

the embodiments in Figures 1 to 9 the first boring and the second boring are aligned. However, exact alignment is not necessary, and therefore claim 1 defines "essentially aligned". It is contemplated that within the scope of the invention and said expression the direction of the second boring may deviate up
5 to approximately 25 degrees from the direction of the first boring. Further, the borings of the nozzles do not have to be cylindrical and do not have to be integrated into the same component (typically into the frame of the spray head) even though this is to be preferred considering the production of the nozzles. In the different embodiments the borings do not necessarily have to be coax-
10 ial, and the borings can be straight-sided. The number of the nozzles may also vary.

CLAIMS

1. A spray head for producing a liquid mist and preferably for extinguishing fire, the spray head comprising a frame (1, 1', 1'', 1''', 1''''), an inlet (2, 2''') and a passage (7, 7', 7'', 7''', 7''''a, 7''''') leading to at least one nozzle (6, 6'a, 6'', 6''', 6''''a) with an opening (3, 3''') including a first boring (4, 4'a, 4'', 4''', 4''''a) and a second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a), the first boring comprising a first diameter (d) and the second boring a second diameter (D), **characterized** by a combination in which
 - the first boring (4, 4'a, 4'', 4''', 4''''a) has a diameter (d) that is 0.1 to 0.9 times the diameter (D) of the second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a),
 - the length (s) of the first boring (4, 4'a, 4'', 4''', 4''''a) is 0.25 to 15 times the diameter (d) of the first boring,
 - the length (S) of the second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a) is approximately 1 to 15 times the diameter (D) of the second boring, and
 - the first boring (4, 4'a, 4'', 4''', 4''''a) and the second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a) are at least essentially aligned and the frame (1, 1', 1'', 1''', 1''''') comprises a main channel (7, 7', 7'', 7''', 7'''''), from which said nozzle (6, 6'a, 6'', 6''', 6''''a) diverges at an angle (θ) from the main channel so that flow of medium along the first boring (4, 4'a, 4'', 4''', 4''''a) and the second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a) is at an angle in relation to the general flow in the main channel.
2. A spray head as claimed in claim 1, **characterized** in that the length (S) of the second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a) is greater than the length (s) of the first boring (4, 4'a, 4'', 4''', 4''''a).
3. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that the first boring (4, 4'a, 4'', 4''', 4''''a) and the second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a) are cylinder-like borings.
4. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that the diameter (D) of the second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a) is about 50 mm at the most.
5. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that the diameter (d) of the first boring (4, 4'a, 4'', 4''', 4''''a) is about 0.3 to about 5 mm.
6. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that there is no boring, with a diameter smaller than the diameter (D) of the second boring (5, 5'a, 5'', 5''', 5''''a) in the nozzle (6, 6'a, 6'', 6''', 6''''a) down-



stream of the second boring.

7. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that said borings (4, 5, 4'a, 5'a, 4'', 5'', 4''', 5''', 4''''a, 5''''a) are made into the frame (1, 1', 1'', 1''', 1''').

5 8. A spray head as claimed in claim 7, **characterized** in that said borings (4, 5, 4'a, 5'a, 4'', 5'', 4''', 5''', 4''''a, 5''''a) form the nozzle (6, 6'a, 6'', 6''', 6''''a).

9. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that the angle is 10 to 120 degrees.

10 10. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** by comprising a further nozzle (6'b) with a first boring (4'b) and a second boring (5'b), the further nozzle being arranged in relation to said at least one nozzle (6'a) so that said nozzles (6'a, 6'b) are placed one after the other regarding the passage (7').

15 11. A spray head as claimed in claim 10, **characterized** in that the further nozzle (6'b) is directed at an angle, approximately 10 to 80 degrees in relation to the passage (7') diverging in relation to said at least one nozzle (6'a).

20 12. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that an air channel (15'') extends from an opening (17'') in the wall of the second boring (5'') to an exterior opening (16'') in the frame (1'').

13. A spray head as claimed in claim 12, **characterized** in that the opening (17'') of the air channel (15'') is close to the transition (45'') between the second and the first boring.

25 14. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized** in that a channel (18''') extends from an opening (17''') in the wall of the second boring (5''') to an opening (16''') in the passage (7''').

30 15. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2 comprising a spindle (8''') slidably arranged in a main channel (7''') of the frame (1''') so that the spindle can be slid from a first position where it closes the passage (7a''', 7''') between the inlet (2''') and said nozzle (6''''a) to a second position where the passage (7a''', 7''') between the inlet and the nozzle is open, **characterized** by a further nozzle (6''''b) comprising a first boring (4''''b) and a second boring (5''''b) these borings being made into the spindle (8''') and having the same geometrical proportions as the borings of said at least one nozzle (6''''a).

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16. A spray head as claimed in claim 15, **characterized** in that said borings (4''b, 5''b) of the further nozzle are made into the end of the spindle (8'') which faces away from the inlet (2'').

17. A spray head as claimed in claim 16, **characterized** in that the spindle (8'') comprises a channel (14'') connecting the further nozzle (6''b) to the main channel (7'').

18. A spray head as claimed in claim 1 or 2 comprising a spindle (8'') slidably arranged in a main channel (7'') of the frame (1'') so that the spindle can be slid from a first position where it closes the passage (7''a, 7'') between the inlet (2'') and said nozzle (6''a) to a second position where the passage (7a'', 7'') between the inlet and the nozzle is open, **characterized** in that said borings (4''a, 5''a) are made into the frame (1'').

19. A spray head as claimed in claim 16, **characterized** in that the spindle (8'') comprises a channel (14'') connecting the further nozzle (6''b) at the end of the spindle to the main channel (7'').

20. A spray head as claimed in claim 15, **characterized** in that the spindle (8'') comprises a piston-like part (11'') whose diameter corresponds with the diameter of the main channel (7'').

21. A spray head as claimed in claim 20, **characterized** by comprising at least one through bore (3'') in the piston-like part (11'') of the spindle (8'').

22. A spray head as claimed in claim 15 comprising a heat release means (9''), **characterized** in that the spindle (8'') is arranged to be supported by the heat release means (9'').

23. A method for forming from a block of material a nozzle of a spray head for producing a liquid mist, the method being **characterized** by the steps of :

- forming in the block of material a first, inlet part of the nozzle by drilling a first boring of a first diameter in the block;

- forming in the block of material a second, outlet part of the nozzle by drilling a second boring of a second diameter in the block, said borings communicating with and being at least essentially aligned with each other;

wherein the first diameter is smaller than the second diameter such that there is a variation of the diameter of the nozzle at the junction of the first boring and the second boring whereby on passage of liquid through the nozzle from the inlet part to the nozzle part the liquid is formed into a mist.



24. A method as claimed in claim 23, **characterized** in that the borings are cylindrical.

25. A method as claimed in claim 23, **characterized** in that the borings are straight-sided

5 26. A method as claimed in claim 23, **characterized** in that the second boring has a truncated conical end surface.

27. A method as claimed in claim 23, **characterized** in that the borings are elongate.

10 28. A method as claimed in claim 23, **characterized** by
- forming the first boring with a diameter that is 0.1 to 0.9 times the diameter of the second boring,

- forming the first boring with a length which is 0.25 to 15 times the diameter of the first boring,

15 - forming the second boring with a length that is approximately 1 to 15 times the diameter of the second boring, and

- forming the first boring and the second boring to be at least essentially aligned, and forming a main channel in a frame which is formed of said block of material, said main channel diverging from which said nozzle at an angle so that flow of medium along the first boring and the second boring is at an angle in relation to the general flow in the main channel.

20 29. A method as claimed in claim 28, **characterized** in that the second boring is formed to have greater length than the first boring.

30. A spray head comprising a nozzle formed by the method of claim 23.

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