

DISPENSING DEVICE

TECHNICAL FIELD

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The present invention is directed to a dispensing device and, in particular, to a dispensing device for separately storing, dispensing and applying proportional amounts of two substances. The invention has been developed primarily for dispensing glue or adhesive in the form of an epoxy and a hardener and will be described with reference to this application.

10 However, it will be appreciated that the invention is not limited to this particular field of use.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many devices are known which are useful for dispensing proportional amounts of two materials, typically epoxy and hardeners, kept separately prior to dispensing. Commonly, prior art devices comprise two collapsible tubes along with a means for holding the two tubes together. While the use of two tubes held together to dispense an epoxy and a hardener would appear to be effective, there are certain disadvantages. The use of a common sleeve or yoke to hold the devices together can interfere with the evacuation of the tubes. In addition, it is difficult to ensure that the proportional amounts of the substances within the tubes are dispensed. This is particularly the case when dispensing small amounts of the substances. Prior art devices are commonly provided for larger scale applications, meaning the tubes or containers holding the epoxy and hardener must be resealed after use. As a result blockage of the tube or dispensing device is common. This can render the glue unusable or difficult to apply in a consistent manner. There is therefore a need for a device for separating and dispensing epoxy and hardeners in a single use pack.

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The device generally requires two hands for dispensing the contents. The distance between the nozzles of the two tubes can make proper mixing of the two substances difficult.

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Prior art devices also include more complicated dispensing systems utilising air pressure or a displacement pump to remove epoxy and hardener from separate chambers. While many of these systems are effective, these machines are not intended for use in small applications and require significant outlay of money and investment of space and time.

It is an object of the invention to provide a dispensing device which will overcome or substantially ameliorate at least some of the deficiencies of the prior art, or to at least provide an alternative.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In broad terms in one aspect the invention comprises a one-use dispensing device for separately storing, dispensing and applying proportional amounts of two substances, comprising a respective flexible receptacle for each substance, characterised by a longitudinal axis about which the receptacles are disposed forming a line of fold extending over the device between the receptacles and about which the device is foldable so that the receptacles are superposable by each receptacle defining a respective rupturable outlet, and by the outlets converging towards the line of fold, the arrangement being such that when the device is folded about the line of fold the outlets are superposed for dispensing and mixing the substances when the receptacles are squeezed, said receptacles including indicia indicating where a thumb and forefinger of a user should be positioned for use, to allow for substantially complete evacuation of the receptacle through the outlet, wherein the device is adapted to be manipulated by a user in one-handed operation to dispense the substances.

In one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a dispensing device for separately storing two substances, adapted to dispense and apply proportional amounts of said substances, said device comprising a longitudinal axis about which two receptacles, composed of a flexible material, are disposed, each receptacle containing one of said two substances and comprising an outlet through which said substance can be squeezed, said dispensing device being adapted to be folded about the longitudinal axis.

Preferably the receptacles are disposed such that one of said receptacles on one side of the longitudinal axis is a transposed mirror image of the other receptacle on the other side of the longitudinal axis, and said receptacles are substantially equidistant from the longitudinal axis.

Preferably the outlets include a weakened region which can comprise a scored or vacuum formed tear line or be adapted such that the substances contained within the receptacle will burst through the weakened region upon the receptacle being squeezed by a user.

Preferably the receptacles include indicia indicating where a thumb and forefinger should be positioned for use.

Preferably the dispensing device comprises two flexible laminae positioned adjacent one another and sealed together so as to define the two substance-containing receptacles.

5 Preferably the laminae are composed of different materials such as foil, polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinyl acetate or foil coated with polypropylene.

Preferably the substances in the receptacles undergo a chemical or physical reaction upon mixing.

10 Preferably one receptacle contains an epoxy and the other receptacle contains a hardener. Alternately the receptacles contain foodstuffs, or pharmaceuticals, liquids, pastes or gels used in medical or dental work.

15 Preferably the dispensing device is adapted to be folded and manipulated by a user in a one-handed operation such that the outlets are easily aligned and the substances contained within the receptacles are simultaneously dispensed, mixed and proportionately applied.

Preferably the dispensing device is adapted to be used once and disposed of.

20 Preferably the outlets are positioned at or adjacent to the side edges of the dispensing device.

In a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a dispensing device for separately storing an epoxy and a hardener, adapted to dispense, mix and apply proportional amounts of the epoxy and hardener, the device comprising a longitudinal axis about which two
25 receptacles, composed of a flexible material, are disposed, each receptacle containing either epoxy or hardener and comprising an outlet through which the epoxy or hardener can be squeezed, the dispensing device being adapted to be folded about the longitudinal axis.

30 Preferably, the dispensing device is adapted to be folded and manipulated by a user in a one-handed operation such that the outlets are easily aligned and the epoxy and hardener are

simultaneously dispensed, mixed and proportionately applied, such device is adapted to be used once and disposed of.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

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A preferred embodiment of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying figure in which:

FIG 1 is a plan view of a dispensing device in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

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FIG 2 is an elevation view of the dispensing device shown in Fig. 1.

FIG 3 is a perspective view of the dispensing device of Fig. 1 in a partially folded configuration.

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FIG 4 is a perspective view of the dispensing device 1 of Fig 1, in a folded configuration and torn open.

FIG 5 is a perspective view of the dispensing device as a user squeezes it.

BEST MODE OF CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

Referring to Figs. 1 – 5, there is shown an embodiment of a dispensing device for separately storing two substances in accordance with the present invention. The device is adapted to dispense, mix and apply proportional amounts of the substances. The dispensing device 1 comprises a substantially flat thin flexible web 2. The web 2 includes a longitudinal axis 3 which is preferably scored or vacuum formed to enable a user to easily fold the dispensing device 1 about longitudinal axis 3.

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Two receptacles 4 and 4' are disposed about longitudinal axis 3. The receptacles 4 and 4' are disposed such that the receptacle 4 on one side of the longitudinal axis 3 is a transposed mirror image of the receptacle 4' on the other side of the longitudinal axis 3.

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The receptacles 4 and 4' each include an outlet 5. The outlet 5 is nozzle shaped to allow a substance contained within the receptacle 4 to be easily evacuated from the receptacle 4. The outlet 5 is positioned on or adjacent the side edge of the web 2, distal from the longitudinal axis 3. It can be seen that when folded, the receptacle 4 on one side of the longitudinal axis 3 is substantially aligned with the receptacle 4' on the other side of the longitudinal axis 3.

The web 2 and receptacles 4 and 4' may be integral to one another or may be composed of separate materials and sealed or otherwise affixed to one another. The materials are flexible to allow a substance contained within receptacle 4 to be squeezed through outlet 5. The web may be composed of foil or polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinyl acetate or foil coated with one of the plastics, specifically polypropylene. The receptacles 4 and 4' may similarly be composed of a foil or polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinyl acetate or foil coated with one of the plastics, specifically polypropylene. The web 2 and receptacles 4 and 4' may comprise one or more laminae. The laminae may be composed of foil or polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinyl acetate or foil coated with one of the plastics, specifically polypropylene or each lamina may be composed of a separate material. The laminae are then sealed together to form the receptacles 4 and 4'.

The receptacles 4 and 4' further include indicia or markings 6 to indicate where a user is to place his or her thumb and forefinger in order to evacuate a substance contained within receptacles 4 and 4' through outlet 5. The indicia 6 can be incorporated into the shape of the receptacles 4 and 4' or can be painted or printed thereon. It can be seen that these indicia 6 allow for a substantially complete evacuation of receptacle 4 through outlet 5. Moreover, it can be seen that the indicia 6 allow for easy one-handed use of the dispensing device 1.

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Outlet 5 may include a weakened point or region (not illustrated). In use the substances contained within the two receptacles 4 and 4' will burst through the weakened region upon a user squeezing receptacle 4. Alternately, web 2 and outlet 5 can incorporate a scored or vacuum formed tear line 7. Tear line 7 may be double die-cut. The tear line 7 leads through the weakest point of outlet 5. It can be seen in Figs. 4 and 5 that upon a user cutting or tearing

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along tear line 7, the seal on outlet 5 would be opened allowing the substances contained within the receptacles 4 to be evacuated by squeezing.

5 The substances contained within the two receptacles 4 and 4' in this embodiment may be an epoxy and a hardener, however any preferred substances can be used. In use it is important that proportional amounts of these substances be applied to a surface (not illustrated). In use the epoxy and hardener can be in the proportions 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4, 1:100 or any suitable proportions. The receptacles 4 and 4' can be molded to any predetermined size. When the receptacles 4 and 4' are of differing sizes the outlets 5 are still substantially aligned. It can be
10 seen that in the present invention the proportion of the substances used is defined by the size of the receptacles 4.

In other embodiments the substances contained within the two receptacles 4 and 4' may be foodstuffs, pharmaceuticals, medical or dental products, beauty aids or any liquid, paste or gel
15 substances designed for separate storage and simultaneous application. In use the receptacles 4 and 4' may be independently evacuated such that one or other of the two substances contained therein is dispensed.

The dispensing device 1 is designed to be used once and then disposed of. The dispensing
20 device 1 can be sold in single application packs which comprise two receptacles 4 or in multiple application packs (not illustrated) where each pair of receptacles 4 corresponds to one application.

The dispensing device 1 may preferably have dimensions of approximately 60mm by 45 mm.
25 The receptacles 4 and 4' may preferably be approximately 7.5 mm in radius at their base (not illustrated) and approximately 5mm in radius at their top (not illustrated). The outlets 5 may preferably taper to an end approximately 15 mm from the centre of the receptacles 4 and 4'. In this case the receptacles 4 and 4' contain between approximately 1 ml and approximately 5 ml of substance. However the receptacles 4 and 4' can be molded to contain any preferable
30 volume of substance and may contain different amounts from one another.

The dispensing device 1 is adapted to be folded and manipulated by a user in a one-handed operation such that the outlets 5 are easily aligned and the substances contained within receptacles 4 and 4' are simultaneously dispensed, mixed and proportionately applied to a surface. In use the receptacles 4 and 4' extend outwardly once folded. In use the flat edges 8 of outlets 5 assist in mixing the two substances when they come into contact after application to the surface (not illustrated).

The foregoing describes only a preferred embodiment of the present invention and modifications, obvious to those skilled in the art, may be made thereto without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The term "comprising" (and its grammatical variations) as used herein is used in the inclusive sense of "having" or "including" and not in the exclusive sense "consisting only of".

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:

1. A one-use dispensing device for separately storing, dispensing, applying proportional amounts of two substances, comprising a respective flexible receptacle for each substance, characterised by a longitudinal axis about which the receptacles are disposed forming a line of fold extending over the device between the receptacles and about which the device is foldable so that the receptacles are superposable by each receptacle defining a respective rupturable outlet, and by the outlets converging towards the line of fold, the arrangement being such that when the device is folded about the line of fold the outlets are superposed for dispensing and mixing the substances when the receptacles are squeezed, said receptacles including indicia indicating where a thumb and forefinger of a user should be positioned for use, to allow for substantially complete evacuation of the receptacle through the outlet, wherein the device is adapted to be manipulated by a user in one-handed operation to dispense the substances.
2. A dispensing device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said receptacles are disposed such that one of said receptacles on one side of the line of fold is a transposed mirror image of the other receptacle on the other side of the line of fold and said receptacles are substantially equivalent from the line of fold.
3. A dispensing device as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein each of said outlets includes a weakened region.
4. A dispensing device as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said weakened region comprises a scored or vacuum formed tear line.
5. A dispensing device as claimed in Claim 4, the scored or vacuum formed tear line leads to the weakened region of the outlet.
6. A dispensing device as claimed in any one of Claims 3 to 5, wherein each outlet is adapted to comprise a narrow orifice intermediate the length of the outlet such that when its respective receptacle is squeezed by the user said respective substance contained therein will burst through said weakened region.

7. A dispensing device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said device comprises two flexible laminae positioned adjacent one another and sealed together so as to define said two receptacles.
8. A dispensing device as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the laminae are composed of foil, polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinyl acetate or foil coated with polypropylene.
9. A dispensing device as claimed in Claim 8, wherein each of the laminae are composed of different materials.
10. A dispensing device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein upon said substances being squeezed from said device and meeting, said substances undergo a chemical or physical reaction.
11. A dispensing device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein one of said two receptacles contains an epoxy and the other of said two receptacles contains a hardener.
12. A dispensing device as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 9, wherein the receptacles contain foodstuffs.
13. A dispensing device as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the receptacles contain pharmaceuticals or other liquids, pastes or gels used in medical or dental work.
14. A dispensing device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said device is adapted to be folded and manipulated by a user in a one-handed operation such that said outlets are easily aligned and said substances contained within said receptacles are simultaneously dispensed, mixed and proportionately applied.
15. A dispensing device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the outlets are positioned at or adjacent to the side edges of the dispensing device.

16. A one-use device for separately storing, dispensing and applying proportional amounts of two substances as claimed in claim 1 wherein the device is adapted to dispense, mix and apply proportional amounts of an epoxy and a hardener, the device comprising a line of fold about which two receptacles, composed of a flexible material, are disposed, each receptacle containing either epoxy or hardener and comprising an outlet through which the epoxy or hardener can be squeezed.

17. A dispensing device as claimed in Claim 14, adapted to be folded and manipulated by a user in a one-handed operation such that the outlets are easily aligned and the epoxy and hardener are simultaneously dispensed, mixed and proportionately applied.

18. A one-use dispensing device, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

19. A one-use device for separately storing and dispensing an epoxy and a hardener, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.