

A Luggage Protector

Background and Field of the Invention

5 The invention relates to a luggage protector.

With people travelling over longer distances and spending greater length of time overseas, it is almost necessary for them to use check-in luggage. However, once the luggage is checked-in, the passenger has no control over how the
10 luggage is handled, and certainly, it is common to see luggage damaged due to improper handling. To reduce such damage, the passenger may fit an outer protective layer over the luggage but such outer protective layers do not serve other purpose.

15 It is an object of this invention to provide a luggage protector which addresses at least one of the prior art disadvantages and/or to provide the public with a useful choice.

Summary of the Invention

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In a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a luggage protector comprising a main body having an interior storage space for receiving a luggage; a cover movable relative to the main body; a closure device attached between the cover and the main body, the closure device being movable
25 between an open position to create an opening for placing the luggage into the interior storage space and a closed position to enclose the luggage; and a support strap held at selected points around a perimeter of the main body to allow a user to grasp at any portion of the support strap between the selected points.

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The described embodiment has an advantage of enabling a user greater flexibility to handle or lift the luggage protector since the user may grasp at any portion of the support strap between the selected points.

Preferably, the main body may be arranged to conform to a shape of the luggage. The luggage protector may further comprise a number of strap loops arranged at the selected points, each of the strap loops including a slot which enables the support strap to run therethrough.

The luggage protector may further comprise a plurality of wheel openings to enable respective wheels from the luggage to protrude therethrough, and at least one sealable cover member for covering the plurality of wheel openings.

The luggage protector may include a cover closure device for sealing or unsealing the sealable cover member to cover or uncover the wheel openings, the cover closure device being accessible only from the interior storage space. This enhances the security of the luggage protector when the luggage protector is used as a bag for storing items.

Preferably, the strap may include an adjustable buckle for adjusting a length of the strap which is arranged around the perimeter of the main body. The luggage protector may further comprise an extendable section for increasing the volume of the interior storage space.

In a specific embodiment, the main body may include a major side, first and second side sections, and top and bottom side sections cooperating with the major side section and the first and second side sections to define the interior storage space, the support strap being arranged to be held around the perimeter defined by the first and second side sections, and the top and bottom sections.

It should be appreciated that features relevant to one aspect may also be relevant to the other aspects.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Exemplary embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

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Figure 1a is a schematic perspective view of a luggage protector when not in use, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention;

Figure 1b is a schematic view of the luggage protector of Figure 1a folded into half;

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Figure 2 is a perspective view of the luggage protector of Figure 1a when it is used to protect a luggage;

Figure 3 shows the luggage protector of Figure 2 with its cover opened to illustrate the luggage;

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Figure 4 shows the luggage protector of Figure 3 but with the luggage omitted for ease of explanation;

Figure 5a is a perspective view of a strap used with the luggage protector of Figure 4;

Figure 5b is an enlarged view of a portion AB of the strap of Figure 5a;

Figure 6a shows a slightly smaller view of the strap of Figure 5a;

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Figure 6b is an enlarged view of a portion BC of Figure 6a to show fastening members on an outer surface of the strap;

Figure 7 shows the luggage protector of Figure 4 with a cover member moved down to show wheel openings;

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Figure 8 is a bottom perspective view of the luggage protector of Figure 2 with the cover member of Figure 7 flipped down to allow wheels from the luggage to protrude out;

Figure 9 is a plan view from a first side section of the luggage protector of Figure 8 with an extendable section in its extended state;

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Figure 10 is a same view of the luggage protector of Figure 7 but with the extendable section in its unextended state;

Figure 11 is a plan view from a major side of the luggage protector of Figure 8 to illustrate what happens when the strap is pulled upwards in a direction of BB; and

Figures 12 and 13 show other ways of pulling the strap of the luggage protector of Figure 8.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiment

Figure 1 is a schematic perspective view of a luggage protector 100 when not in use, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention, and Figure 2 shows the luggage protector 100 when it is used to protect a luggage 200.

As it can be appreciated from Figures 1 and 2, the luggage protector 100 has a main body 102 and a cover 104, with both the main body 102 and the cover 104 being made of soft and waterproof material so that it is foldable for easy storage. For example, the material may include a type of flexible plastic (such as PVC). In this way, the main body 102 is able to conform to the shape of the luggage 200, when the luggage 200 is stored in the luggage protector 100.

In this embodiment, the main body 102 includes a major side 106, first and second side sections 108,110, and top and bottom sections 112,114 which cooperate with the cover 104, the major side 106, the first and second side sections 108,110 to define an interior storage space 116 for receiving the luggage 200 and this can be seen from Figures 3 and 4. The interior storage space 116 is substantially rectangular, although it is envisaged that its size and shape may be adapted accordingly.

The luggage protector 100 also includes a closure member in the form of a zipper 118 attached between the cover 104 and an open edge 120 joining the first and second side sections 108,110 and the top section 112. The zipper 118 is movable between an opened position (see Figure 3) to create an opening for placing the luggage 200 into the interior space 116 and a closed position to enclose the luggage 200 (see Figure 2).

The luggage protector 100 further includes a strap 122 which goes around an exterior of the luggage protector 100. Figure 5a is a perspective view of the

strap 122 without showing the rest of the luggage protector 100, and Figure 5b is an enlarged view of the portion AB. The strap 122 includes a relatively flat and flexible strap member 122a having a first end 122b fixedly attached to an adjustable buckle 122c and a second end 122d which is free. The adjustable buckle 122c includes two rectangular link elements 122e, 122f with each of their first side members 122g, 122h held together by the first end 122b of the strap member 122a, and second side members 122i, 122j allowed to open and be spaced from each other. In other words, the adjustable buckle 122c is pivotally held at the first side members 122g, 122h. In this way, the free end 122d may loop through one of the two rectangular link elements 122e, 122f as shown in Figure 5b and the two rectangular link elements 122e, 122f cooperate to maintain the strap member 122a at a fixed length.

To keep the free end 122d of the strap 122 in place, the strap 122 includes a fastening member and in this embodiment, this is in the form of a series of spaced apart loop Velcro™ strips 122m arranged orthogonal to the length of the strap member 122a. The series of spaced apart loop Velcro™ strips 122m are arranged at a distance away from the free end 122d of the strap member 122a to accommodate an elongate hook Velcro™ strip 122n. The elongate hook Velcro™ strip 122n is parallel to the length of the strap member 122a (and thus, orthogonal to the series of spaced apart loop Velcro™ strips 122m) is arranged to fasten to selected ones of the loop Velcro™ strips 122m when the free end 122d is looped through the adjustable buckle 122c (as shown in Figure 5b) so that the elongate hook Velcro™ strip would face the series of spaced apart loop Velcro™ strips 122n and is attached to one or more of the loop Velcro™ strips 122n depending on the length of the free end 122d.

The strap 122 is held at selected points around the exterior of the luggage protector 100 and in this embodiment, the luggage protector 100 includes a number of strap loops 124 (see Figure 3) located selectively around a larger perimeter of the luggage perimeter 100 to ensure that the strap 122 is securely held. In this example, the larger perimeter is defined by the first and second side sections 108, 110, and the top and bottom sections 112, 114.

As it can be seen from Figure 4, there are two strap loops 124 at the top section 112, two strap loops 124 along the first side section 108 and two (not shown) along the second side section 110, and also two strap loops 124 at the bottom section 114 (see Figure 8).

Each strap loop 124 is generally rectangular and has a support portion 126 with end portions 128 fixedly mounted to the main body 102 to create a slot 130 underneath the support portion 126 to allow the strap 122 to thread through the slot 130. In this way, the support portions 126 of the strap loops 124 holds the strap 122 in place as the strap 122 hugs around the larger perimeter of the main body 102. This allows a user to grasp at any point along the strap 122 between the strap loops 124 and to raise the luggage protector 100 and the luggage 200 in the luggage protector 100 using the strap 122 to support the luggage 200 indirectly.

The luggage protector 100 includes a cover member 132 disposed at an inner surface 134 of the bottom section 114 of the main body and the cover member 132 may be made of sufficiently tough material and serve to reinforce the strength of the luggage protector 100, in particular when the luggage protector 100 is used upright and the weight of the luggage 200 rests on the bottom section 114 (when the cover member 132 rests on the inner surface 134).

The cover member 132 may be removable or one side of the cover member 132 may be stitched or fixed to an edge between the bottom section 114 and the major side 106 and another side of the cover member 132 having a cover closure device so that the cover member 132 may be unfastened and flipped down as that shown in Figure 7 to reveal four wheel openings 136, 138, 140, 142.

The cover member 132 is made of flexible material (such as fabric) and may include VelcroTM so that the cover member 132 may be attached neatly to the (internal) major side of the luggage protector 100, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 8 shows wheels 202 from the luggage 200 (and not from the luggage protector 100) protruding out through the wheel openings 136,138,140,142. In other words, the wheel openings 136,138,140,142 of the luggage protector 100 are disposed at locations to register with the wheels 202 of the luggage 200 which the luggage protector 100 protects.

The cover closure device of the cover member 132 is in the form of a cover member zipper (not shown) which can be zipped up to seal the wheel openings 136,138,140,142 or unzipped to allow the wheels 202 to protrude through the respective wheel openings 136,138,140,142. It should be appreciated that the cover member zipper (or generally the cover closure device) is accessible only via the internal storage space 116 which means that the cover member 132 may be partially detached (i.e. unzipped) only from the inside of the luggage protector 100 and not from the outside. This serves to protect the contents stored in the luggage protector 100 to prevent someone accessing the contents via the wheel openings 136,138,140,142 (especially since the luggage protector 100 may double up as a spare bag or luggage bag by itself).

Indeed, if the luggage 200 does not have the wheels 202, the cover member 132 may be closed (i.e. zipped up) or the wheel openings 136,138,140,142 covered up since the wheel openings 136,138,140,142 serve no purpose whereas if the luggage 200 comes with wheels for ease of moving the luggage 200 around, the cover member 132 may be opened up to allow the wheels 202 to protrude through the wheel openings 136,138,140,142, and the user of the luggage protector 100 may use the wheels 202 from the luggage 200 to roll the luggage protector 100 and the luggage 200 around.

In this embodiment, the luggage protector 100 includes an extendable section 148 to increase volume of the internal storage space 116, for example, when the luggage protector 100 is used to contain a slightly larger luggage or when used as a luggage bag by itself and more storage space 116 is needed.

The extendable section 148 is controlled by an extendable section zipper 150 which runs around the larger perimeter of the main body 102 (similar to the strap 122) and Figure 8 shows the extendable section zipper 150 fully unzipped to show the main body 102 in an extended or expanded state with an increased volume for the internal storage space 116. Figure 9 shows a view from the first side section 108 to show the luggage protector 100 in its extended state and Figure 10 shows the luggage protector 100 in its unextended state i.e. when the extendable section zipper 150 is fully zipped up. It should be apparent there is a difference in width of AA.

As it can be appreciated, the luggage protector 100 may be adapted to fit a standard luggage to protect the luggage against damage, scratch or wear and tear. The strap 122 which is arranged around the perimeter of the main body 102 is useful as it allows a user to grasp and lift the luggage protector 100 (and its contents) at any angle and in particular at any point between the strap loops 124. This is particularly useful when picking up the luggage protector 100 off from a conveyor system at airports, or lifting the luggage protector 100 out of a car boot. It should be appreciated that in this embodiment, the strap 122 is only held by the strap loops 124 but not fixed in place. In other words, the strap 122 is freely adjustable or movable through the slots 130 and this provides a variety of ways that that luggage protector 100 may be carried. For example, Figure 11 is a plan view from the major side 106 to illustrate what happens when the strap 122 is pulled upwards in the direction of BB from the first side section 108. It should be appreciated that the strap 122 tightens around the perimeter of the main body 102 and due to the weight of the luggage 200 acting on the luggage protector 100, in particular on the second side section 110, the strap 122 loosens into a loop which functions as a carrying handle for lifting the luggage protector 100 up (the 'loop' of the strap 122 may be more pronounced in Figure 11 (and the other figures) to show the effect more clearly).

Figure 12 shows the luggage protector 100 of Figure 11 in an upright position when a lifting force is used to pull the strap 122 in a direction CC (i.e. from the top section 112). Figure 13 is an another example to illustrate the luggage

protector 100 of Figure 11 in an upright position when two lifting forces are used to pull the strap 122 at two separate locations near edges of the top section 112 in directions DD and EE. In other words, this means that two or more people can hold various parts of the strap 122 around the perimeter to share the weight of carrying the luggage protector 100 (with the luggage 200). This may be particularly useful when carrying or lifting the luggage protector 100 up a flight of stairs.

Further, the luggage protector 100 may double up as a spare bag for example, when it is not protecting the luggage 200. As it will be apparent, the zipper 118 may be locked using any existing locking methods. When used as a spare bag, it should be appreciated that the cover member 132 should be closed to prevent unauthorized access from the outside. It should also be appreciated that the extendable section zipper 150 may be in a different colour from the other zipper 118 for ease of identification.

The described embodiments should not be construed as limitative. For example, the luggage protector 100 may come in various sizes and shapes to accommodate to different luggage sizes. Also, the number of strap loops 124 may be adapted to be more or less depending on the size of the luggage protector 100. Also, the extendable section 148 may not be necessary and the luggage protector 100 may come without it. The cover member 132 may come in different designs and there may be four flap members with each flap member covering one of the wheel openings 136,138,140,142.

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The described embodiment illustrates that the wheel openings 136,138,140,142 are located at the bottom section 114 but this may not be necessary. Indeed, the luggage protector 100 may be adapted to protect different types of luggage, so the wheel openings 136,138,140,142 may be relocated accordingly, and there may not be four wheel openings but perhaps only two openings. Similarly, the location of the flap members 136,138 may be modified accordingly. Also, in some instances, it may not be necessary for the cover member 132 to be accessible only from the interior storage space 116, although it is preferred to

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be for security reasons. Indeed, it may or may not be necessary to have the cover zipper, although for security reasons, it is preferred to have the cover zipper, which is accessible only via the internal storage space 116.

- 5 The strap 122 may not have the adjustable buckle 122c and may instead be an endless loop.

The luggage protector 100 may be provided with an external document pocket 144 (see Figure 11) to allow the user to keep documents or notes in the pocket 144 for easy access. The document pocket 144 may be transparent so that the
10 pocket 144 may carry some form of identification to assist with the identification of the luggage protector 100. Also, in the event the strap 122 is not long enough, an additional strap may be used to tie to the strap 122 for pulling the luggage protector 100 or for lifting the luggage protector 100.

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Having now fully described the invention, it should be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that many modifications can be made hereto without departing from the scope as claimed.

CLAIMS

1. A foldable luggage protector comprising
a foldable main body having an interior storage space for receiving a
5 luggage;
a cover movable relative to the main body;
a closure device attached between the cover and the main body, the
closure device being movable between an open position to create an
opening for placing the luggage into the interior storage space and a
10 closed position to enclose the luggage;
a support strap held at selected points around a perimeter of the main
body to allow a user to grasp at any portion of the support strap between
the selected points; and
a plurality of wheel openings to enable respective wheels from the
15 luggage to protrude therethrough, and
at least one sealable cover member for covering the plurality of wheel
openings.
2. A foldable luggage protector according to claim 1, wherein the main body
20 is arranged to conform to a shape of the luggage.
3. A foldable luggage protector according to claim 1 or 2, further comprising
a number of strap loops arranged at the selected points, each of the
strap loops including a slot which enables the support strap to run
25 therethrough.
4. A foldable luggage protector according to any preceding claim, further
comprising a cover closure device for sealing or unsealing the sealable
cover member to cover or uncover the wheel openings, the cover closure
30 device being accessible only from the interior storage space.

5. A foldable luggage protector according to any preceding claim, wherein the strap includes an adjustable buckle for adjusting a length of the strap which is arranged around the perimeter of the main body.
- 5 6. A foldable luggage protector according to any preceding claim, further comprising an extendable section for increasing the volume of the interior storage space.
- 10 7. A foldable luggage protector according to any preceding claim, wherein the main body includes a major side, first and second side sections, and top and bottom side sections cooperating with the major side section and the first and second side sections to define the interior storage space, the support strap being arranged to be held around the perimeter defined by the first and second side sections, and the top and bottom sections.

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