



US005998735A

# United States Patent [19]

[11] Patent Number: **5,998,735**

Patterson, Jr.

[45] Date of Patent: **Dec. 7, 1999**

[54] SAFETY DEVICE FOR AN ELECTRICAL OUTLET

Primary Examiner—Kristine Kincaid  
Assistant Examiner—Dhiru R Patel  
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Michael I. Kroll

[76] Inventor: **Paul Leroy Patterson, Jr.**, ACU-5 R-1,  
Box 555161, Camp Pendleton, Calif.  
92055

[57] **ABSTRACT**

[21] Appl. No.: **09/128,614**

A safety device (14) for an electrical outlet (16) including a back cover plate (32) having a pair of vertically aligned apertures (34), (36) therethrough. A pair of shields (40), (42) are sized to obstruct the apertures (34), (36) in the back cover plate (32), to prevent access to dual sockets (24), (26) of a receptacle (22). A structure (44) on a front face (46) of the back cover plate (32) is for guiding the upper shield (40) to move upwardly away from the upper aperture (34) and the lower shield (42) to move downwardly away from the lower aperture (36) in the back cover plate (32). Components (48) are for biasing the shields (40), (42) on the front face (46) of the back cover plate (32). A front cover plate (50) has a pair of vertically aligned apertures (52), (54) therethrough. Elements (58) are for mating the front cover plate (50) to the back cover plate (32) cover the shields (40), (42). A facility (60) is for engaging the upper shield (40) through the upper aperture (52) in the front cover plate (50) and move it upwardly away from the upper aperture (34) in the back cover plate (32). A facility (62) is for engaging the lower shield (42) through the lower aperture (54) in the front cover plate (50) and move it downwardly away from the lower aperture (36) in the back cover plate (32).

[22] Filed: **Aug. 3, 1998**

[51] Int. Cl.<sup>6</sup> ..... **H02G 3/14**

[52] U.S. Cl. .... **174/67; 220/242; 439/135**

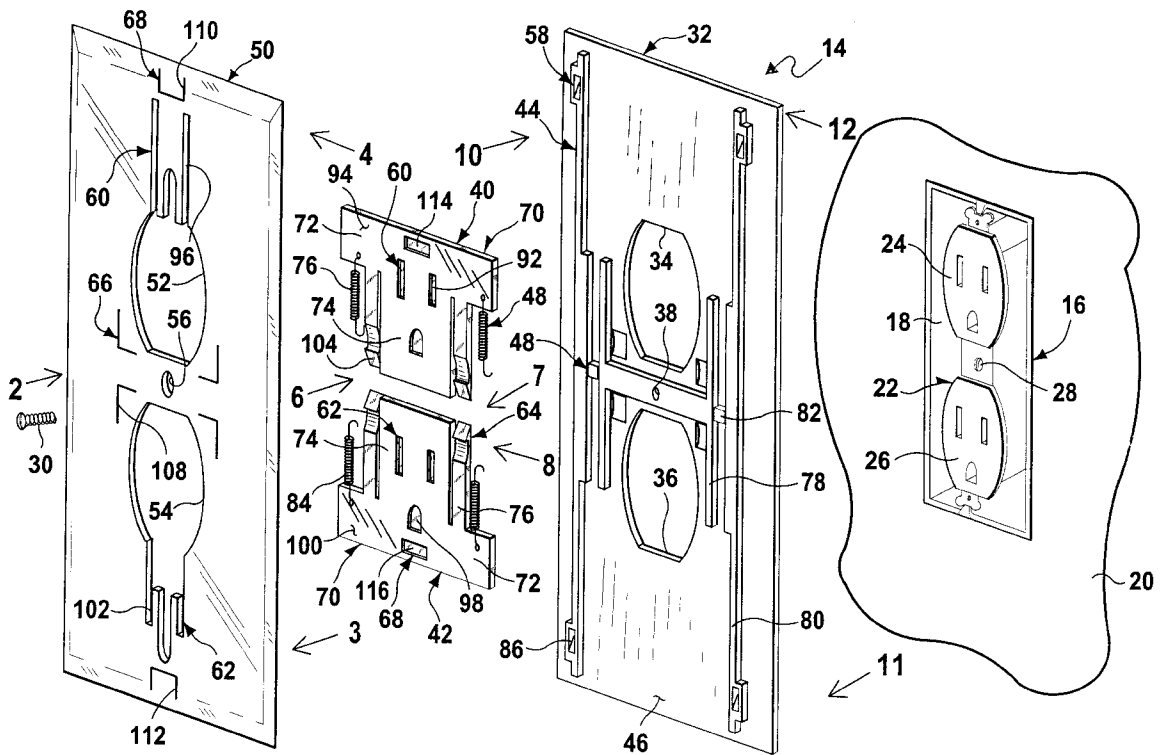
[58] Field of Search ..... **174/66, 67, 53; 220/3.8, 241, 242; 439/135, 195**

### [56] References Cited

#### U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

3,068,442	12/1962	Kubik et al. .	
4,640,564	2/1987	Hill .....	439/137
4,733,017	3/1988	Wolfe-Taylor et al. ....	174/67
4,793,818	12/1988	Poirier .....	439/140
4,801,271	1/1989	Piper .....	439/148
5,107,075	4/1992	Currier, Jr. .	
5,212,347	5/1993	Powers et al. ....	174/67
5,456,373	10/1995	Food .....	220/242
5,563,373	10/1996	Doroslovac .	
5,571,995	11/1996	Pierce .	
5,675,126	10/1997	Halvorsen .	
5,703,329	12/1997	DeLone .....	174/67

19 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets



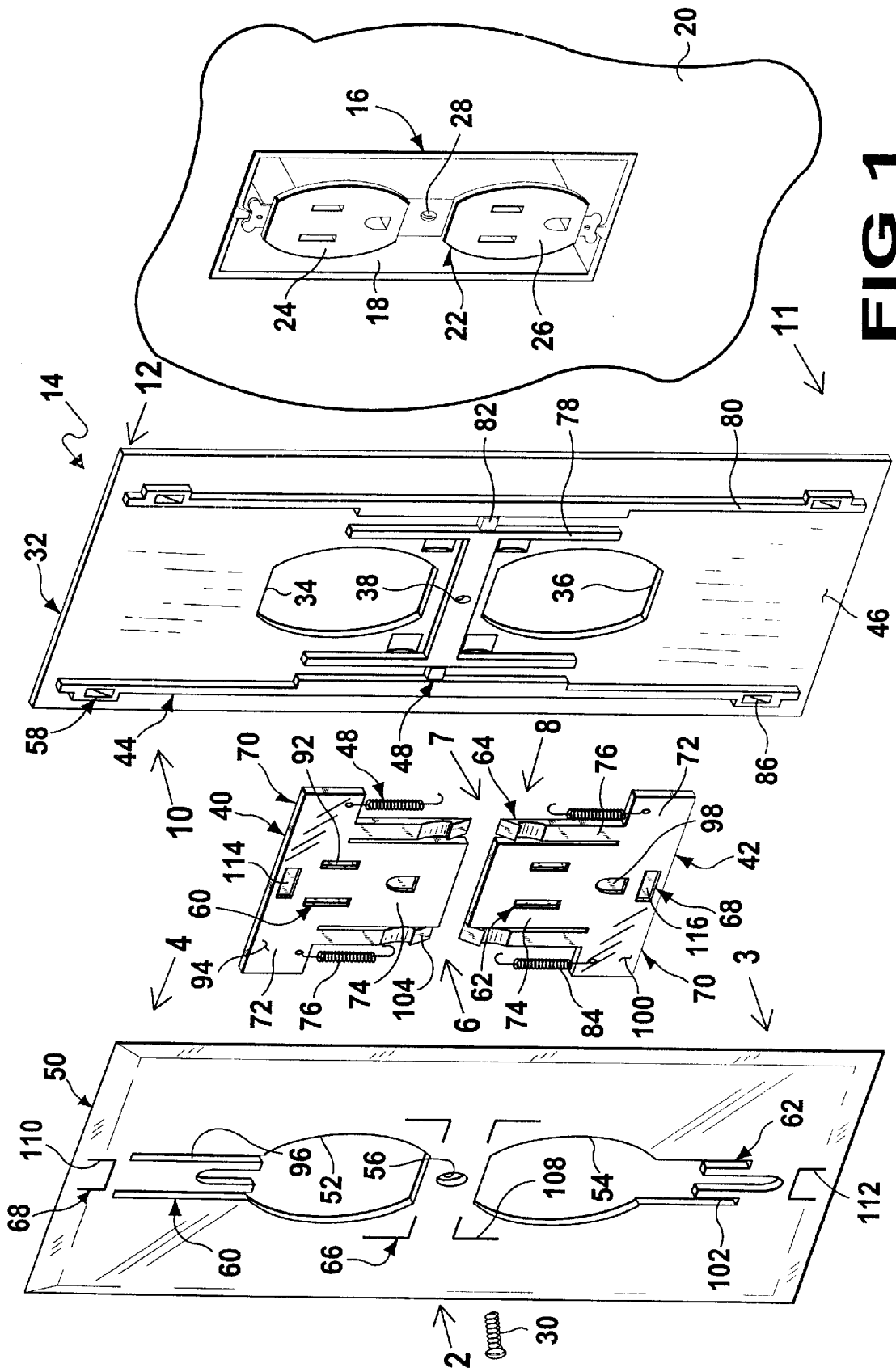
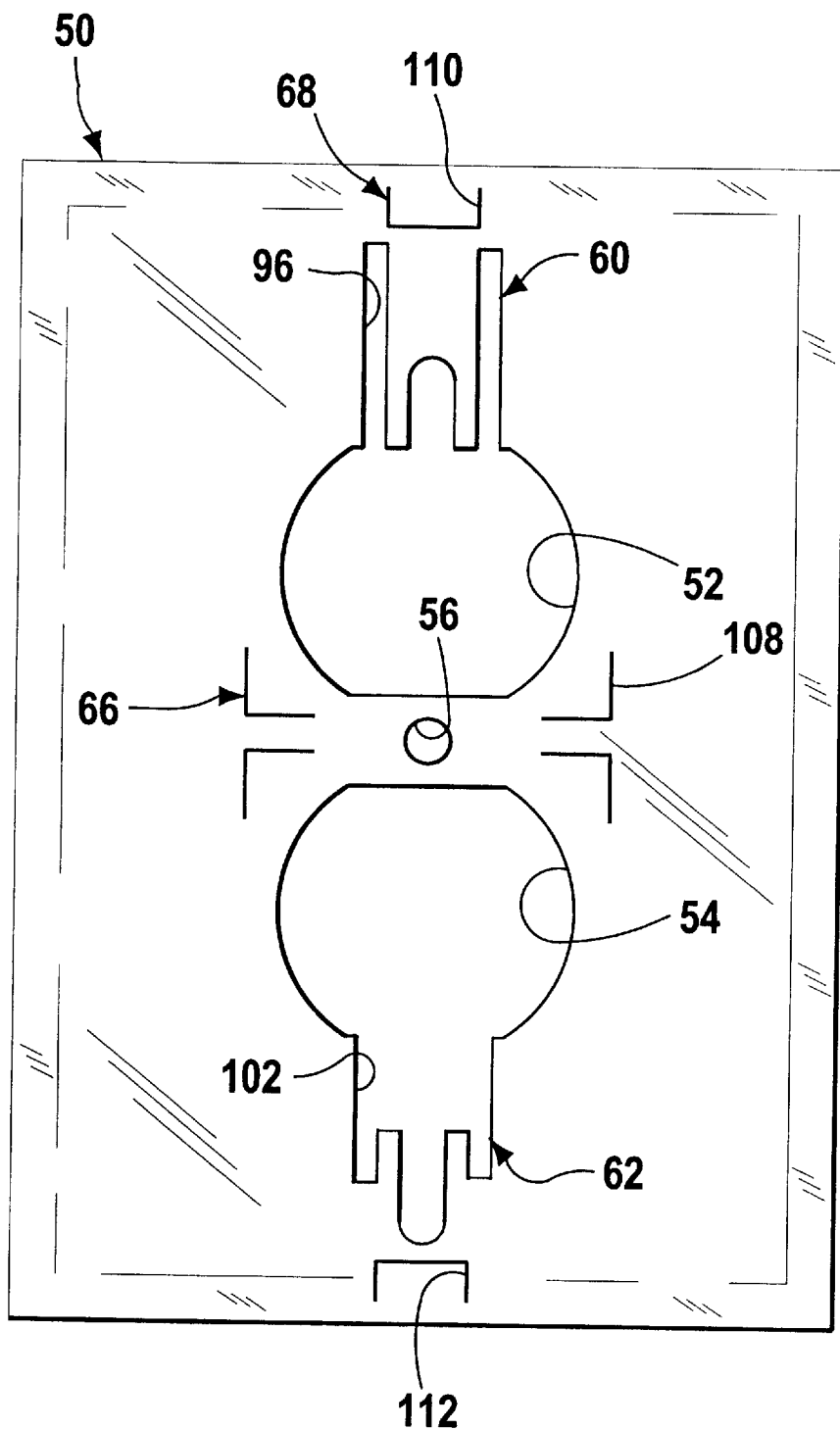
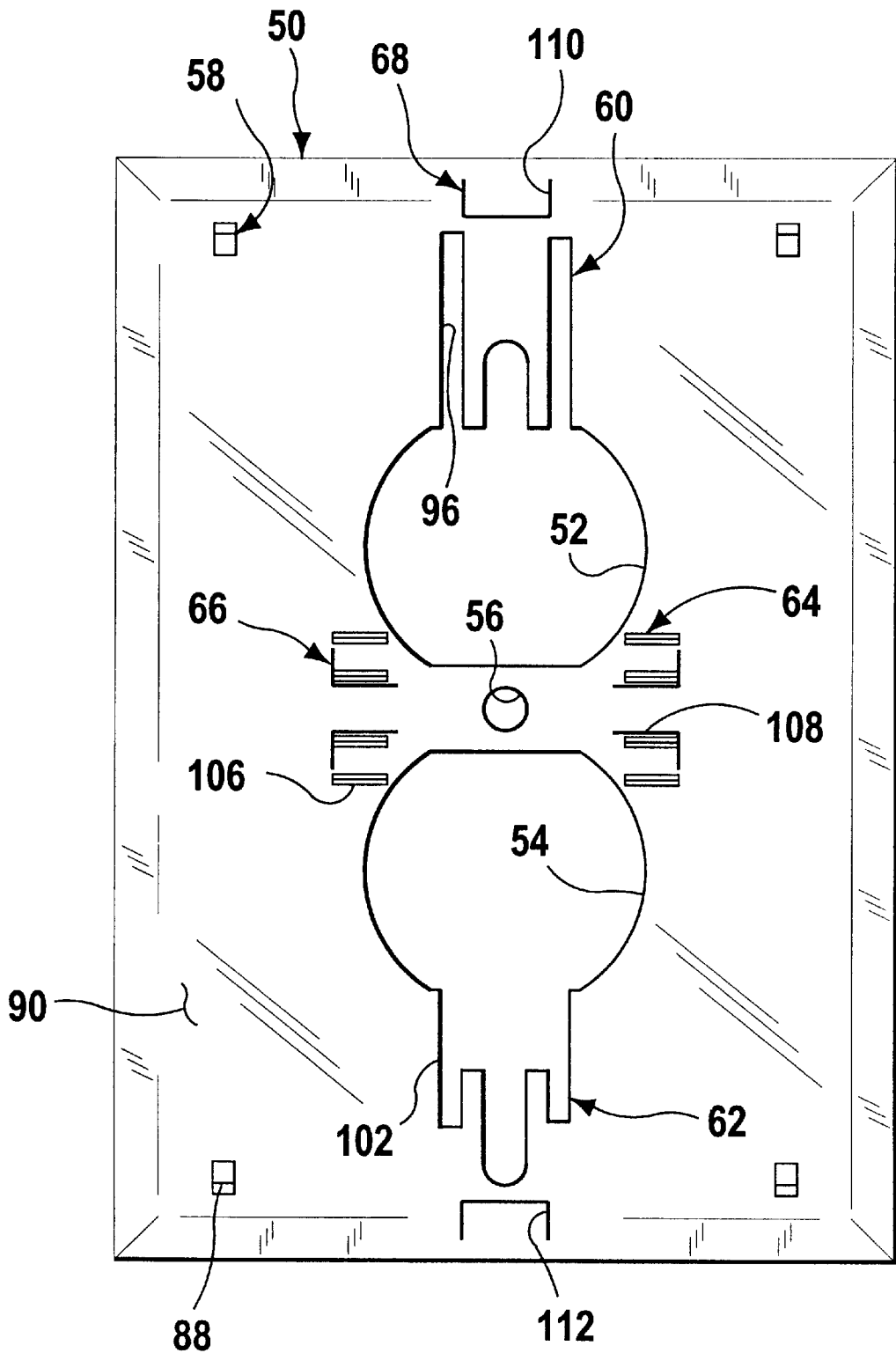


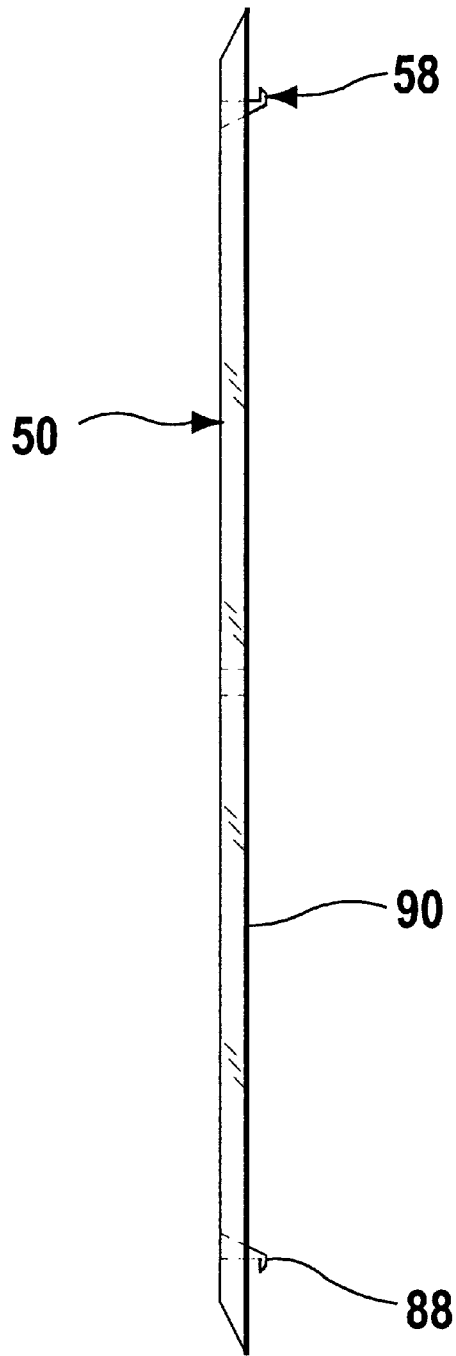
FIG 1



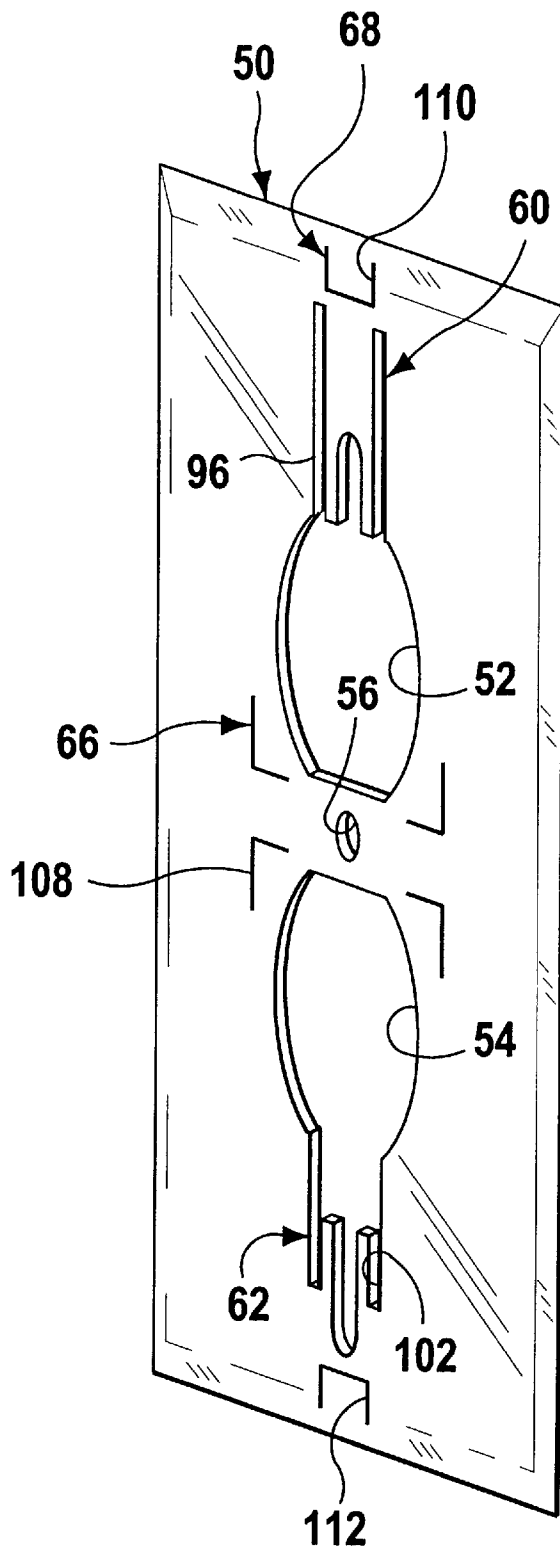
**FIG 2**



**FIG 3**

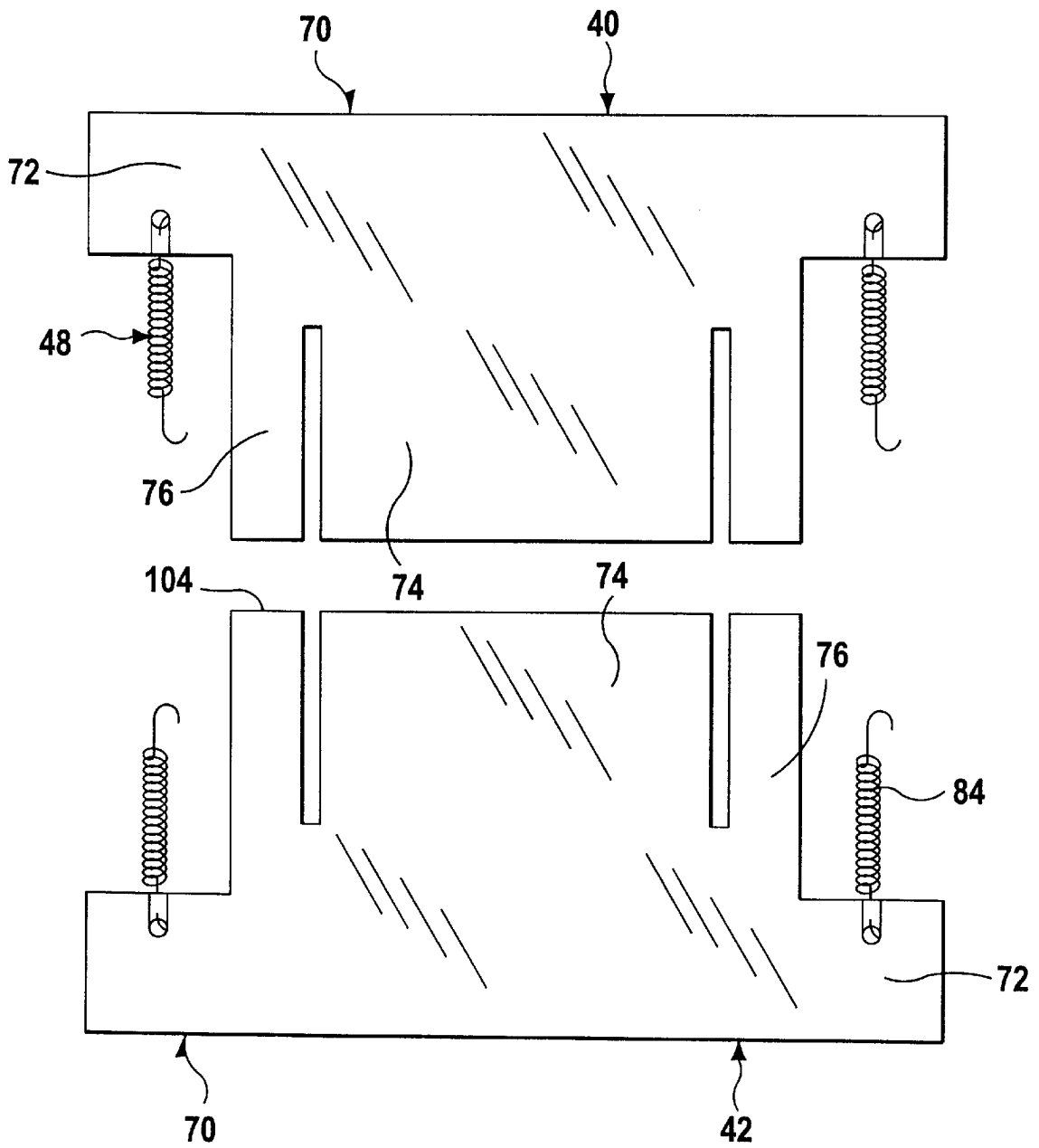


**FIG 4**



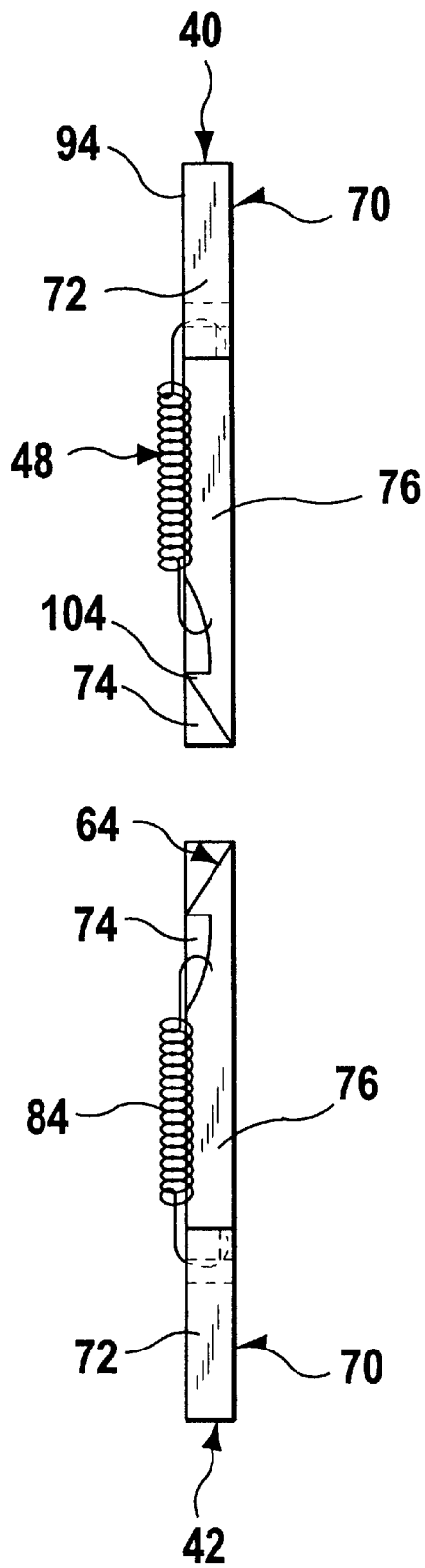
**FIG 5**



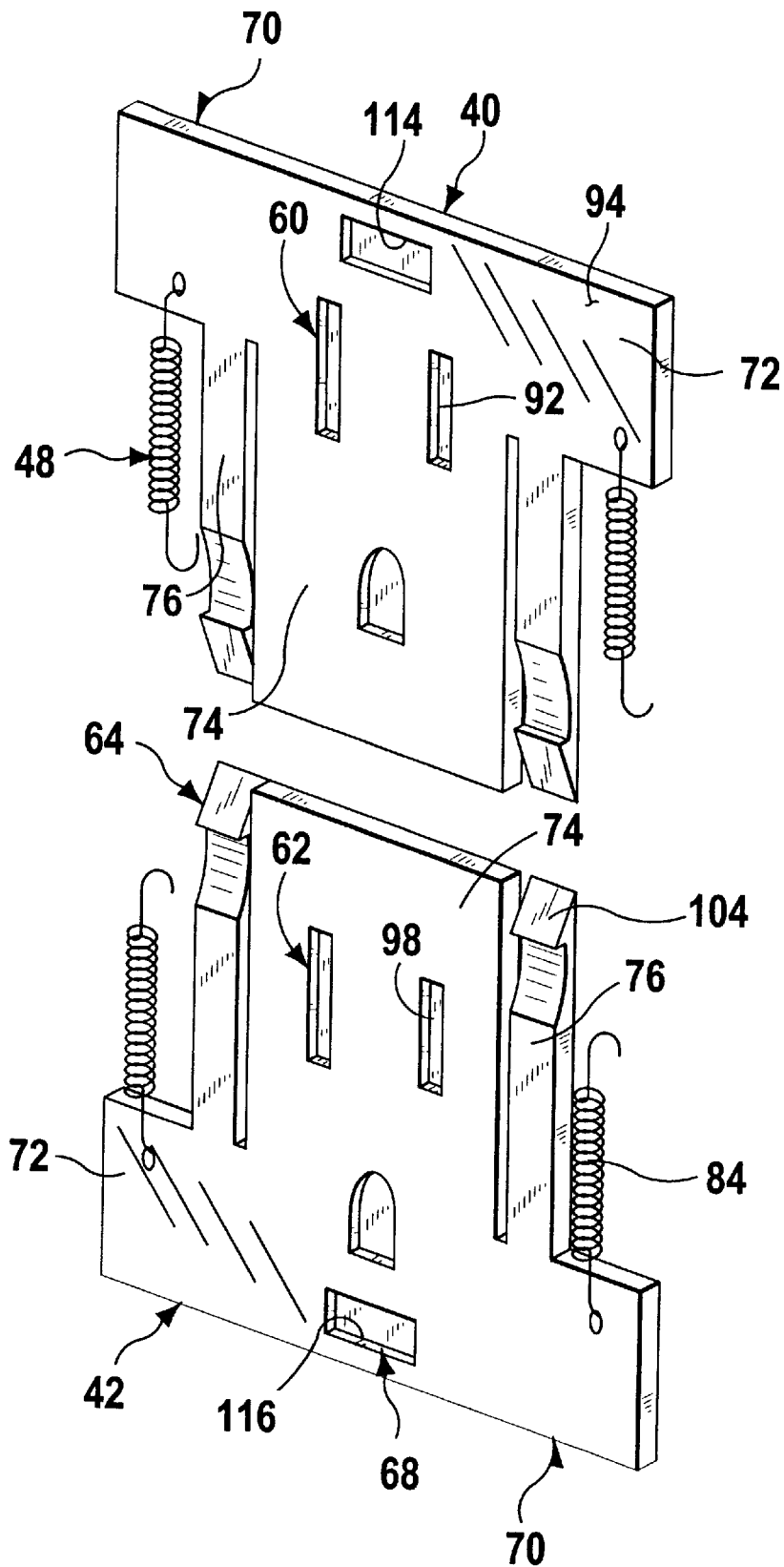


**FIG 7**

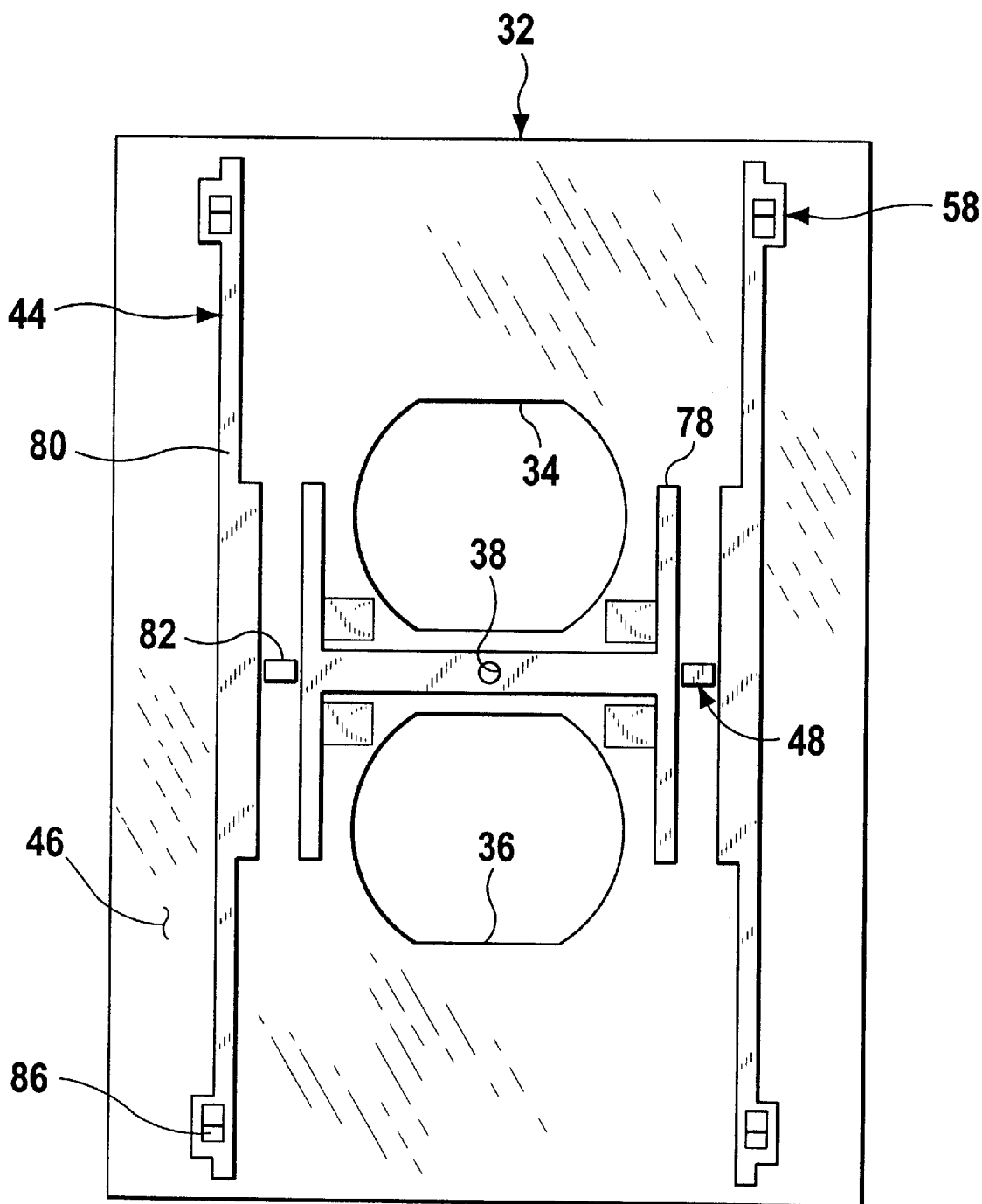




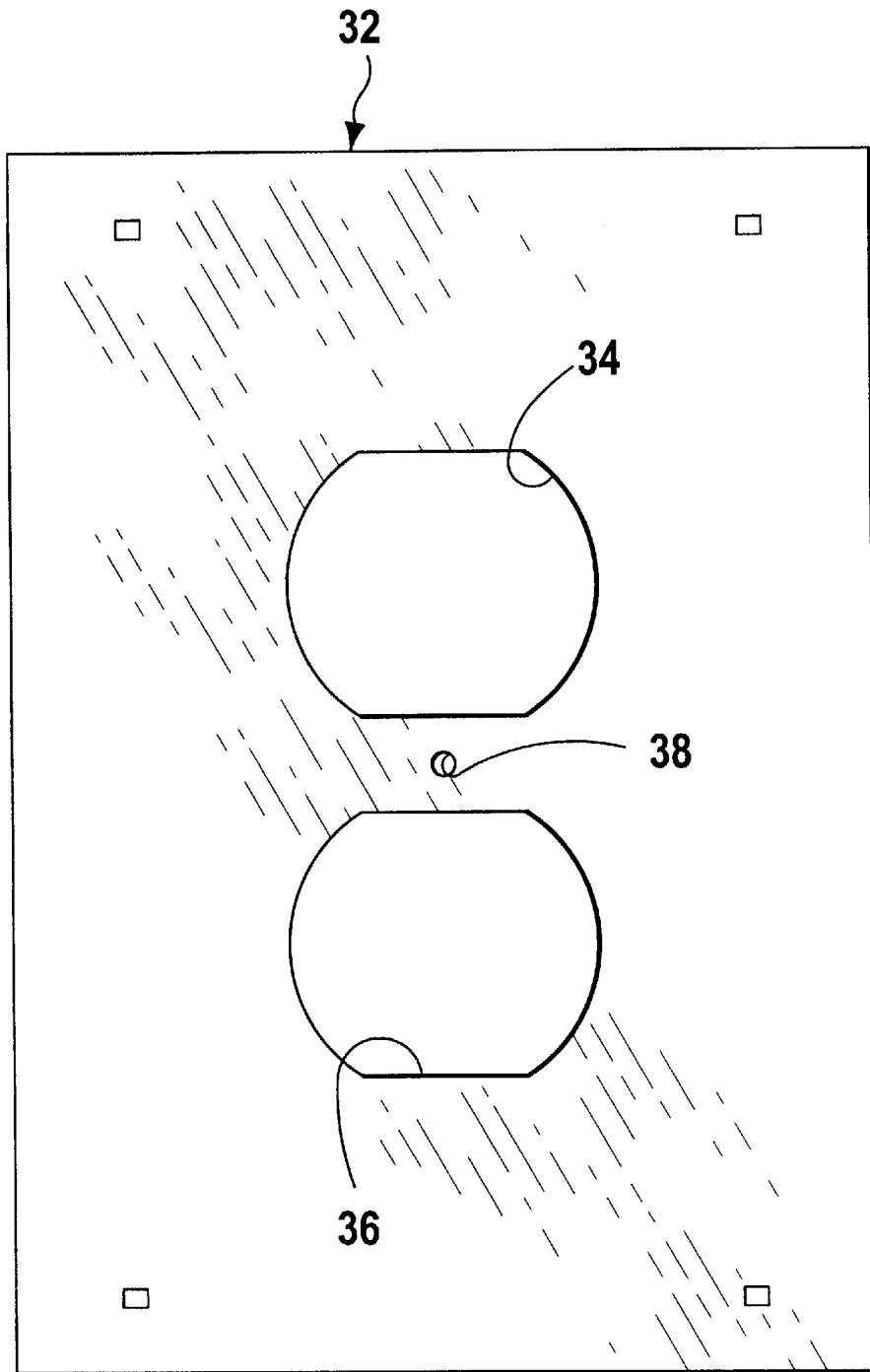
**FIG 8**



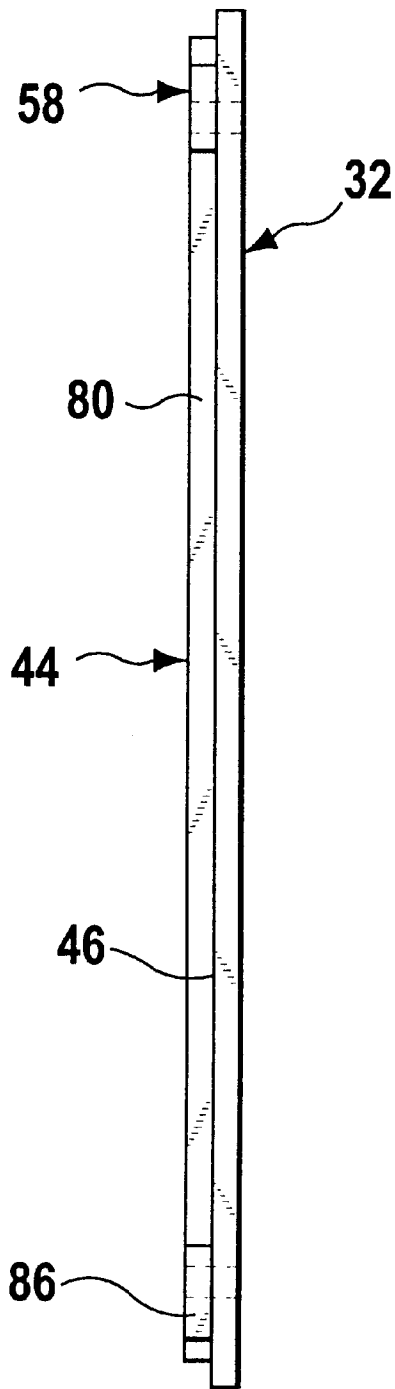
**FIG 9**



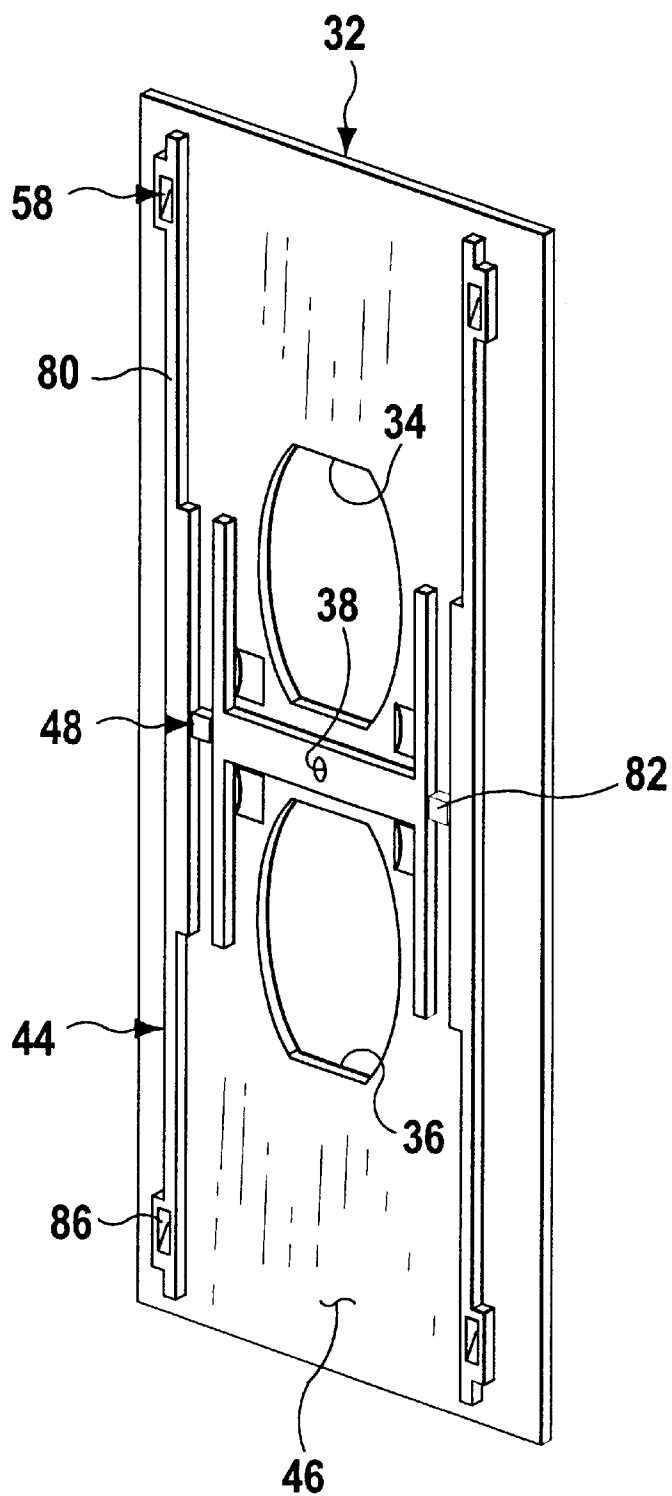
**FIG 10**



**FIG 11**



**FIG 12**



**FIG 13**

1

## SAFETY DEVICE FOR AN ELECTRICAL OUTLET

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

#### 1. Field of the Invention

The instant invention relates generally to electrical outlet guard covers and more specifically it relates to a safety device for an electrical outlet. The safety device for an electrical outlet will replace an existing cover plate of the electrical outlet, so as to cover the hazardous slots of the receptacle and yet appear very similar to the electrical outlet. An adult will have easy access to the receptacle, but it would be difficult for a child to gain access to the receptacle. This will help prevent the child from plugging in appliances that are dangerous to use, such as an electric knife, a can opener or a microwave oven, to name a few.

#### 2. Description of the Prior Art

Numerous electrical outlet guard covers have been provided in prior art. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 3,068,442 to Kubik et al.; U.S. Pat. No. 5,107,075 to Currier, Jr.; U.S. Pat. No. 5,563,373 to Doroslovac; U.S. Pat. No. 5,571,995 to Pierce and U.S. Pat. No. 5,675,126 to Halvorsen all are illustrative of such prior art. While these units may be suitable for the particular purpose to which they address, they would not be as suitable for the purposes of the present invention as heretofore described.

KUBIK, JOHN T.

KUBIK, STANLEY

### SAFETY GUARD FOR WALL SOCKETS

U.S. Pat. No. 3,068,442

A safety guard for electrical wall sockets comprising a box-like enclosure dimensioned to fit over the face plate of a wall socket of the type having a pair of vertically aligned sockets. The enclosure has a front wall extending parallel to and spaced outwardly from the face plate. The front wall has a pair of socket openings aligned with the sockets. A slide member is mounted for sliding vertical movement within the enclosure. The slide member has a pair of elongated arms extending vertically adjacent to the sides of the enclosure. The slide member has a pair of shorter arms spaced inwardly from the elongated arms. The space between the arms form a pair of elongated vertically directed slots. An upper bar is normally disposed in overlying relationship to the upper of the socket openings. The upper edge of the upper bar engages the lower ends of the shorter arms. The upper bar has a pair of horizontally directed bosses extending outwardly along its lower edge. A pair of studs extend from the front wall of the enclosure toward the face plate within the slots. A pair of normally contracted coil springs are mounted within the slots. The springs extend between the studs and bosses. A lower bar is normally disposed in overlying relationship to the lower of the socket openings. The upper edge of the lower bar engages the lower ends of the elongated arms. A second pair of studs extend from the front wall toward the face plate. The lower bar has a pair of slots adjacent its ends. A pair of normally contracted coil springs are mounted within the slots. The springs extend between the second pair of studs and the lower bar. There being free areas above each of the bars. The slide member is movable downwardly to move the bars away from the socket openings and bring the free areas into alignment with the socket openings. Each of the bars upon the release of the slide

2

member is held in a downward position if a plug is inserted in its socket opening and is free for independent return movement to its normal position by the urging of the springs if no plug is inserted in its opening.

CURRIER, JR., DONALD J.

### SLIDABLE SAFETY COVER FOR ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

U.S. Pat. No. 5,107,075

An improved slidable safety cover for use with electrical outlets is disclosed in which at least one slidable cover member is movably mounted on an apertured stationary frame overlaying an electrical outlet. The slidable cover member is movable between an open position at which access to underlying electrical outlets is available through the slidable safety cover and a closed position at which access to the electrical outlets is blocked by the slidable cover member. Movement of the slidable cover member from the closed position to the open position requires release of a locking mechanism comprising at least one resilient finger latch member having a first end portion anchored to the stationary frame and a second end portion partially protruding through the slidable cover member. A finger latch opening is provided in the slidable cover member and is located distal from all sides of the safety cover slidable cover member.

DOROSLOVAC, SLOBODAN

### SAFETY SHIELD FOR ELECTRICAL OUTLET

U.S. Pat. No. 5,563,373

A safety device replaces the cover plate of a wall-mounted electrical outlet box having a pair of female receptacles for receiving a male plug. The safety device has a face plate, a back plate, a pair of shutters and a biasing means. The face plate has two large apertures in it, corresponding to the two female receptacles and exposing the receptacles when the face plate is positioned atop the outlet box and secured to it. The back plate has an inner surface and an outer surface and an aperture, which is shaped and positioned to correspond to the pair of female receptacles. When the front plate and back plate are mated, the front plate and the back plate are joined with the back face of the front plate, the inner surface of the back plate and a pair of parallel flanges on the back face defining a channel. First and second shutters, corresponding to each of the large apertures on the face plate, cover the apertures. Each shutter is an imperforate shield member with an arm extending from each side and is positioned slidably within the channel, so as to obstruct the corresponding large aperture completely when in a first position and to provide access to a male plug through the large aperture when in a second position. The shutters are biased into the closed first position by a biasing means, preferably a pair of rubber bands.

HALVORSEN, GARY

### OUTLET COVER

U.S. Pat. No. 5,675,126

An outlet cover, for an electrical outlet, that is attachable over the electrical outlet itself or a face plate thereof. The outlet cover has a plate member with apertures for permitting access to sockets of the electrical outlet. Hinged doors

swing to allow access to the sockets and to cover the sockets. A latch mechanism latches the doors shut over the sockets to eliminate an electrical shock hazard potential to children. The doors may be opened via an opening in a side surface of the outlet cover so positioned to be inconspicuous. The opening provides clearance for a prong, of an electrical plug, to be inserted therein to release the latch mechanism. Alternatively, a slot may be provided in the side surface to accept a human nail, a pencil point, or a pin that may be used to release the latch, either along or in conjunction with a further mechanism for acting on the latch mechanism. An embodiment of the invention has the doors configured to lie flush with a face surface of the outlet cover.

PIERCE, DAVID B.

LOCKING SAFETY COVER FOR ELECTRICAL  
OUTLETS

U.S. Pat. No. 5,571,995

A safety cover for electrical outlets includes a center locking block which is attached to an electrical outlet by a screw, and which has grooves to receive elongate members integral with individual receptacle covers. Matching cross-sectional shapes of the grooves and members fit closely so that elongate members are retained in the grooves. A flexible latching arm on the front of a receptacle cover engages the locking block to latch the cover in place. The latching arm is pressed aside with a fingertip to permit removal of the receptacle cover. One of the covers has prongs which engage openings in the receptacle to prevent the safety cover assembly from being rotated around the mounting screw.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A primary object of the present invention is to provide a safety device for an electrical outlet that will overcome the shortcomings of the prior art devices.

Another object is to provide a safety device for an electrical outlet that will replace an existing cover plate of the electrical outlet, so as to cover the hazardous slots of the receptacle and yet appear very similar to the electrical outlet.

An additional object is to provide a safety device for an electrical outlet in which an adult will have easy access to the receptacle, but would be difficult for a child to gain access to the receptacle, so as to help prevent the child from plugging in appliances that are dangerous to use, such as an electric knife, a can opener of a microwave oven, to name a few.

A further object is to provide a safety device for an electrical outlet that is simple and easy to use.

A still further object is to provide a safety device for an electrical outlet that is economical in cost to manufacture.

Further objects of the invention will appear as the description proceeds.

To the accomplishment of the above and related objects, this invention may be embodied in the form illustrated in the accompanying drawings, attention being called to the fact, however, that the drawings are illustrative only, and that changes may be made in the specific construction illustrated and described within the scope of the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING  
FIGURES

Various other objects, features and attendant advantages of the present invention will become more fully appreciated

as the same becomes better understood when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters designate the same or similar parts throughout the several views, and wherein;

FIG. 1 is an exploded front perspective view of the present invention ready to be installed over a receptacle in an electrical outlet.

FIG. 2 is a front elevational view of the front cover plate taken in the direction of arrow 2 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a rear elevational view of the front cover plate taken in the direction of arrow 3 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a side elevational view of the front cover plate taken in the direction of arrow 4 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is a front perspective view of the front cover plate.

FIG. 6 is a front elevational view of the shields taken in the direction of arrow 6 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 7 is a rear elevational view of the two shields taken in the direction of arrow 7 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 8 is a side elevational view of the two shields taken in the direction of arrow 8 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 9 is a front perspective view of the two shields.

FIG. 10 is a front elevational view of the back cover plate taken in the direction of arrow 10 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 11 is a rear elevational view of the back cover plate taken in the direction of arrow 11 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 12 is a side elevational view of the back cover plate taken in the direction of arrow 12 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 13 is a front perspective view of the back cover plate.

Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE  
PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Turning now descriptively to the drawings, in which similar reference characters denote similar elements throughout the several views, FIGS. 1 through 13 illustrate the present invention being a safety device 14. With regard to the reference numerals used, the following numbering is used throughout the various drawing figures.

14	safety device
16	electrical outlet
18	outlet box of 16 in 20
20	wall
22	receptacle of 16 in 18
24	upper socket of 22
26	lower socket of 22
28	central threaded opening in 22
30	cover plate screw
32	back cover plate of 14
34	upper aperture in 32
36	lower aperture in 32
38	central hole in 32
40	upper shield of 14
42	lower shield of 14
44	guiding structure of 14
46	front face of 32
48	biasing components of 14
50	front cover plate of 14
52	upper aperture in 50
54	lower aperture in 50
56	central hole in 50
58	mating elements of 14
60	upper shield engaging facility of 14
62	lower shield engaging facility of 14
64	shields locking components
66	shields releasing elements



-continued

68	shields retaining structures
70	T-shaped slide panel for 40, 42
72	tab of 70
74	main flat body of 70
76	leg of 70
78	H-shaped cross member of 44
80	guide rail of 44
82	stud of 48
84	spring of 48
86	small socket of 58
88	locking tab of 58
90	rear face of 50
92	depression in 40
94	front face of 40
96	vertical slot in 50
98	depression in 42
100	front face of 42
102	vertical slot in 50
104	hook end of 64 on 76
106	raised protrusion of 64 on 90
108	L-shaped tab of 66
110	first U-shaped tab of 68
112	second U-shaped tap of 68
114	horizontal depression in 40 of 68
116	horizontal depression in 42 of 68

The safety device **14** is for an electrical outlet **16** of the type that includes an outlet box **18** in a wall **20** for maintaining a receptacle **22** having vertically aligned dual sockets **24, 26** and a central threaded opening **28** between the sockets **24, 26** for receiving a cover plate screw **30**. The safety device **14** comprises a back cover plate **32**, having a pair of vertically aligned apertures **34, 36** therethrough with a central hole **38** between the apertures **34, 36**. The apertures **34, 36** are shaped and positioned to correspond to the dual sockets **24, 26**. The central hole **38** is aligned with the central threaded opening **28** of the receptacle **22** in the outlet box **18**, when the back cover plate **32** is positioned over the outlet box **18**. A pair of shields **40, 42** are sized to obstruct the apertures **34, 36** in the back cover plate **32**, to prevent access to the dual sockets **24, 26** of the receptacle **22**.

A structure **44** on a front face **46** of the back cover plate **32** is for guiding the upper shield **40** to move upwardly away from the upper aperture **34** in the back cover plate **32** and the lower shield **42** to move downwardly away from the lower aperture **36** in the back cover plate **32**. Components **48** are for biasing the shields **40, 42** on the front face **46** of the back cover plate **32**, so as to normally position the shields **40, 42** to obstruct the apertures **34, 36** in the back cover plate **32**. A front cover plate **50** has a pair of vertically aligned apertures **52, 54** therethrough with a central hole **56** between the apertures **52, 54**. The apertures **52, 54** are shaped and positioned to correspond to the dual sockets **24, 26** while the central hole **56** is aligned with the central threaded opening **28** of the receptacle **22** in the outlet box **18**. Elements **58** are for mating the front cover plate **50** to the back cover plate screw **32** over the shields **40, 42**, so that the cover plate screw **30** can engage with the central threaded opening **28** in the receptacle **22**, to hold the safety device **14** thereto.

A facility **60** is provided, for engaging the upper shield **40** through the upper aperture **52** in the front cover plate **50**, so that the upper shield **40** can move upwardly away from the upper aperture **34** in the back cover plate **32**, to expose the upper socket **24** of the receptacle **22**. A facility **62** is also provided, for engaging the lower shield **42** through the lower aperture **54** in the front cover plate **50**, so that the lower shield **42** can move downwardly away from the lower aperture **36** in the back cover plate **32**, to expose the lower socket **26** of the receptacle **22**.

The safety device **14** for the electrical outlet **16** further includes components **64** on the front cover plate **50**, for

locking each of the shields **40, 42** in the normally obstructing positions. Elements **66** on the front cover plate **50** are for releasing each of the shields **40, 42** from the normally obstructing positions. Structures **68** on the front cover plate **50** are for retaining each of the shields **40, 42** away from the sockets **24, 26** of the receptacle **22**, so that an electrical plug (not shown) can engage with each of the sockets **24, 26** of the receptacle **22**. Each shield **40, 42** is a T-shaped slide panel **70**, having a pair of outwardly extending tabs **72** and a main flat body **74** with a pair of integral parallel legs **76**, in which each leg **76** extends from one tab **72** adjacent the main flat body **74**.

The guiding structure **44** consists of an H-shaped cross member **78** integrally formed centrally on the front face **46** of the back cover plate **32**. A pair of vertically spaced apart side guide rails **80** are integrally formed on the front face **46** of the back cover plate **32** on opposite sides of the H-shaped cross member **78**. The biasing components **48** include two studs **82** integrally formed on the front face **46** of the back cover plate **32**. Four springs **84** are provided. Two springs **84** are connected between the upper shield **40** and the two studs **82**, while other two springs **84** are connected between the lower shield **42** and the two studs **82**.

The mating elements **58** are four small sockets **86** integrally formed on the front face **46** of the back cover plate **32** at the corners thereof. Four locking tabs **88** are integrally formed on a rear face **90** of the front cover plate **50** at the corners thereof, so that the locking tabs **88** can engage with the small sockets **86**.

The upper shield engaging facility **60** includes the upper shield **40** having three depressions **92** in a front face **94** thereof simulating a hot slot, neutral slot and ground slot of the upper socket **24** of the receptacle **22**, for engagement by the hot blade, neutral blade and ground prong of an electrical plug. The front cover plate **50** has three vertical slots **96** extending upwardly from the upper aperture **52** and in alignment with the three depressions **92** in the upper shield **40**, to allow the electrical plug to raise the upper shield **40** to its uppermost position.

The lower shield engaging facility **62** consists of the lower shield **42** having three depressions **98** in a front face **100** thereof simulating a hot slot, neutral slot and ground slot of the lower socket **26** of the receptacle **22**, for engagement by the hot blade, neutral blade and ground prong of an electrical plug. The front cover plate **50** has three vertical slots **102** extending downwardly from the lower aperture **54** and in alignment with the three depressions **98** in the lower shield **42**, to allow the electrical plug to lower the lower shield **42** to its lowermost position.

The shields locking components **64** comprises the legs **76** of the shields **40, 42** having hook ends **104**. Four sets of two raised protrusions **106** are integrally formed on the rear face **90** of the front cover plate **50** above and below the apertures **52, 54** which engages with the hook ends **104**.

The shields releasing structures **66** include the front cover plate **50** having four L-shaped tabs **108** cut therethrough above and below the apertures **52, 54**. Each L-shaped tab **108** is in front of the two raised protrusions **106**. When two of the L-shaped tabs **108** above and below the apertures **52, 54** are simultaneously manually depressed inwardly, the two hook ends **104** of the two legs **76** of one shield **40** or **42** will disengage from the raised protrusions **106**. The shield **40** or **42** can be moved away from the respective aperture **52** or **54** in the front cover plate **50** and the respective aperture **34** or **36** in the back cover plate **32** by an electrical plug, to expose the respective sockets **24** or **26** of the receptacle **22**.

The shields retaining structures **68** include the front cover plate **50** having two U-shaped tabs **110**, **112** cut there-through. The first U-shaped tab **110** is located centrally adjacent a top edge and the second U-shaped tab **112** is located centrally adjacent a bottom edge. The upper shield **40** has a horizontal depression **114** in the front face **94** at a top end. The lower shield **42** has a horizontal depression **116** in the front face **100** at a bottom end. When the upper shield **40** is moved to its uppermost position, the first U-shaped tab **110** can be manually depressed into the horizontal depression **114** of the upper shield **40**, to keep the upper shield **40** raised. When the lower shield **42** is moved to its lowermost position, the second U-shaped tab **112** can be manually depressed into the horizontal depression **116** of the lower shield **42**, to keep the lower shield **42** lowered.

It will be understood that each of the elements described above, or two or more together may also find a useful application in other types of methods differing from the type described above.

While certain novel features of this invention have been shown and described are pointed out in the annexed claims, it is not intended to be limited to the details above, since it will be understood that various omissions, modifications, substitutions and changes in the forms and details of the device illustrated and in its operation can be made by those skilled in the art without departing in any way from the spirit of the present invention.

Without further analysis, the foregoing will so fully reveal the gist of the present invention that others can, by applying current knowledge, readily adapt it for various applications without omitting features that, from the standpoint of prior art, fairly constitute essential characteristics of the generic or specific aspects of this invention.

What is claimed is new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent is set forth in the appended claims:

1. A safety device for an electrical outlet of the type including an outlet box in a wall for maintaining a receptacle having vertically aligned dual sockets, the dual sockets including an upper socket and a lower socket, and a central threaded opening between the sockets for receiving a cover plate screw, said safety device comprising:

- a) a back cover plate having upper and lower vertically aligned apertures therethrough with a central hole between said apertures, said apertures being shaped and positioned to correspond to the upper and lower sockets, while said central hole is aligned with the central threaded opening of the receptacle in the outlet box, when said back cover plate is positioned over the outlet box;
- b) upper and lower shields sized to obstruct said apertures in said back cover plate, to prevent access to the upper and lower sockets of the receptacle;
- c) means on a front face of said back cover plate for guiding said upper shield to move upwardly away from said upper aperture in said back cover plate, and said lower shield to move downwardly away from said lower aperture in said back cover plate;
- d) means for biasing said shields on said front face of said back cover plate, so as to normally position said shields to obstruct said apertures in said back cover plate;
- e) a front cover plate having a pair of vertically aligned apertures therethrough with a central hole between said apertures, said apertures being shaped and positioned to correspond to the upper and lower sockets, while said central hole is aligned with the central threaded opening of the receptacle in the outlet box;

f) means for mating said front cover plate to said back cover plate over said shields, so that the cover plate screw can engage with the central threaded opening in the receptacle to hold said safety device thereto;

g) means for engaging said upper shield through said upper aperture in said front cover plate, so that said upper shield can move upwardly away from said upper aperture in said back cover plate to expose the upper socket of the receptacle; and

h) means for engaging said lower shield through said lower aperture in said front cover plate, so that said lower shield can move downwardly away from said lower aperture in said back cover plate to expose the lower socket of the receptacle, wherein each said shield is a T-shaped slide panel having a pair of outwardly extending tabs and a main flat body with a pair of integral parallel legs in which each of said legs extends from one said tab adjacent said main flat body.

2. A safety device for an electrical outlet as recited in claim 1, wherein said mating means includes:

a) four small sockets integrally formed on said front face of said back cover plate at corners thereof; and

b) four locking tabs integrally formed on a rear face of said front cover plate at the corners thereof, so that said locking tabs can engage with small sockets.

3. A safety device for an electrical outlet as recited in claim 1, wherein said shields locking means includes:

a) said legs of said shields having hook ends; and

b) four sets of two raised protrusions integrally formed on a rear face of said front cover plate above and below said apertures which engages with said hook ends.

4. A safety device for an electrical outlet as recited in claim 3, wherein said shields releasing means includes said front cover plate having four L-shaped tabs cut therethrough above and below said apertures, whereby each of said L-shaped tabs is in front of said two raised protrusions, so that when two of said L-shaped tabs above and below said apertures are simultaneously manually depressed inwardly said hook ends of said two legs of one of said shields will disengage from said raised protrusions, so that said one of said shields can be moved away from said respective aperture in said front cover plate and said respective aperture in said back cover plate by said electrical plug to expose the respective sockets of the receptacle.

5. A safety device for an electrical outlet as recited in claim 3, wherein said shields retaining means includes:

a) said front cover plate having first and second U-shaped tabs cut therethrough, in which said first U-shaped tab is located centrally adjacent a top edge and said second U-shaped tab is located centrally adjacent a bottom edge; and

b) said upper shield having a horizontal depression in a front face at a top end and said lower shield having a horizontal depression in a front face at a bottom end, so that when said upper shield is moved to its uppermost position said first U-shaped tab can be manually depressed into said horizontal depression of said upper shield to keep said upper shield raised, and when said lower shield is moved to its lowermost position said second U-shaped tab can be manually depressed into said horizontal depression of said lower shield, to keep said lower shield lowered.

6. A safety device for an electrical outlet of the type including an outlet box in a wall for maintaining a receptacle having vertically aligned dual sockets, the dual sockets including an upper socket and a lower socket, and a central

threaded opening between the sockets for receiving a cover plate screw, said safety device comprising:

- a) a back cover plate having upper and lower vertically aligned apertures therethrough with a central hole between said apertures, said apertures being shaped and positioned to correspond to the upper and lower sockets, while said central hole is aligned with the central treaded opening of the receptacle in the outlet box, when said back cover plate is positioned over the outlet box;
  - b) upper and lower shields sized to obstruct said apertures in said back cover plate, to prevent access to the upper and lower sockets of the receptacle;
  - c) means on a front face of said back cover plate for guiding said upper shield to move upwardly away from said upper aperture in said back cover plate, and said lower shield to move downwardly away from said lower aperture in said back cover plate, wherein said guiding means includes an H-shaped cross member integrally formed centrally on said front face of said back cover plate; and a pair of vertically spaced apart side guide rails integrally formed in said front face of said back cover plate on opposite sides of said H-shaped cross member;
  - d) means for biasing said shields on said front face of said back cover plate, so as to normally position said shields to obstruct said apertures in said back cover plate;
  - e) a front cover plate having a pair of vertically aligned apertures therethrough with a central hole between said apertures, said apertures being shaped and positioned to correspond to the upper and lower sockets, while said central hole is aligned with the central threaded opening of the receptacle in the outlet box;
  - f) means for mating said front cover plate to said back cover plate over said shields, so that the cover plate screw can engage with the central threaded opening in the receptacle to hold said safety device thereto;
  - g) means for engaging said upper shield through said upper aperture in said front cover plate, so that said upper shield can move upwardly away from said upper aperture in said back cover plate to expose the upper socket of the receptacle; and
  - h) means for engaging said lower shield through said lower aperture in said front cover plate, so that said lower shield can move downwardly away from said lower aperture in said back cover plate to expose the lower socket of the receptacle.
7. A safety device for an electrical outlet of the type including an outlet box in a wall for maintaining a receptacle having vertically aligned dual sockets, the dual sockets including an upper socket and a lower socket, and a central threaded opening between the sockets for receiving a cover plate screw, said safety device comprising:
- a) a back cover plate having upper and lower vertically aligned apertures therethrough with a central hole between said apertures, said apertures being shaped and positioned to correspond to the upper and lower sockets, while said central hole aligned with the central threaded opening of the receptacle in the outlet box, when said back cover plate is positioned over the outlet box;
  - b) upper and lower shields sized to obstruct said apertures in said back cover plate, to prevent access to the upper and lower sockets of the receptacle;
  - c) means on a front face of said back cover plate for guiding said upper shield to move upwardly away from

said upper aperture in said back cover plate, and said lower shield to move downwardly away from said lower aperture in said back cover plate;

- d) means for biasing said shields on said front face of said back cover plate, so as to normally position said shields to obstruct said apertures in said back cover plate, wherein said biasing means includes two studs integrally formed in said front face of said back cover plate; and four springs in which two said springs are connected between said upper shield and said two studs, while other two said springs are connected between said lower shield and said two studs;
  - e) a front cover plate having a pair of vertically aligned apertures therethrough with a central hole between said apertures, said apertures being shaped and positioned to correspond to the upper and lower sockets, while said central hole aligned with the central treaded opening of the receptacle in the outlet box;
  - f) means for mating said front cover plate to said back cover plate over said shields, so that the cover plate screw can engage with the central threaded opening in the receptacle to hold said safety device thereto;
  - g) means for engaging said upper shield through said upper aperture in said front cover plate, so that said upper shield can move upwardly away from said upper aperture in said back cover plate to expose the upper socket of the receptacle; and
  - h) means for engaging said lower shield through said lower aperture in said front cover plate, so that said lower shield can move downwardly away from said lower aperture in said back cover plate to expose the lower socket of the receptacle.
8. A safety device for an electrical outlet of the type including an outlet box in a wall for maintaining a receptacle having vertically aligned dual sockets, the dual sockets including an upper socket and a lower socket, and a central threaded opening between the sockets for receiving a cover plate screw, said safety device comprising:
- a) a back cover plate having upper and lower vertically aligned apertures therethrough with a central hole between said apertures, said apertures being shaped and positioned to correspond to the upper and lower sockets, while said central hole aligned with the central threaded opening of the receptacle in the outlet box, when said back cover plate is positioned over the outlet box;
  - b) upper and lower shields sized to obstruct said apertures in said back cover plate, to prevent access to the upper and lower sockets of the receptacle;
  - c) means on a front face of said back cover plate for guiding said upper shield to move upwardly away from said upper aperture in said back cover plate, and said lower shield to move downwardly away from said lower aperture in said back cover plate;
  - d) means for biasing said shields on said front face of said back cover plate, so as to normally position said shields to obstruct said apertures in said back cover plate;
  - e) a front cover plate having a pair of vertically aligned apertures therethrough with a central hole between said apertures, said apertures being shaped and positioned to correspond to the upper and lower sockets, while said central hole aligned with the central threaded opening of the receptacle in the outlet box;
  - f) means for mating said front cover plate to said back cover plate over said shields, so that the cover plate