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(54) **Shower curtain ring.**

(57) A multi-piece shower curtain ring comprising an elongated tube having a first end and a second end, an interconnecting plug for interconnecting the first end of the elongated tube to the second end of the elongated tube to form an essentially circular shower curtain ring for supporting a shower curtain, thus facilitating the hanging or removal of a shower curtain from a curtain rod.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to shower curtain rings for hanging a shower curtain and, in particular, to a novel shower curtain ring construction which facilitates the hanging and replacement of a shower curtain.

Generally, shower curtain rings have been used to hang shower curtains on a curtain rod to prevent water from leaving a shower or bath enclosure. Heretofore, shower curtain rings have been primarily of two closed designs. The first type of closed design is a one-piece metal hook which only permits the displacement of the hook onto or away from a shower curtain and curtain rod by exerting considerable pressure on two ends of the metal hook. A second type of closed ring is an injection molded one-piece plastic ring having an interlocking construction comprised of an elongated bayonet projection that is received into an opening formed in the opposing portion of the ring. Both of these types of shower curtain rings are less than completely satisfactory because they are often difficult to engage and disengage from the shower curtain and the curtain rod. Also, molded plastic rings are easily broken due to the force needed to open the rings sufficiently for replacement and removal. Accordingly, an improved shower curtain ring having a construction which facilitates replacement and removal of a shower curtain is desired.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Generally speaking, in accordance with the present invention, an improved shower curtain ring is provided including elongated tubing having a first end and a second end, the tubing having a substantially circular cross-section. A first connector is secured within the first end of the elongated tubing and a second connector is secured within the second end of the elongated tubing. The first connector and the second connector are constructed and arranged to be releasably interconnected to each other to form with the tubing an essentially circular shower curtain ring for supporting a shower curtain and for facilitating the hanging or removal of a shower curtain from a curtain rod. another embodiment, in accordance with the present invention, an elongated tube is provided with a one-piece connector. The connector is adapted to be releasably inserted into both ends of the tubing to form a shower curtain ring for supporting the shower curtain and for facilitating the hanging and removal of a shower curtain.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide an improved closed loop type shower curtain ring for facilitating the hanging of a shower curtain on a curtain rod.

Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved multi-piece shower curtain ring construction.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide an improved shower curtain ring which facilitates the hanging of a shower curtain.

Still other objects and advantages of the invention will in part be obvious and will in part be apparent from the specification.

The invention accordingly comprises the features of construction, combination of elements and arrangement of parts which will be exemplified in the constructions hereinafter set forth, and the scope of the invention will be indicated in the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a fuller understanding of the invention, reference is had to the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is an elevational view of a two-piece shower curtain ring constructed in accordance with a first embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a sectional view of the two-piece shower curtain ring depicted in FIG. 1 when hanging a shower curtain from a curtain rod;

FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken along line 3-3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is an elevational view of a three-piece shower curtain ring construction in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a sectional view of the three-piece shower curtain ring depicted in FIG. 4 when hanging a shower curtain from a curtain rod; and

FIG. 6 is a sectional view taken along line 6-6 of FIG. 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Reference is made to FIGS. 1-3 wherein a two-piece shower curtain ring, generally indicated at 10, is depicted. The shower curtain ring includes an elongated tubing 12 having a first end 14 and a second end 16 and a plastic connector, generally indicated as 18.

Tubing 12 is formed of thermoplastic/polyvinyl chloride although other materials, such as polyurethane, can be used. Moreover, by utilizing a scented polymer, the shower curtain ring can be used to impart a pleasant scent to the bathroom enclosure. In an exemplary embodiment, in order to be compatible with the eyelet size of most commercially available shower curtains, the outer diameter of the tubing is 3/8", although this also may vary.

Connector 18 includes a body 26 and a first arm 20 and a second arm 22 each projecting from body 26. Body 26 includes two raised annular shoulders 25 and an annular recess 27 positioned between shoul-

ders 25 so that the eyelet 29 of a shower curtain 19 can be positioned in recess 28. The width of recess 27 should be sufficient to receive a shower curtain therein. First arm 20 and second arm 22 have substantially circular cross-sections approximating the inner diameter of tubing 12. First arm 20 and second arm 22 each have a single annular notch 24, respectively, disposed therein. First arm 20 and second arm 22 are adapted to be secured within first end 14 and second end 16 of tubing 12 by a friction fit between the inner walls of the tubing and the outer surface of arms 20 and 22. In a preferred embodiment, connector 18 is injection molded from polypropylene. However, there are various materials, such as metal, plastic, or polyurethane, which can be formed into the shape of and used as connector 18.

In operation, either first arm 20 or second arm 22 is inserted into one of the ends of tubing 12. The shower curtain ring tubing 12 is then inserted into the eyelet 29 of a shower curtain 19 and wrapped around a curtain rod 23. Next, the free arm of the connector 16 is inserted into the free end of the tubing to complete the shower ring. When it is desired to remove the shower ring it is only necessary to remove an arm from the end of the tubing.

FIGS. 4-6 illustrate a three-piece shower curtain ring, generally indicated at 30, like reference numerals being utilized to depict like elements described above. Shower curtain ring 30 includes an elongated tubing 12 having a first end 14 and a second end 16, a female connector 40 and a male connector 36. Male connector 36 is inserted in second end 16 and female connector 40 is inserted in first end 14. Male connector 36 and female connector 40 can be made of metal, polypropylene, or the like.

Male connector 36 is formed with a body having a central portion 44 having a diameter greater than the inner diameter of tubing 12. An arm 38 has a diameter less than the inner diameter of tubing 12 forming a shoulder 46 with the larger diametered body 44. Arm 38 is formed with an annular recess 50 providing annular flanges 48 having a truncated conical shape on arm 38. Flanges 48 have a diameter greater than or equal to the inner diameter of tubing to form a friction fit with the inner surface of tubing 12. A post 42 extends from body central portion 44 and has a diameter less than central portion 44.

A female connector 40 is disposed within tubing 12 at end 14. Female connector 40 is formed with an annular recess 54 providing annular flanges 56,58 forming truncated cones having a diameter equal to or greater than the inner diameter of tubing 12 to provide a friction fit with tubing 12. In an exemplary embodiment, an adhesive can also be used to prevent connectors 36 and 40 from being disengaged from tubing 12.

Female connector 40 includes a blind hole 46 adapted to receive and secure, by way of friction fit, post 42 of connector 36. By placing either connector 40 or connector 36 through an eyelet 29 of a shower curtain 19 and around a shower curtain rod, and thereafter coupling post 42 of male connector 36 to female connector 40, an improved releasable shower curtain ring is constructed for supporting a shower curtain around the curtain rod.

It will thus be seen that the objects set forth above, among those made apparent from the preceding description, are efficiently attained and, since certain changes may be made in the above constructions without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

It is also to be understood that the following claims are intended to cover all of the generic and specific features of the invention herein described and all statements of the scope of the invention which, as a matter of language, might be said to fall therebetween.

Claims

1. A shower curtain ring, comprising:

   an elongated tubing having a first end and a second end, said elongated tubing having a substantially circular cross-section, and an inner diameter and an outer diameter, said outer diameter greater than said inner diameter;

   first connector means secured within said first end of said elongated tubing, and second connector means secured within said second end of said elongated tubing; and

   said first connector means and said second connector means constructed and arranged to be releasably interconnected to form a shower curtain ring for supporting a shower curtain.

2. A shower curtain ring as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first connector means includes at least one truncated conical shape having a diameter equal to or greater than said inner diameter of said elongated tubing.

3. A shower curtain ring as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second connector means includes a truncated conical shape having a diameter thereof equal to or greater than said inner diameter of said elongated tubing.

4. A shower curtain ring as claimed in claim 1, wherein said elongated tubing is thermoplastic/polyvinyl chloride.

5. A shower curtain ring as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first interconnecting means in-

cludes an opening and said second connector means includes a post adapted to be releasably inserted in said opening.

6. A shower curtain ring as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first connector means and said second connector means are each made from the group consisting of rubber, metal, plastic or polyurethane.

7. A shower curtain ring, comprising:

an elongated tubing having a first end and a second end, said elongated tubing having a substantially circular cross-section and an inner diameter and an outer diameter, said outer diameter greater than said inner diameter;

interconnecting means for connecting said first and said second ends of said elongated tubing, said interconnecting means being constructed and arranged to be releasably secured to said first end of said elongated tubing and said second end of said elongated tubing to form a shower curtain ring.

8. A shower curtain ring as claimed in claim 7, wherein said interconnecting means has a body and two arms extending therefrom, said arms being adapted to be releasably inserted and secured in the respective ends of said elongated tubing.

9. A shower curtain support as claimed in claim 8, wherein said body includes a recess for allowing a shower curtain to remain in the recess.

10. A shower curtain ring as claimed in claim 9, wherein said elongated tubing is thermoplastic/polyvinyl chloride.

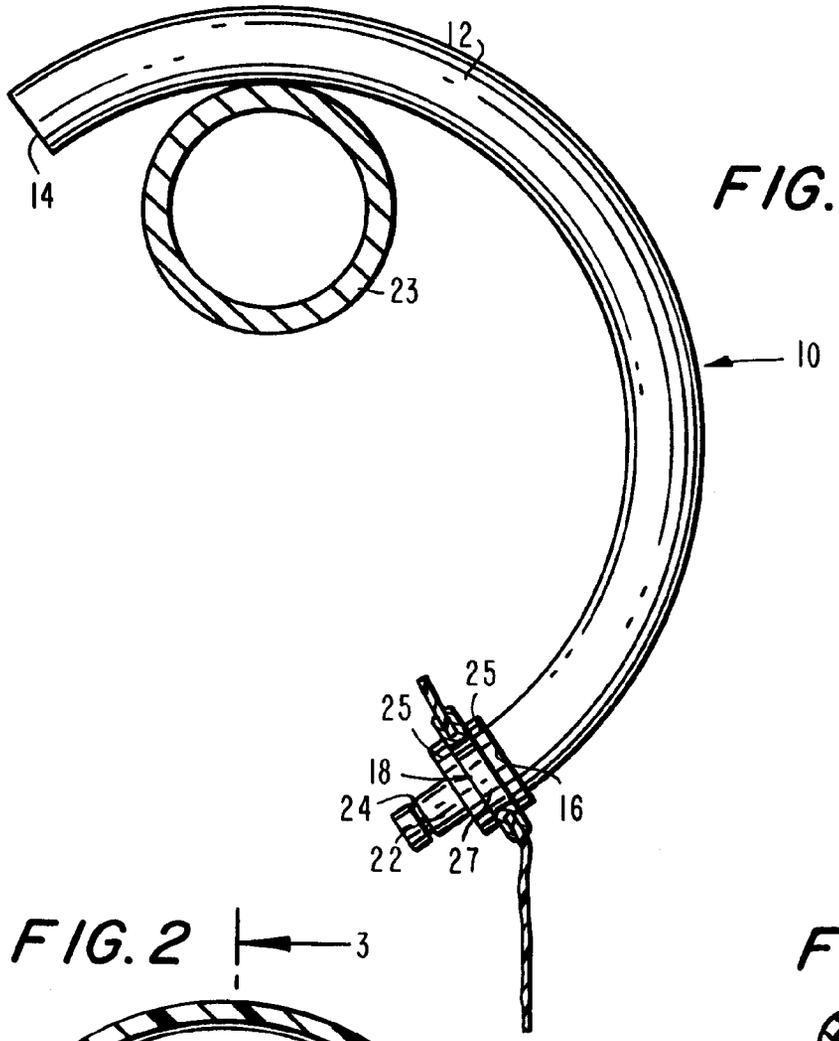

FIG. 1

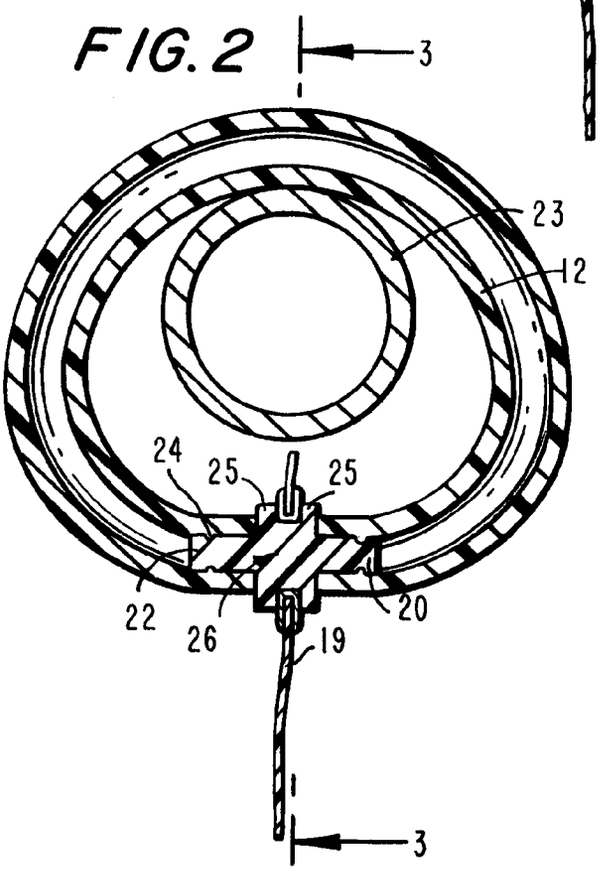

FIG. 2

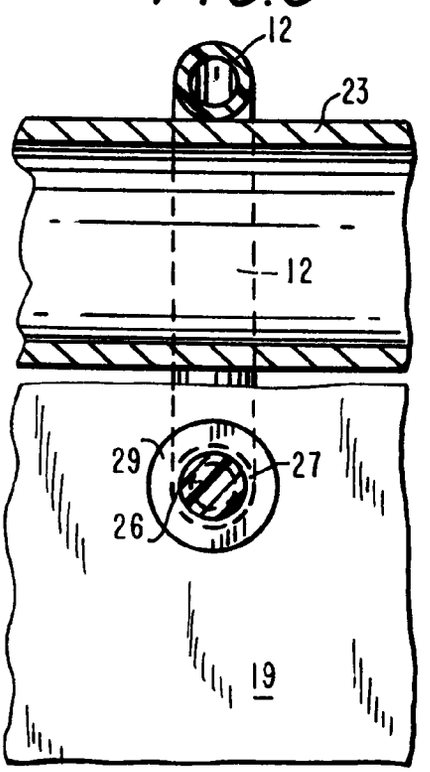

FIG. 3

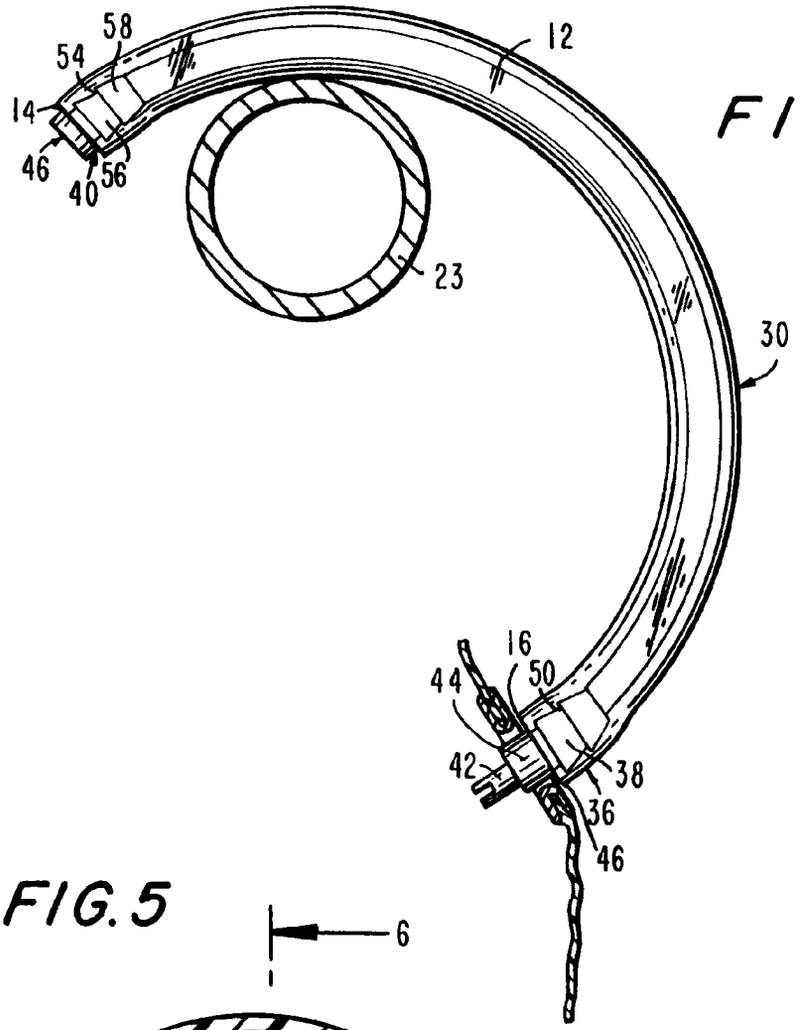

FIG. 4

FIG. 5

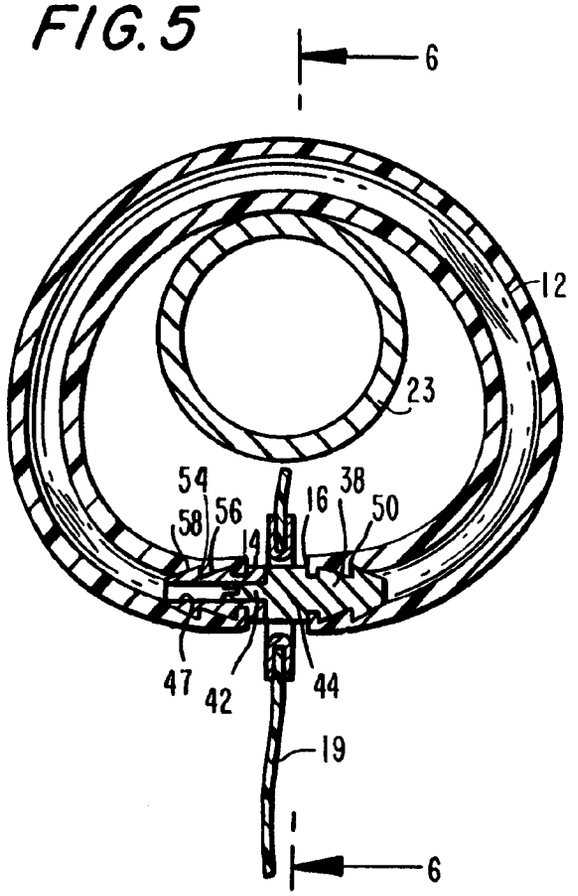

FIG. 6