



(12) **CORRECTED EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION**

Note: Bibliography reflects the latest situation

- (15) Correction information:
Corrected version no 1 (W1 B1)
Corrections, see page(s) 22
- (48) Corrigendum issued on:
04.05.2005 Bulletin 2005/18
- (45) Date of publication and mention
of the grant of the patent:
23.06.2004 Bulletin 2004/26
- (21) Application number: **99956637.5**
- (22) Date of filing: **22.10.1999**
- (51) Int Cl.7: **C08L 63/00**, B32B 3/04,
B29C 67/00, C08J 9/00,
B60R 13/08
- (86) International application number:
PCT/US1999/024795
- (87) International publication number:
WO 2000/027920 (18.05.2000 Gazette 2000/20)

(54) **SOUND DEADENING AND STRUCTURAL REINFORCEMENT COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS OF USING THE SAME**

GERÄUSCHVERMINDERNDE UND STRUKTURELLE
VERSTÄRKUNGSZUSAMMENSETZUNGEN SOWIE VERFAHREN ZU DEREN VERWENDUNG
COMPOSITIONS CON UES POUR LE RENFORCEMENT STRUCTURAL ET LA REDUCTION DU
BRUIT ET PROCEDES POUR LEUR UTILISATION

- (84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE**
- (30) Priority: **05.11.1998 US 186537**
- (43) Date of publication of application:
21.11.2001 Bulletin 2001/47
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- (56) References cited:
**EP-A- 0 500 009 WO-A-95/13328
US-A- 4 737 407 US-A- 4 742 115
US-A- 5 274 006 US-A- 5 506 025
US-A- 5 755 486**
- Remarks:
The file contains technical information submitted
after the application was filed and not included in this
specification

Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 Field of the Invention.

10 **[0001]** The present invention is broadly concerned with expandable sealant and baffle compositions for sealing hollow structural members of vehicles, and methods for making and using such compositions. The compositions are prepared by forming an expandable mixture including a first thermoplastic resin (preferably an SBS block copolymer) and an epoxy resin (preferably a bisphenol A-based liquid epoxy resin). The compositions preferably also include a second thermoplastic resin (preferably a polystyrene) different from the first thermoplastic resin, and a compound selected from the group consisting of pigments, blowing agents, catalysts, curing agents, reinforcers, and mixtures thereof. The preferred reinforcers are hydrated amorphous silica and glass microspheres. The compositions of the invention are injection moldable and can be formed into freestanding, self-sustaining parts. Alternately, the compositions of the invention can be supported on lattice-type nylon supports. Upon heating of the compositions to temperatures of at least about 149°C (300°F), the compositions greatly expand to form lightweight products having high compressive strengths.

Description of the Prior Art.

20 **[0002]** During the fabrication of automobiles, trucks, and similar over-the-road vehicles, many body components present structural members having cavities that require sealing to prevent the entrance of moisture and contaminants which can cause corrosion of the body parts. It is also desirable to greatly strengthen the members while maintaining their light weight. It is also necessary to stabilize these members in order to attenuate noise that would otherwise be transmitted along the length or passage of the cavity. Many of these cavities are irregular in shape or narrow in size, thus making them difficult to properly seal and baffle.

25 **[0003]** Many attempts have been made to seal these cavities, spraying sealants into the cavity, introducing foam products into the cavity, and using of fiberglass matting and the like. These methods each have their drawbacks. For example, foaming in place presents a problem in that it is difficult to control where the foam travels upon its introduction into the cavity. Furthermore, it is often necessary to introduce an excess amount of foam into the cavity in order to ensure that the cavity is sufficiently sealed. Finally, foams will generally not adhere to the interior surfaces of the cavity walls if those surfaces contain even a small amount of oil.

30 **[0004]** Self-sustaining foam products, either with or without a non-foam support structure, have been introduced into structural member cavities in an attempt to seal the cavities. However, these methods generally result in the addition of excess weight to the structural member which is undesirable in most instances. Attempts have been made to utilize foam products which are lighter in weight or which do not use a support structure. However, these attempts have generally resulted in products which lack the increased compressive strength necessary to adequately reinforce the structural member.

35 **[0005]** U.S. Patent No. 5,755,486 to Wycech is directed towards a structural reinforcement member which includes a thermally expandable resin-based material. The structural member is heated so as to expand the resin-based material, thus locking the reinforcement member in place. However, the compositions disclosed in the '486 patent do not possess sufficient expansion capabilities. As a result, more of the composition is required to adequately fill and seal a particular cavity, thus resulting in added weight to the car and added expense to the automotive manufacturer. Furthermore, the composition disclosed in the '486 patent makes use of fumed silica which leads to a product having a high viscosity and therefore unsuitable for injection molding of the composition.

40 **[0006]** U.S. Patent Nos. 5,373,027 and 5,266,133 to Hanley et al. are respectively directed towards expansible sealant and baffle components for sealing and providing an acoustic baffle for cavities in vehicle bodies and methods of making such components. The components expand upon heating, thus sealing the cavity in which they are placed. The components are formed of a composition which includes an ethylene- α,β ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid copolymer, a blowing agent, a tackifier, and optionally an additive polymer and a cross-linking agent. While the compositions of the '027 and '133 patents possess sufficient expansion capabilities, they are not strong enough to make suitable reinforcement members.

45 **[0007]** U.S. Patent No. 5,506,025 to Otto et al. is concerned with an expandable baffle apparatus for sealing an automobile cavity. The apparatus of the '025 patent includes a piece of heat expandable sealing material formed in a shape corresponding to the shape of the cross-section of the cavity to be sealed. The sealing material is supported by an open lattice support element formed of material such as nylon. While the apparatus of the '025 patent is suitable as a cavity sealant and baffle apparatus, it does not provide sufficient reinforcement to the structural member forming the cavity in which the apparatus is placed.

50 **[0008]** There is a need for an injection moldable, expandable, lightweight composition which acts as both a sealant

to prevent the entrance of undesirable components into vehicle cavities and a baffle to diminish or prevent noises which normally travel along the length of the cavity. Furthermore, this composition should have a high compressive strength so that it reinforces the structural members in which it is used.

5 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The instant invention overcomes these problems by providing an expandable sealant and baffle compositions comprising mixtures of thermoplastic resin(s) and an epoxy resin which are injection moldable and lightweight, and which have a high compressive strengths.

10 **[0010]** In more detail, the compositions of the invention include a first thermoplastic resin, usually selected from the group consisting of the polystyrenes, rubbers (preferably solid rubbers), and mixtures thereof. It is preferred that the first thermoplastic resin be a solid rubber or mixtures of solid rubbers. Preferred solid rubbers include styrene-butadiene rubber (such as SBR 1009®), nitrile-butadiene rubber (such as Nipol 1411®), thermoplastic elastomers including SBS block co-polymers (such as Fina Clear 530®), and mixtures thereof. (As used herein, "rubber" is intended to include
15 all synthetic rubbers as well as elastomers.). If the rubber used is an SBS block co-polymer, it is preferred that the SBS block co-polymer have a molecular weight of from about 100,000-150,000, and preferably from about 110,000-135,000. When a styrene-butadiene rubber is used as the rubber, the ratio of butadiene to styrene is preferably from about 32:68 to about 18:82, and more preferably from about 27:73 to about 23:77. If the first thermoplastic resin is a rubber, then the rubber is preferably present in the composition at a level from about 20-30% by weight, and more preferably
20 from about 23-28% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.

[0011] If the first thermoplastic resin is a polystyrene, then the polystyrene should be present in the composition at a level of from about 5-20% by weight, and preferably at a level of from about 10-15% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight. It is preferable that the polystyrene have a molecular weight of from about 150,000-320,000, and more preferably from about 200,000-270,000. Two preferred polystyrenes are sold
25 under the trade names Fina Crystal 500® and Fina Crystal 535®.

[0012] The compositions further include an epoxy resin, preferably a liquid epoxy resin such as a bisphenol A-based liquid epoxy resin. The epoxy resin should be present in the composition at a level of from about 30-45% by weight, and preferably from about 35-40% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight. A preferred solid epoxy resin is available under the trade name Epon 1001 F®. Two preferred liquid epoxy resins are
30 sold under the trade names Araldite 6010® and Epon 71®.

[0013] In a particularly preferred embodiment, the compositions of the inventions further include a second thermoplastic resin different from the first thermoplastic resin. The second thermoplastic resin is likewise preferably selected from the group consisting of the polystyrenes, rubbers (preferably solid rubbers or thermoplastic elastomers), and mixtures thereof. It is preferred that the first thermoplastic resin be a solid rubber and mixtures of solid rubbers while
35 the second thermoplastic resin is preferably a polystyrene, with the individual concentrations of solid rubber and polystyrene being those described above. The total weight of both the first thermoplastic resin and the second thermoplastic resin is preferably from about 25-50% by weight, and more preferably from about 33-43% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.

[0014] In another embodiment, the compositions of the invention further include a third thermoplastic resin in addition to and different from the first and second thermoplastic resins. The third thermoplastic resin is preferably selected from the group consisting of polystyrenes, rubbers (preferably solid rubbers or thermoplastic elastomers), and mixtures thereof. In compositions according to the invention which include a third thermoplastic resin, the third resin should be present in an amount of from about 1-10% by weight, and preferably from about 3-7% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight. A preferred third thermoplastic resin is a solid rubber such as
40 nitrile-butadiene rubber (NBR). When NBR is used as the third thermoplastic resin, the ratio of acrylonitrile to butadiene is preferably from about 42:58 to about 35:65, and more preferably about 38:62.

[0015] The compositions of the invention should also include a compound selected from the group consisting of pigments, blowing agents, catalysts, curing agents, reinforcers, and mixtures thereof. Any pigments, blowing agents, catalysts, and curing agents known in the art are suitable for use in the instant invention. Examples of some of those
45 compounds and their preferred concentrations in the compositions of the invention are set forth in Table 1.

Table 1

Compound	% By Wt. ^a	Examples
Pigments	0-5%	Carbon black, zinc oxide
Blowing agents	0-5%	Azodicarbonamides such as the following which are available from Uniroyal - Celogen AZ 765®, Celogen AZ 754A®, and Celogen AZ 130®

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Table 1 (continued)

Compound	% By Wt. ^a	Examples
Catalysts	0-5%	Urea-based catalysts such as N,N dimethyl phenyl urea and catalysts sold under the trade names MBTS®, Dicap®, and Urisys U 405®
Curing agent	0-5%	Sulfur, dicyandiamide, including the curing agent sold under the trade name Urisys DDA 10®
Percent by weight of the particular compound, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.		

[0016] The preferred reinforcers are selected from the group consisting of hydrated amorphous silica, glass microspheres, and mixtures thereof. Preferably the compositions hereof include from about 1-10% by weight hydrated amorphous silica and from about 10-20% glass microspheres. Utilizing both of these reinforcers results in a composition having a very high compressive strength. Also, hydrated amorphous silica is important for providing a composition that has high expansion capabilities as well as a viscosity (at 110°C) of less than about 1500 P, and preferably less than about 1250 P, so that the composition can readily be injection molded.

[0017] One of the most preferred embodiments of the compositions in accordance with the instant invention includes the following: from about 20-30% by weight SBS block co-polymer; from about 5-20% by weight polystyrene; from about 30-45% by weight bisphenol A-based liquid epoxy resin; from about 0.5-5% by weight carbon black; from about 1-10% by weight hydrated amorphous silica; from about 10-20% by weight glass microspheres; from about 0.5-5% by weight blowing agent; from about 0.3-5% by weight catalysts; and from about 1-5% by weight curing agent, with all percents by weight being based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.

[0018] The compositions of the invention are formed by mixing the first thermoplastic resin (preferably solid rubber) with a small portion (about 1/40th of the total amount) of the epoxy resin in a heated mixer until the temperature of the mixer reaches from about 116-127°C (240-260°F) (the temperature of the mixture within the mixer is at least about 79°C (175°F) and the mixture is substantially homogeneous, at which time all of the second thermoplastic resin (preferably a polystyrene) is added to the mixer and mixing is continued. After the second thermoplastic resin is substantially mixed with the first thermoplastic resin/epoxy resin mixture, the remainder of the epoxy resin is slowly added to the mixer, stopping and starting the mixer as necessary, with the ingredients being thoroughly mixed to obtain a substantially homogeneous mixture. The resulting "premix" can then be used immediately to form the final composition or, alternately, can be formed into a thick sheet (approximately 20 mm) via a two-roll mill, cut into pieces, and stored for later use.

[0019] To form the final composition from the premix, the desired amount of premix is placed in a heated mixer (set at a temperature of about 121°C (250°F)) and mixing is commenced. While mixing, the desired pigments are added to the mixer and mixing is stopped once a homogeneous mixture is obtained within the mixer. While mixing is stopped, one of the desired reinforcers is added to the mixer and mixing is resumed and continued until the mixture is homogeneous. This step can be repeated, adding additional reinforcers as desired.

[0020] The temperature of the mixer is then set to a temperature below 71°C (160°F). When the temperature of the mixer drops below 71°C (160°F), the desired blowing agents, curing agents, and/or catalysts are added and mixing is resumed and continued only until the mixture is homogeneous. The resulting mixture is then preferably extruded into strands (at an extruder temperature of 77-82°C 170-180°F and screw rotation speeds of about 400 rpm) and cut into pellets. Alternately, the desired blowing agents, curing agents, and/or catalysts can be dry blended with the cut pellets rather than being added to the mixture prior to extrusion. The pellets are then injection molded into the desired shape at a temperature of about 82-93°C (180-200°F) using any injection molding techniques and equipment known in the art. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the desired shape of the molded composition will depend upon the volume of the cavity to be sealed and baffled, as well as the configuration of that cavity thus ensuring that the composition fully expands into a sealing relationship with the structural sidewalls. The molded product that is formed is a physical mixture, and no chemical reactions have occurred prior to the heating of the product within the vehicle cavity to a temperature of at least about 300°F 149°C.

[0021] While the sealing and baffling compositions of the invention can be manufactured as formed, freestanding parts, in other embodiments the compositions can be supported on a support element comprising an open lattice formed in the same shape as of the composition, thus forming a sealant and baffle apparatus. Preferred lattice support elements are formed of nylon, and particularly glass reinforced nylon. Use of open lattice supports allows the composition to expand through the openings of the lattice upon heating of the composition to a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F). This structure is superior to the structure in U.S. Patent No. 5,755,486 to Wycech as the use of a lattice support element adds minimal weight to the apparatus.

[0022] The expanded composition then adheres to adjacent walls of the cavity in which the apparatus is placed.

Preferred apparatuses comprise a plurality of U-shaped expandable composition structures spaced apart from one another and in general alignment, having the lattice support element attached to the three outer surfaces of the U-shaped structure. This embodiment provides for contact by the composition with a greater surface area of the cavity walls than is provided by U.S. Patent No. 5,506,025 to Otto et al., thus providing superior reinforcement of structural member forming the cavity.

[0023] In use, the compositions of the invention are formed into the U-shaped structure described above, or are shaped (in either free standing form or some type of lattice-supported form) to conform to the cross-sectional shape of (although slightly smaller than) the cavity in which the composition or apparatus is to be used. The formed composition or apparatus is then placed within the hollow channel or cavity and heat is applied so that the composition expands as the epoxy resin is crosslinked and the expanded composition adheres to the sidewalls of the cavity resulting in a channel or cavity that is substantially blocked by the expanded composition. Optionally, some type of fastening device or mechanism can be utilized to secure the composition within the channel prior to heat expansion.

[0024] It will be appreciated that the compositions of the invention can be used in virtually any area of the automotive industry, including body shops, paint shops, and automobile manufacturing facilities. A particular advantage of the compositions and apparatuses of the invention is that they can be placed within the desired channel prior to conveyance of the vehicle body through a bake oven where the temperatures are sufficiently high to expand the composition.

[0025] When the sealants and baffle compositions of the invention are subjected to a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F), the percent expansion of the composition will be at least about 95%, preferably at least about 125%, and more preferably at least about 150%, wherein the percent expansion (as used herein) is defined as:

$$100 \times \left\{ \left[\frac{\text{(the specific gravity of the composition before heating)} - \text{(the specific gravity of the composition after heating)}}{\text{(the specific gravity of the composition after heating)}} \right] \right\}$$

[0026] The expanded compositions have a compressive strength (using a sample having a diameter of 2 inches and a length of 4 inches and a compression rate of 0.5 inches/minute) of at least about 1200 psi, preferably at least about 1400 psi, and more preferably at least about 1600 psi. Prior to expansion, the compositions have a specific gravity (with reference to water) of at least about 0.90, while the specific gravity (with reference to water) of the expanded compositions is less than about 0.47, preferably less than about 0.37, and more preferably less than about 0.32. The compositions of the invention have a ratio of compressive strength:specific gravity after bake of at least about 2500:1, preferably at least about 3000:1, and more preferably at least about 3600:1.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0027]

Figure 1 is a side elevation view of the preferred U-shaped sealant and baffle apparatus utilizing the open lattice support element in accordance with the invention;
 Fig. 2 is a top plan view of the apparatus of Fig. 1;
 Fig. 3 is a left end elevation view of the apparatus of Fig 1; and
 Fig. 4 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along line 4-4 of Fig. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0028] Turning now to the drawings, a sealant and baffle apparatus 10 is shown in Figs. 1-4. The apparatus 10 broadly includes three expandable, U-shaped members 12, 14, 16 (see Figs. 1 and 2) and a support element 18 (see Figs. 2 and 3).

[0029] In more detail and referring to Fig. 1, member 12 includes a base portion 20 and two leg portions 22, 24. Members 14, 16 are identical to member 12 in that they each include a base portion and two leg portions. Leg portions 26, 28 of members 14, 16, respectively, are illustrated in Fig. 2, while base portions 30, 32 of members 14, 16, respectively, are illustrated in Fig. 3. In each of members 12, 14, 16, the leg portions are substantially perpendicular to their respective base portions. Stated otherwise, each of the legs of members 12, 14, 16 is essentially parallel to its counterpart leg on the respective member. Members 12, 14, 16 are each formed of the heat expandable compositions of the invention and are preferably injection molded as integral members into the illustrated U-shape.

[0030] Support element 18 is formed of three sections, i.e., a base section and two leg sections, which are likewise

configured into a U-shape. Base section 34 of element 18 is illustrated in Fig. 3 while leg section 36 is illustrated in Fig. 2. The final leg section 38 of element 18 is shown in phantom in Fig. 1. Each of sections 34, 36, 38 of support element 18 have a latticework structure and are formed of a material having a melting point higher than the temperature at which members 12, 14, 16 expand. A preferred material for element 18 is nylon, and particularly glass reinforced nylon.

[0031] The outside planar surfaces of the base and leg portions of members 12, 14, 16 are preferably formed with depressions (indicated by double lines 40 in Figs. 2 and 3). These depressions correspond in both size and shape with the size and shape of the latticework of element 18. The depressions are preferably at least as deep as the lattice is thick, and act as a retaining mechanism so that element 18 remains attached to members 12, 14, 16. Thus, the expandable composition of which members 12, 14, 16 are formed protrudes somewhat through the lattice openings of element 18 (as indicated by numeral 42 in Figs. 2-4). Element 18 can be formed so that each of the sections 34, 36, 38 are integral, or alternately, each of sections 34, 36, 38 can be formed separately and connected by some fastening mechanism (such as clips or snaps) around the members 12, 14, 16 of the apparatus.

[0032] In operation, the apparatus 10 is positioned within the channel of a hollow member (such as within a vehicle). The apparatus 10 can be positioned at any angle and orientation as determined appropriate by one having ordinary skill in the art. For example, the base portions 20, 30, 32 and base section 34 of apparatus 10 can be positioned against the lower wall of the channel, while the respective leg portions and sections of apparatus 10 would be positioned against the sidewalls of the channel. Or, the apparatus 10 could be inverted so that the base portions 20, 30, 32 and base section 34 are positioned against the upper wall of the channel.

[0033] Once the apparatus 10 is positioned within the channel, the apparatus 10 is then subjected to heat (such as by passing the vehicle through a bake oven), preferably having a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F). The heat application will cause the composition to expand in all directions, thus protruding even further through the openings of the latticework. The expanded composition will then adhere to the walls of the channel, securing apparatus 10 within the channel.

[0034] While the figures illustrate an embodiment utilizing a support structure for the compositions of the invention, those skilled in the art will understand that the compositions of the invention do not require a support structure and can be used in a freestanding, self-sustaining form. Also, numerous other support elements can be used with the compositions of the invention depending upon the particular application.

EXAMPLES

[0035] The following examples set forth preferred compositions and methods in accordance with the invention. It is to be understood, however, that these examples are provided by way of illustration and nothing therein should be taken as a limitation upon the overall scope of the invention.

EXAMPLE 1

1. Preparation of Premix

[0036] A mixer (Moriyama Company, Japan) equipped with a ram was used to prepare a premix. The temperature of the mixer was set to 99°C (210°F), and 266.67 grams of Fina Clear 530® (SBS block copolymer) was added to the mixer followed by the addition of about 10 grams of Araldite 6010® (liquid epoxy resin). The ram was lowered and slow mixing was commenced when the temperature of the mixer had reached 93°C (200°F). Mixing was continued until the mixture was substantially homogeneous, and the temperature display indicated 121°C (250°F). At this point, the ram was opened and 133.33 grams of Fina Crystal 500® (polystyrene) was added to the mixer. Mixing was continued until the material in the mixer became substantially homogeneous. The remainder of the Araldite 6010® (about 390 grams) was added to the mixture slowly, in small increments, with mixing carried out between each addition.

[0037] After all of the Fina Crystal 500® was added, the resulting mixture was thoroughly mixed for about 5 minutes, and the material was then transferred to a 2-roll mill. The material was milled into sheets having a thickness of about 20 mm, and cut into pieces to be used later.

2. Preparation of the Intermediate Compound

[0038] In this step, a Moriyama mixer equipped with a ram was also used, with the temperature of the mixer being set at 121°C (250°F). The premix made in Part 1 of this Example was added to the mixer. Mixing was commenced, and 10 grams of carbon black (pigment) was added to the mixer. When the mixture became homogeneous, mixing was stopped, 60 grams of HiSil 233® (hydrated amorphous silica) was added to the mixture, and mixing was resumed. Mixing continued until the mixture was homogeneous, at which time mixing was again stopped and 140 grams of

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Scotchlite S60/10,000® (glass microspheres) was added to the mixture. Mixing was resumed and was continued until the resulting mixture was homogeneous. The temperature of the mixer was set below 71°C (160°F). When the mixer temperature cooled to below 71°C (160°F), 16 grams of Celogen AZ 765® (blowing agent) and 64 grams of Urisys DDA 10® (curing agent) was added to the mixer and mixing was resumed and continued only until the mixture was homogeneous.

3. Pelletization of the Intermediate Compound and Injection Molding of the Pellets

[0039] The compound formed in Part 2 of this Example was fed into the inlet of a single screw extruder set at an extruder temperature of 79°C (175°F). The screw was rotated at a speed of about 400 rpm, and the stranded compound was cut into pellets as it emerged from the die positioned at the outlet of the extruder barrel. The die used was one designed to make pellets of such a size that 90 (± 10) of the pellets weighed 1 gram.

[0040] The pellets were added to the hopper (not equipped with a stirrer) of a conventional injection mold machine and molded into the desired shapes at about 88°C (190°F).

4. Test Properties of the Molded Product

[0041] The mechanical properties of the compound were tested. Those properties are reported in Table 2 below. These tests were carried out as follows on 10 mm thick, 1 in. x 1 in. portions of the product prepared as previously described:

(1) Specific Gravity Before Bake.

(2) Specific Gravity After Bake - The composition was placed in an oven heated to 163°C (325°F). The composition was kept in the oven for 10 minutes after the temperature of the composition reached 163°C (325°F) (referred to as 163°C (325°F) for 10 minutes Metal Temperature). The composition was then removed from the oven and allowed to remain at room temperature (RT) for 60 minutes (referred to as RT for 60 minutes). This was followed by 163°C (325°F) for 10 minutes Metal Temperature, then RT for 60 minutes, and finally 121°C (250°F) for 20 minutes Metal Temperature, followed by the determination of the specific gravity.

(3) Expansion After Bake = [(specific gravity before bake) - (specific gravity after bake)]/(specific gravity after bake)

(4) Compressive Strength After Bake - The compressive strength was determined after the following was carried out: the composition remain in a 177°C (350°F) oven for a total of 35 minutes; RT for 60 minutes; and finally 121°C (250°F) for 20 minutes metal temperature.

Table 2

MECHANICAL TEST	RESULTS
Specific Gravity Before Bake	0.96
Specific Gravity After Bake	0.38
Percent Expansion	153
Compressive Strength, psi ^a	655 ^b

^a The test specimens were aged in a 90°C oven for four hours and tested immediately upon removal from the oven.

^b Several tests of the compressive strength were conducted on this sample. This number is the average of the results of all tests conducted.

EXAMPLE 2

[0042] A molded compound was formed following the procedures set forth in Example 1 except that the following components and concentrations were used: 133.33 grams of Fina Crystal 500®; 266.67 grams of Fina Clear 530®; 400 grams of Araldite 6010®; 10 grams of carbon black; 4.8 grams of zinc oxide (pigment); 45 grams of HiSil 233®; 155 grams of Scotchlite S60/10,000®; 30 grams of Urisys DDA 10®; 4 grams of Urisys U 405® (catalyst); and 6 grams of Celogen AZ 130® (blowing agent). The catalyst was added at the same time as the blowing agent and curing agent. The final product was tested for its mechanical properties as described in Example 1 and as set forth in Table 3.

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Table 3

MECHANICAL TEST	RESULTS
Specific Gravity Before Bake	0.95
Specific Gravity After Bake	0.37
Percent Expansion	150
Compressive Strength, psi ^a	1419 ^b
Viscosity (110°C), P	1240

^a The test specimens were aged in a 90°C oven for four hours and tested immediately upon removal from the oven.

^b Several tests of the compressive strength were conducted on this sample. This number is the average of the results of all tests conducted.

EXAMPLE 3

[0043] A molded compound was formed following the procedures set forth in Example 1 except the following components and concentrations were used: 120 grams of Fina Crystal 500®; 240 grams of Fina Clear 530®; 40 grams of Nipol 1411® (nitrile-butadiene rubber); 400 grams of Araldite 6010®; 10 grams of carbon black; 4.8 grams of zinc oxide; 45 grams of HiSil 233®; 155 grams of Scotchlite S60/10,000®; 30 grams of Urisys DDA 10®; 4 grams of Urisys U 405®; and 6 grams of Celogen AZ 130®. The final product was tested for its mechanical properties as set forth in Table 4.

Table 4

MECHANICAL TEST	RESULTS
Specific Gravity Before Bake	0.9
Specific Gravity After Bake	0.39
Percent Expansion	131
Compressive Strength, psi ^a	1822 ^b

^a The test specimens were aged in a 90°C oven for four hours and tested immediately upon removal from the oven.

^b Several tests of the compressive strength were conducted on this sample. This number is the average of the results of all tests conducted.

EXAMPLE 4

[0044] Several more compositions were prepared following the preparation procedures set forth in the preceding examples. The formulations and mechanical properties of the resulting compounds are set forth in Tables 5 and 6, respectively.

Table 5

Ingredient	A (grams)	B (grams)	C (grams)	D (grams)
Fina Crystal 500®	133.33	133.33	133.33	133.33
Fina Clear 530®	266.67	266.67	266.67	266.67
Araldite 6010®	340	400	400	400
Epon 1001F®	60	--	--	--
Carbon Black	10	10	10	10
Zinc Oxide	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
HiSil 233®	45	45	45	45
Scotchlite S60/10,000®	155	155	155	155
Rubbensil 150® (hydrated amorphous silica)	--	40	--	--
Quincy 325® (CaCO ₃)	--	--	40	--

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Table 5 (continued)

Ingredient	A (grams)	B (grams)	C (grams)	D (grams)
Magsil 399® (talc)	--	--	--	40
Urisys DDA 10®	30	30	30	30
Urisys U 405®	4	4	4	4
Celogen AZ 130®	6	6	6	6

Table 6

Test Data	A	B	C	D
Specific Gravity Before Bake	0.94	0.96	0.95	0.94
Specific Gravity After Bake	0.38	0.42	0.4	0.41
Percent Expansion	147	129	138	129
Compressive Strength, psi ^a	1526 ^b	2129 ^b	1422 ^b	1621 ^b

^a The test specimens were aged in a 90°C oven for four hours and tested immediately upon removal from the oven.

^b Several tests of the compressive strength were conducted on this sample. This number is the average of the results of all tests conducted.

EXAMPLE 5

[0045] This test was carried out to compare the effect of using fumed silica in the composition rather than hydrated amorphous silica. The procedure followed to prepare the composition was as described in the previous examples. The components and concentrations used were as follows: 133.33 grams of Fina Crystal 500®; 266.67 grams of Fina Clear 530®; 400 grams of Araldite 6010®; 10 grams of carbon black; 4.8 grams of zinc oxide; 45 grams of Cabot TS-720® (fumed silica); 155 grams of Scotchlite S60/10,000®; 30 grams of Urisys DDA 10®; 4 grams of Urisys U 405®; and 6 grams of Celogen AZ 130®. The properties of the resulting compound are set forth in Table 7 below.

Table 7

MECHANICAL TEST	RESULTS
Specific Gravity Before Bake	0.93
Specific Gravity After Bake	0.43
Percent Expansion	116
Compressive Strength, psi ^a	1572 ^b
Viscosity (110°C), P	3600

^a The test specimens were aged in a 90°C oven for four hours and tested immediately upon removal from the oven.

^b Several tests of the compressive strength were conducted on this sample. This number is the average of the results of all tests conducted.

[0046] In comparing these results to the results of the previous examples, it can be seen that this compound has a lower expansion than the other compounds. Furthermore, the viscosity is much higher than the viscosity of the compound obtained in Example 2, where hydrated amorphous silica was used. With such a high viscosity, this compound would not be useful in injection molding.

EXAMPLE 6

[0047] This test was carried out to determine the effect on the mechanical properties of the composition if no polystyrene was used. The procedure followed to prepare the composition was as described in the previous examples. The components and concentrations used were as listed in Example 2, with the exception that no Fina Crystal 500® (or any other polystyrene) was used. The properties of the resulting compound are set forth in Table 8 below.

Table 8

MECHANICAL TEST	RESULTS
Specific Gravity Before Bake	0.93
Specific Gravity After Bake	0.38
Percent Expansion	145
Compressive Strength, psi ^a	913 ^b

^a The test specimens were aged in a 90°C oven for four hours and tested immediately upon removal from the oven.

^b Several tests of the compressive strength were conducted on this sample. This number is the average of the results of all tests conducted.

EXAMPLE 7

[0048] This test was carried out to determine the effect on the mechanical properties of the composition if no SBS (or any other rubber) was used. Preparation of the composition was commenced following the previously described procedures. However, the preparation was aborted during the preparation of the premix because, without the use of a rubber, the initial ingredients could not be mixed.

EXAMPLE 8

[0049] This test was carried out to determine how the use of SBR, in addition to SBS rubber, would affect the overall properties of the composition. The procedure followed to prepare the composition was as described in the previous examples. The components and concentrations used were as follows: 120.0 grams of Fina Crystal 500®; 240 grams of Fina Clear 530®; 40 grams of SBR 1009®, crumb; 400 grams of Araldite 6010®; 10 grams of carbon black; 4.8 grams of zinc oxide; 45 grams of HiSil 233®; 155 grams of Scotchlite S60/10,000®; 30 grams of Urisys DDA 10®; 4 grams of Urisys U 405®; and 6 grams of Celogen AZ 130®. The properties of the resulting compound are set forth in Table 9.

Table 9

MECHANICAL TEST	RESULTS
Specific Gravity Before Bake	0.91
Specific Gravity After Bake	0.35
Percent Expansion	160
Compressive Strength, psi ^a	1095 ^b

^a The test specimens were aged in a 90°C oven for four hours and tested immediately upon removal from the oven.

^b Several tests of the compressive strength were conducted on this sample. This number is the average of the results of all tests conducted.

Claims

1. An expandable sealing body comprising a synthetic resin composition including a quantity of a first thermoplastic resin mixed with from about 30-45% by weight of an epoxy resin based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight, said body exhibiting at least about 95% expansion after heating of the body to a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F) and said body having a compressive strength of at least about 1200 psi after expansion.
2. The body of claim 1, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is selected from the group consisting of the polystyrenes, solid rubbers, and mixtures thereof.
3. The body of claim 2, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is a polystyrene having a molecular weight of from about 150,000-320,000.
4. The body of claim 2, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is a rubber selected from the group consisting of SBS block co-polymers, styrene-butadiene rubbers, nitrile-butadiene rubbers, and mixtures thereof.

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5. The body of claim 1, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is a thermoplastic elastomer.
6. The body of claim 5, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is an SBS block co-polymer having a molecular weight of from about 100,000-150,000.
7. The body of claim 4, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is a styrene-butadiene rubber having a ratio of butadiene to styrene of from about 32:68 to about 18:82
8. The body of claim 4, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is a nitrile-butadiene rubber having a ratio of butadiene to acrylonitrile of from about 42:58 to about 35:65.
9. The body of claim 2, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is a polystyrene and is present in said composition at a level of from about 5-20% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.
10. The body of claim 4, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is an SBS block co-polymer and is present in said composition at a level of from about 20-30% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.
11. The body of claim 1, further including a quantity of a second thermoplastic resin different from said first thermoplastic resin and selected from the group consisting of the polystyrenes, solid rubbers, and mixtures thereof.
12. The body of claim 11, wherein the total weight percent of said first thermoplastic resin and said second thermoplastic resin is from about 25-50% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.
13. The body of claim 11, further including a quantity of a third thermoplastic resin different from said first and second thermoplastic resins and selected from the group consisting of polystyrenes, solid rubbers, and mixtures thereof.
14. The body of claim 1, wherein said epoxy resin is a liquid epoxy resin.
15. The body of claim 14, wherein said liquid epoxy resin is a bisphenol A-based liquid epoxy resin.
16. The body of claim 1, wherein the percent expansion of said body is at least about 125%.
17. The body of claim 1, wherein said body is expanded by heating to a temperature of at least about 300°F and said expanded body has a specific gravity with reference to water of less than about 0.47.
18. The body of claim 1, wherein said body has a specific gravity with reference to water of at least about 0.90.
19. The body of claim 1, wherein said body is formed by injection molding.
20. The body of claim 1, further including a compound selected from the group consisting of pigments, blowing agents, catalysts, curing agents, reinforcers, and mixtures thereof.
21. The body of claim 20, wherein said compound is a reinforcer selected from the group consisting of hydrated amorphous silica, glass microspheres, and mixtures thereof.
22. The body of claim 21, wherein said reinforcer is hydrated amorphous silica, and said hydrated amorphous silica is present in said composition. at a level of from about 1-10% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.
23. The body of claim 21, wherein said reinforcer is glass microspheres, and said glass microspheres are present in said composition at a level of from about 10-20% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.
24. The body of claim 1, wherein said body is expanded by heating to a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F) and said expanded body has a compressive strength: specific gravity after bake ratio of at least about 2500:1.
25. The body of claim 24, wherein said ratio is at least about 3000:1.

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26. The body of claim 1, wherein said body is formed into a U-shaped structure and said structure is operably coupled to a lattice-type support presenting a plurality of elongated lattice-forming elements with corresponding lattice openings therebetween.
- 5 27. A method of forming an expanded sealant and baffle body comprising the steps of:
- (a) providing a quantity of a pre-mix, said pre-mix being formed by a process comprising the steps of mixing a first thermoplastic resin and an epoxy resin to form a mixture and heating said mixture to a temperature of at least about 79°C (175°F) to form said pre-mix;
 - 10 (b) mixing a compound with said pre-mix to form an intermediate mixture, said compound being selected from the group consisting of pigments, reinforcers, and mixtures thereof; and
 - (c) mixing an ingredient with said intermediate mixture, said ingredient being selected from the group consisting of blowing agents, curing agents, catalysts, and mixtures thereof to yield an expandable composition as defined in claim 1, wherein said expandable composition exhibits at least about 95% expansion after heating of said
 - 15 expandable composition to a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F); and
 - (d) heating said expandable composition by subjecting the composition to a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F) to yield said expanded body having a compressive strength of at least about 1200 psi:
- 20 28. The method of claim 26, wherein said process for forming the pre-mix further includes the step of mixing a second thermoplastic resin different from said first thermoplastic resin with the mixture of step (a).
29. The method of claim 27, further including the step of forming the intermediate mixture resulting from step (b) into pellets prior to step (c).
- 25 30. The method of claim 27, further including the step of shaping the composition resulting from step (c) to conform to the shape of an opening defined by a structural member to be sealed by said composition.
31. The method of claim 30, further including the step of placing said shaped composition into said opening within said structural member.
- 30 32. The method of claim 31, further including the step of heating said structural member containing said shaped composition by subjecting said member to air having a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F) to expand said shaped composition.
- 35 33. The method of claim 32, wherein said expanded shaped composition has a compressive strength of at least about 1200 psi.
34. The method of claim 30, wherein said shaping step comprises injection molding said composition.
- 40 35. The method of claim 32, wherein the percent expansion of said expanded shaped composition with respect to said composition prior to said heating step is at least about 95%.
36. The method of claim 27, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is selected from the group consisting of the polystyrenes, solid rubbers, and mixtures thereof.
- 45 37. The method of claim 27, wherein said epoxy resin is a bisphenol A-based liquid epoxy resin.
38. The method of claim 28, wherein said second thermoplastic resin is selected from the group consisting of the polystyrenes, solid rubbers, and mixtures thereof.
- 50 39. The method of claim 37, wherein said bisphenol A-based liquid epoxy resin is used in such an amount that it is present in said composition at a level of from about 30-45% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.
- 55 40. The method claim 27, wherein said reinforcers are selected from the group consisting of hydrated amorphous silica, glass microspheres, and mixtures thereof.
41. The method of claim 40, wherein said reinforcer is hydrated amorphous silica, and said hydrating amorphous

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silica is used in such an amount that it is present in said composition at a level of from about 1-10% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.

5 **42.** A sealant and baffle device for sealing a cavity of a vehicle body, said device comprising:

10 a lattice-type support presenting a plurality of elongated lattice-forming elements with corresponding lattice openings therebetween; and
an expandable synthetic resin body operably coupled with and supported by said lattice-type support, said body comprising a synthetic resin composition including a quantity of a first thermoplastic resin and from about 30-45% by weight of an epoxy resin based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight, the body having a temperature at which it begins to expand, said body being expandable at least partially through said lattice openings and exhibiting at least 95% expansion upon heating thereof to a temperature of at least about 149°C (300°F), said body having a compressive strength of at least about 1200 psi after expansion,

15 said elements having a melting point higher than said expansion temperature of said body.

20 **43.** The device of claim 42, wherein the cavity of the vehicle is formed by a plurality of walls and wherein when said body expands through said openings of said lattice, said expanded portions of said body adhere to at least one of the walls.

44. The device of claim 43, wherein said resin body is formed into a U-shaped body.

25 **45.** The device of claim 44, said device including a plurality of said U-shaped resin bodies being positioned spaced apart from one another and in alignment with one another.

46. The device of claim 42, wherein said first thermoplastic resin is selected from the group consisting of the polystyrenes, solid rubbers, and mixtures thereof.

30 **47.** The device of claim 43, further including a quantity of a second thermoplastic resin different from said first thermoplastic resin and selected from the group consisting of the polystyrenes, rubbers, and mixtures thereof.

48. The device of claim 42, wherein said epoxy resin is a bisphenol A-based liquid epoxy resin.

35 **49.** The device of claim 42, wherein said body is formed by injection molding.

50. The device of claim 42, said body further including a compound selected from the group consisting of pigments, blowing agents, catalysts, curing agents, reinforcers, and mixtures thereof.

40 **51.** The device of claim 50, wherein said compound is a reinforcer selected from the group consisting of hydrated amorphous silica, glass microspheres, and mixtures thereof.

45 **52.** The device of claim 51, wherein said reinforcer is hydrated amorphous silica, and said hydrated amorphous silica is present in said composition at a level of from about 1-10% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.

53. The device of claim 51, wherein said reinforcer is glass microspheres, and said glass microspheres are present in said composition at a level of from about 10-20% by weight, based upon the total weight of the composition taken as 100% by weight.

50 **54.** The device of claim 42, wherein said support is formed of nylon..

55. The device of claim 54, wherein said support is formed of glass reinforced nylon.

55 **56.** A composition as defined in claim 1 which comprises a quantity of different first and second thermoplastic resins mixed with from about 30-45% weight of an epoxy resin.

Patentansprüche

- 5 1. Expandierbarer Abdichtungskörper, enthaltend eine Kunstharzzusammensetzung, die eine Menge eines ersten thermoplastischen Harzes in Abmischung mit etwa 30-45 Gew.-% eines Epoxidharzes, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, enthält, wobei der Körper nach Erhitzen auf mindestens etwa 149°C (300°F) eine Expansion von mindestens etwa 95% und nach Expansion eine Druckfestigkeit von mindestens 1200 psi aufweist.
- 10 2. Körper nach Anspruch 1, bei dem das erste thermoplastische Harz aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Polystyrolen, festen Kautschuken und Gemischen davon stammt.
3. Körper nach Anspruch 2, bei dem es sich bei dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz um ein Polystyrol mit einem Molekulargewicht von etwa 150.000-320.000 handelt.
- 15 4. Körper nach Anspruch 2, bei dem es sich bei dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz um einen Kautschuk aus der Gruppe bestehend aus SBS-Blockcopolymeren, Styrol-Butadien-Kautschuken, Nitril-Butadien-Kautschuken und Gemischen davon handelt.
- 20 5. Körper nach Anspruch 1, bei dem es sich bei dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz um ein thermoplastisches Elastomer handelt.
6. Körper nach Anspruch 5, bei dem es sich bei dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz um ein SBS-Blockcopolymer mit einem Molekulargewicht von etwa 100.000-150.000 handelt.
- 25 7. Körper nach Anspruch 4, bei dem es sich bei dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz um einen Styrol-Butadien-Kautschuk mit einem Butadien/Styrol-Verhältnis von etwa 32:68 bis etwa 18:82 handelt.
8. Körper nach Anspruch 4, bei dem es sich bei dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz um einen Nitril-Butadien-Kautschuk mit einem Butadien/Acrylnitril-Verhältnis von etwa 42:58 bis etwa 35:65 handelt.
- 30 9. Körper nach Anspruch 2, bei dem es sich bei dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz um ein Polystyrol handelt, das in der Zusammensetzung in einem Anteil von etwa 5-20 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, vorliegt.
- 35 10. Körper nach Anspruch 4, bei dem es sich bei dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz um ein SBS-Blockcopolymer handelt, das in der Zusammensetzung in einem Anteil von etwa 20-30 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, vorliegt.
- 40 11. Körper nach Anspruch 1, ferner enthaltend eine Menge eines zweiten thermoplastischen Harzes, das sich von dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz unterscheidet und aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Polystyrolen, festen Kautschuken und Gemischen davon stammt.
- 45 12. Körper nach Anspruch 11, bei dem der prozentuale Gesamtgewichtsanteil des ersten thermoplastischen Harzes und des zweiten thermoplastischen Harzes etwa 25-50 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, beträgt.
- 50 13. Körper nach Anspruch 11, ferner enthaltend eine Menge eines dritten thermoplastischen Harzes, das sich von dem ersten und dem zweiten thermoplastischen Harz unterscheidet und aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Polystyrolen, festen Kautschuken und Gemischen davon stammt.
- 55 14. Körper nach Anspruch 1, bei dem es sich bei dem Epoxidharz um ein flüssiges Epoxidharz handelt.
15. Körper nach Anspruch 14, bei dem es sich bei dem flüssigen Epoxidharz um ein flüssiges Epoxidharz auf Basis von Bisphenol A handelt.
16. Körper nach Anspruch 1, bei dem die prozentuale Expansion des Körpers mindestens etwa 125% beträgt.
17. Körper nach Anspruch 1, bei dem der Körper durch Erhitzen auf eine Temperatur von mindestens etwa 300°F

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expandiert worden ist und der expandierte Körper ein auf Wasser bezogenes spezifisches Gewicht von weniger als etwa 0,47 aufweist.

5 18. Körper nach Anspruch 1, der ein auf Wasser bezogenes spezifisches Gewicht von weniger als etwa 0,90 aufweist.

19. Körper nach Anspruch 1, der durch Spritzguß hergestellt worden ist.

10 20. Körper nach Anspruch 1, ferner enthaltend eine Verbindung aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Pigmenten, Treibmitteln, Katalysatoren, Härtern, Verstärkungsmitteln und Gemischen davon.

21. Körper nach Anspruch 20, bei dem es sich bei der Verbindung um ein Verstärkungsmittel aus der Gruppe bestehend aus amorphem Siliciumoxidhydrat, Glasmikrokugeln und Gemischen davon handelt.

15 22. Körper nach Anspruch 21, bei dem es sich bei dem Verstärkungsmittel um amorphes Siliciumoxidhydrat handelt, das in der Zusammensetzung in einem Anteil von etwa 1-10 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, vorliegt.

20 23. Körper nach Anspruch 21, bei dem es sich bei dem Verstärkungsmittel um Glasmikrokugeln handelt, die in der Zusammensetzung in einem Anteil von etwa 10-20 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, vorliegen.

25 24. Körper nach Anspruch 1, bei dem der Körper durch Erhitzen auf eine Temperatur von mindestens etwa 149°C (300°F) expandiert worden ist und der expandierte Körper ein Verhältnis von Druckfestigkeit zu spezifischem Gewicht nach dem Brennen von mindestens etwa 2500:1 aufweist.

26 25. Körper nach Anspruch 24, bei dem das Verhältnis mindestens etwa 3000:1 beträgt.

30 26. Körper nach Anspruch 1, der zu einer U-förmigen Struktur geformt ist, welche mit einem Gitterträger, der mehrere langgestreckte gitterbildende Elemente mit entsprechenden Gitteröffnungen dazwischen aufweist, wirkverbunden ist.

27. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines expandierten Abdichtungs- und Dämpfungskörpers, bei dem man:

35 (a) eine Menge einer Vormischung bereitstellt, wobei die Vormischung nach einem Verfahren hergestellt wird, bei dem man ein erstes thermoplastisches Harz und ein Epoxidharz vermischt und die dabei erhaltene Mischung auf eine Temperatur von mindestens etwa 79°C (175°F) erhitzt, wobei man die Vormischung erhält;

40 (b) die Vormischung mit einer aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Pigmenten, Verstärkungsmitteln und Gemischen davon ausgewählten Verbindung vermischt, wobei man eine Zwischenmischung erhält; und

45 (c) die Zwischenmischung mit einem aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Treibmitteln, Härtern, Katalysatoren und Gemischen davon ausgewählten Bestandteil vermischt, was eine expandierbare Zusammensetzung gemäß Anspruch 1 ergibt, die nach Erhitzen auf mindestens etwa 149°C (300°F) eine Expansion von mindestens etwa 95% aufweist; und

(d) die expandierbare Zusammensetzung erhitzt, indem man sie einer Temperatur von mindestens etwa 149°C (300°F) aussetzt, was den expandierten Körper mit einer Druckfestigkeit von mindestens 1200 psi ergibt.

50 28. Verfahren nach Anspruch 26, bei dem man bei dem Verfahren zur Herstellung der Vormischung ferner die Mischung aus Schritt (a) mit einem zweiten thermoplastischen Harz, das sich von dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz unterscheidet, vermischt.

55 29. Verfahren nach Anspruch 27, bei dem man ferner die Zwischenmischung aus Schritt (b) vor Schritt (c) in Pelletform bringt.

30. Verfahren nach Anspruch 27, bei dem man ferner die Zusammensetzung aus Schritt (c) so formt, daß sie der Form einer durch ein mit der Zusammensetzung abzudichtendes Bauelement definierten Öffnung entspricht.

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31. Verfahren nach Anspruch 30, bei dem man ferner die geformte Zusammensetzung in die Öffnung in dem Bauelement einbringt.
- 5 32. Verfahren nach Anspruch 31, bei dem man ferner das die geformte Zusammensetzung enthaltende Bauelement erhitzt, indem man es Luft mit einer Temperatur von mindestens etwa 149°C (300°F) aussetzt, wodurch die geformte Zusammensetzung expandiert wird.
- 10 33. Verfahren nach Anspruch 32, bei dem die expandierte geformte Zusammensetzung eine Druckfestigkeit von mindestens etwa 1200 psi aufweist.
34. Verfahren nach Anspruch 30, bei dem man bei der Formgebung die Zusammensetzung spritzgießt.
- 15 35. Verfahren nach Anspruch 32, bei dem die prozentuale Expansion der expandierten geformten Zusammensetzung, bezogen auf die Zusammensetzung vor dem Erhitzen, mindestens etwa 95% beträgt.
- 20 36. Verfahren nach Anspruch 27, bei dem man das erste thermoplastische Harz aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Polystyrolen, festen Kautschuken und Gemischen davon auswählt.
37. Verfahren nach Anspruch 27, bei dem es sich bei dem Epoxidharz um ein flüssiges Epoxidharz auf Basis von Bisphenol A handelt.
- 25 38. Verfahren nach Anspruch 28, bei dem man das zweite thermoplastische Harz aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Polystyrolen, festen Kautschuken und Gemischen davon auswählt.
- 30 39. Verfahren nach Anspruch 37, bei dem man das flüssige Epoxidharz auf Basis von Bisphenol A in einer solchen Menge verwendet, daß es in der Zusammensetzung in einem Anteil von etwa 30-45 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, vorliegt.
- 35 40. Verfahren nach Anspruch 27, bei dem man die Verstärkungsmittel aus der Gruppe bestehend aus amorphem Siliciumoxidhydrat, Glasmikrokugeln und Gemischen davon auswählt.
42. Abdichtungs- und Dämpfungsvorrichtung zum Abdichten eines Hohlraums einer Fahrzeugkarosserie, enthaltend:
- einen Gitterträger, der mehrere langgestreckte gitterbildende Elemente mit entsprechenden Gitteröffnungen dazwischen aufweist; und
- 40 einen expandierbaren Kunstharzkörper, der mit dem Gitterträger wirkverbunden ist und davon getragen wird, wobei der Körper eine Kunstharzzusammensetzung enthält, die eine Menge eines ersten thermoplastischen Harzes in Abmischung mit etwa 30-45 Gew.-% eines Epoxidharzes, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, enthält, wobei der Körper eine Temperatur aufweist, bei der er zu expandieren beginnt, zumindest teilweise durch die Gitteröffnungen expandierbar ist und nach Erhitzen auf mindestens etwa 149°C (300°F) eine Expansion von mindestens 95% und nach Expansion eine Druckfestigkeit von mindestens 1200 psi aufweist,
- 45 wobei die Elemente einen über der Expansionstemperatur des Körpers liegenden Schmelzpunkt aufweisen.
- 50 43. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 42, bei der der Hohlraum des Fahrzeugs durch mehrere Wände gebildet wird und beim Expandieren des Körpers durch die Öffnungen des Gitters die expandierten Teile des Körpers an mindestens einer der Wände haften.
- 55 44. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 43, bei der der Harzkörper zu einem U-förmigen Körper geformt ist.
45. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 44 mit mehreren der U-förmigen Harzkörper, die voneinander beabstandet und aufeinander ausgerichtet sind.

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46. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 42, bei der das erste thermoplastische Harz aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Polystyrolen, festen Kautschuken und Gemischen davon stammt.
- 5 47. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 43, ferner enthaltend eine Menge eines zweiten thermoplastischen Harzes, das sich von dem ersten thermoplastischen Harz unterscheidet und aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Polystyrolen, festen Kautschuken und Gemischen davon stammt.
- 10 48. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 42, bei der es sich bei dem Epoxidharz um ein flüssiges Epoxidharz auf Basis von Bisphenol A handelt.
- 15 49. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 42, bei der der Körper durch Spritzguß hergestellt worden ist.
- 20 50. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 42, bei der der Körper ferner eine Verbindung aus der Gruppe bestehend aus Pigmenten, Treibmitteln, Katalysatoren, Härtern, Verstärkungsmitteln und Gemischen davon enthält.
- 25 51. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 50, bei der es sich bei der Verbindung um ein Verstärkungsmittel aus der Gruppe bestehend aus amorphem Siliciumoxidhydrat, Glasmikrokugeln und Gemischen davon handelt.
- 30 52. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 51, bei der es sich bei dem Verstärkungsmittel um amorphes Siliciumoxidhydrat handelt, das in der Zusammensetzung in einem Anteil von etwa 1-10 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, vorliegt.
- 35 53. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 51, bei der es sich bei dem Verstärkungsmittel um Glasmikrokugeln handelt, die in der Zusammensetzung in einem Anteil von etwa 10-20 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das als 100 Gew.-% gerechnete Gesamtgewicht der Zusammensetzung, vorliegen.
- 40 54. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 42, bei der der Träger aus Polyamid besteht.
- 45 55. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 54, bei der der Träger aus glasverstärktem Polyamid besteht.
- 50 56. Zusammensetzung nach Anspruch 1, die eine Menge eines ersten thermoplastischen Harzes und eines zweiten thermoplastischen Harzes, die voneinander verschieden sind, in Abmischung mit etwa 30-45 Gew.-% eines Epoxidharzes enthält.

Revendications

- 40 1. Corps d'étanchéité expansible comprenant une composition de résine synthétique incluant une quantité d'une première résine thermoplastique mélangée avec environ 30-45% en poids d'une résine époxy, par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids, ledit corps montrant au moins 95% d'expansion après chauffage du corps à une température d'au moins environ 149°C (300°F) et ledit corps ayant une résistance à la compression d'au moins environ 8,27 MPa (1200 psi) après expansion.
- 45 2. Corps selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est choisie parmi le groupe constitué des polystyrènes, des caoutchoucs solides et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
- 50 3. Corps selon la revendication 2, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est un polystyrène ayant un poids moléculaire d'environ 150 000-320 000.
- 55 4. Corps selon la revendication 2, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est un caoutchouc choisi parmi le groupe constitué des copolymères à blocs SBS, des caoutchoucs de styrène-butadiène, des caoutchoucs de nitrile-butadiène et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
5. Corps selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est un élastomère thermoplastique.
6. Corps selon la revendication 5, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est un copolymère à blocs SBS ayant un poids moléculaire d'environ 100 000-150 000.

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7. Corps selon la revendication 4, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est un caoutchouc de styrène-butadiène ayant un rapport du butadiène au styrène d'environ 32:68 à environ 18:82.
- 5 8. Corps selon la revendication 4, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est un caoutchouc de nitrile-butadiène ayant un rapport du butadiène à l'acrylonitrile d'environ 42:58 à environ 35:65.
9. Corps selon la revendication 2, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est un polystyrène et est présent dans ladite composition à un taux d'environ 5-20% en poids par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids.
- 10 10. Corps selon la revendication 4, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est un copolymère à blocs SBS et est présente dans ladite composition à un taux d'environ 20-30% en poids, par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids.
- 15 11. Corps selon la revendication 1, incluant en plus une quantité d'une seconde résine thermoplastique différente de ladite première résine thermoplastique et choisie parmi le groupe constitué des polystyrènes, des caoutchoucs solides et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
- 20 12. Corps selon la revendication 11, dans lequel le pourcentage en poids total de ladite première résine thermoplastique et de ladite seconde résine thermoplastique est environ 25-50% en poids, par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids.
- 25 13. Corps selon la revendication 11, incluant en plus une quantité d'une troisième résine thermoplastique différente de ladite première et de ladite seconde résines thermoplastiques et choisie parmi le groupe constitué des polystyrènes, des caoutchoucs solides et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
- 30 14. Corps selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ladite résine époxy est une résine époxy liquide.
- 35 15. Corps selon la revendication 14, dans lequel ladite résine époxy liquide est une résine époxy liquide à base de bisphénol A.
- 40 16. Corps selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le pourcentage d'expansion dudit corps est au moins d'environ 125%.
- 45 17. Corps selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit corps est expansé par la chaleur à une température d'au moins environ 149°C (300°F) et ledit corps expansé a une densité en référence à l'eau de moins d'environ 0,47.
18. Corps selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit corps a une densité en référence à l'eau d'au moins environ 0,90.
- 40 19. Corps selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit corps est formé par moulage par injection.
- 50 20. Corps selon la revendication 1, incluant en plus un composé choisi parmi le groupe constitué de pigments, d'agents gonflants, de catalyseurs, d'agents de durcissement, d'agents de renforcement et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
- 55 21. Corps selon la revendication 20, dans lequel ledit composé est un agent de renforcement choisi parmi le groupe constitué de silice amorphe hydratée, de microsphères de verre et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
22. Corps selon la revendication 21, dans lequel ledit agent de renforcement est de la silice amorphe hydratée et ladite silice amorphe hydratée est présente dans ladite composition à un taux d'environ 1-10% en poids, par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids.
- 50 23. Corps selon la revendication 21, dans lequel ledit agent de renforcement est constitué de microsphères de verre et lesdites microsphères de verre sont présentes dans ladite composition à un taux d'environ 10-20% en poids, par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids.
- 55 24. Corps selon la revendication 1 dans lequel ledit corps est expansé par chauffage à une température d'au moins environ 149°C (300°F) et ledit corps expansé a un rapport de la résistance à la compression:densité après cuisson d'au moins environ 2500:1.

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25. Corps selon la revendication 24, dans lequel ledit rapport est d'au moins environ 3000:1.
26. Corps selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit corps est façonné en une structure en U et ladite structure est couplée de manière opérable à un support de type réseau présentant une pluralité d'éléments allongés formant un réseau avec entre eux des ouvertures correspondantes du réseau.
27. Procédé de formation d'un corps d'étanchéité expansé et de chicane comprenant les étapes de :
- a) fourniture d'une quantité d'un prémélange, ledit prémélange étant formé par un procédé comprenant les étapes de mélange d'une première résine thermoplastique et d'une résine époxy pour former un mélange et le chauffage dudit mélange à une température d'au moins environ 79°C (175°F) pour former ledit prémélange ;
 - b) mélange d'un composé avec ledit prémélange pour former un mélange intermédiaire, ledit composé étant choisi parmi le groupe constitué de pigments, d'agents de renforcement et de mélanges de ceux-ci ; et
 - c) mélange d'un ingrédient avec ledit mélange intermédiaire, ledit ingrédient étant choisi parmi le groupe constitué d'agents gonflants, d'agents de durcissement, de catalyseurs et des mélanges de ceux-ci pour donner une composition expansible comme définie dans la revendication 1 où ladite composition expansible montre au moins environ 95% d'expansion après chauffage de ladite composition expansible à une température d'au moins environ 149°C (300°F) ; et
 - d) chauffage de ladite composition expansible en soumettant la composition à une température d'au moins environ 149°C (300°F) ; pour donner ledit corps expansé ayant une résistance à la compression d'au moins environ 8,27 MPa (1200 psi).
28. Procédé selon la revendication 26, dans lequel ledit procédé pour former le prémélange inclut en plus l'étape de mélange d'une seconde résine thermoplastique différente de ladite première résine thermoplastique avec le mélange de l'étape a).
29. Procédé selon la revendication 27, incluant en plus l'étape de formation du mélange intermédiaire résultant de l'étape b) en pastilles avant l'étape c).
30. Procédé selon la revendication 27, incluant en plus l'étape de façonnage de la composition résultant de l'étape c) pour la conformer à la forme d'une ouverture définie par un membre de structure à remplir avec ladite composition.
31. Procédé selon la revendication 30, incluant en plus l'étape de placement de ladite composition façonnée dans ladite ouverture dans ledit membre de structure.
32. Procédé selon la revendication 31, incluant en plus l'étape de chauffage dudit membre de structure contenant ladite composition façonnée en soumettant ledit membre à de l'air ayant une température d'au moins environ 149°C (300°F) pour expanser ladite composition façonnée.
33. Procédé selon la revendication 32, dans lequel ladite composition façonnée expansée a une résistance à la compression d'au moins environ 8,27 MPa (1200 psi).
34. Procédé selon la revendication 30, dans lequel ladite étape de façonnage comprend le moulage par injection de ladite composition.
35. Procédé selon la revendication 32, dans lequel le pourcentage d'expansion de ladite composition façonnée expansée par rapport à ladite composition avant ladite étape de chauffage est d'au moins environ 95%.
36. Procédé selon la revendication 27, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est choisie parmi le groupe constitué des polystyrènes, des caoutchoucs solides et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
37. Procédé selon la revendication 27, dans lequel ladite résine époxy est une résine époxy liquide à base de bisphénol A.
38. Procédé selon la revendication 28, dans lequel ladite seconde résine thermoplastique est choisie parmi le groupe constitué des polystyrènes, des caoutchoucs solides et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
39. Procédé selon la revendication 37, dans laquelle ladite résine époxy liquide à base de bisphénol A est utilisée

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dans une quantité telle qu'elle est présente dans ladite composition à un taux d'environ 30-45% en poids, par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids.

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40. Procédé selon la revendication 27, dans lequel lesdits agents de renforcement sont choisis parmi le groupe constitué de silice amorphe hydratée, de microsphères de verre et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
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41. Procédé selon la revendication 40, dans lequel ledit agent de renforcement est de la silice amorphe hydratée et ladite silice amorphe hydratée est utilisée dans une quantité telle qu'elle est présente dans ladite composition à un taux d'environ 1-10% en poids, par rapport au poids total de la composition considérée comme 100% en poids.
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42. Dispositif de corps étanche et de chicane pour remplir une cavité d'une carrosserie de véhicule, ledit dispositif comprenant :
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- un support de type réseau présentant une pluralité d'éléments allongés formant un réseau avec entre eux des ouvertures correspondantes du réseau ; et
un corps de résine synthétique expansible couplé de manière opérable avec et supporté par ledit support de type réseau, ledit corps comprenant une composition de résine synthétique incluant une quantité d'une première résine thermoplastique et d'environ 30-45% en poids d'une résine époxy, par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids, le corps ayant une température à laquelle il commence à s'expanser, ledit corps étant expansible au moins partiellement à travers lesdites ouvertures du réseau et montrant au moins 95% d'expansion lors du chauffage de celui-ci à une température d'au moins environ 149°C (300°F), ledit corps ayant une résistance à la compression d'au moins environ 8,27 MPa (1200 psi) après expansion,
25 lesdits éléments ayant un point de fusion plus élevé que ladite température d'expansion dudit corps.
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43. Dispositif selon la revendication 42, dans lequel la cavité du véhicule est formée par une pluralité de parois et dans lequel, quand ledit corps s'expande à travers lesdites ouvertures dudit réseau, lesdites portions expansées dudit corps adhèrent au moins à une des parois.
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44. Dispositif selon la revendication 43, dans lequel ledit corps de résine est transformé en un corps en forme de U.
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45. Dispositif selon la revendication 44, ledit dispositif incluant une pluralité desdits corps de résine en forme de U positionnés séparés les uns des autres et alignés les uns par rapport aux autres.
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46. Dispositif selon la revendication 42, dans lequel ladite première résine thermoplastique est choisie parmi le groupe constitué des polystyrènes, des caoutchoucs solides et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
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47. Dispositif selon la revendication 43, incluant en plus une quantité d'une seconde résine thermoplastique différente de ladite première résine thermoplastique et choisie parmi le groupe constitué des polystyrènes, des caoutchoucs et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
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48. Dispositif selon la revendication 42, dans lequel ladite résine époxy est une résine époxy liquide à base de bis-phénol A.
49. Dispositif selon la revendication 42, dans lequel ledit corps est formé par moulage par injection.
50. Dispositif selon la revendication 42, ledit corps incluant en plus un composé choisi parmi le groupe constitué de pigments, d'agents gonflants, de catalyseurs, d'agents de durcissement, d'agents de renforcement et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
51. Dispositif selon la revendication 50, dans lequel ledit composé est un agent de renforcement choisi parmi le groupe constitué de silice amorphe hydratée, de microsphères de verre et des mélanges de ceux-ci.
52. Dispositif selon la revendication 51, dans lequel ledit agent de renforcement est de la silice amorphe hydratée et ladite silice amorphe hydratée est présente dans ladite composition à un taux d'environ 1-10% en poids par rapport au poids total de la composition considéré comme 100% en poids.
53. Dispositif selon la revendication 51, dans lequel ledit agent de renforcement est constitué de microsphères de

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verre et lesdites microsphères de verre sont présentes dans ladite composition à un taux d'environ 10-20% en poids, par rapport au poids total de la composition considérée comme 100% en poids.

5 **54.** Dispositif selon la revendication 42, dans lequel ledit support est formé de Nylon.

55. Dispositif selon la revendication 54, dans lequel ledit support est formé de Nylon renforcé avec du verre.

10 **56.** Composition comme définie selon la revendication 1, qui comprend une quantité de première et seconde résines thermoplastiques différentes mélangées avec environ 30-45% en poids d'une résine époxy.

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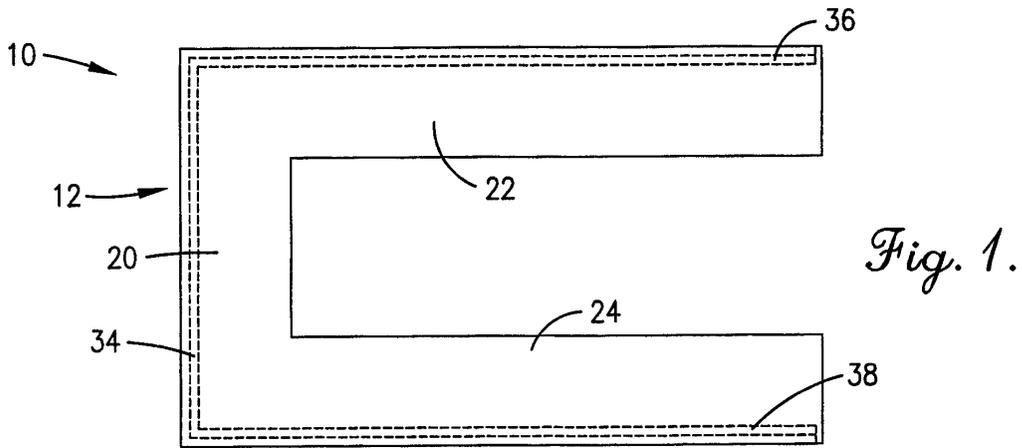


Fig. 1.

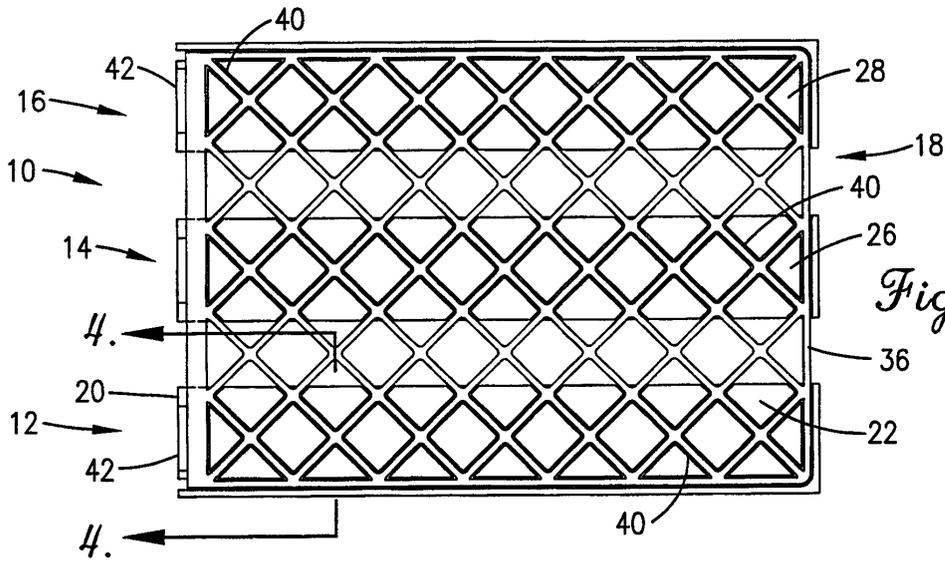


Fig. 2.

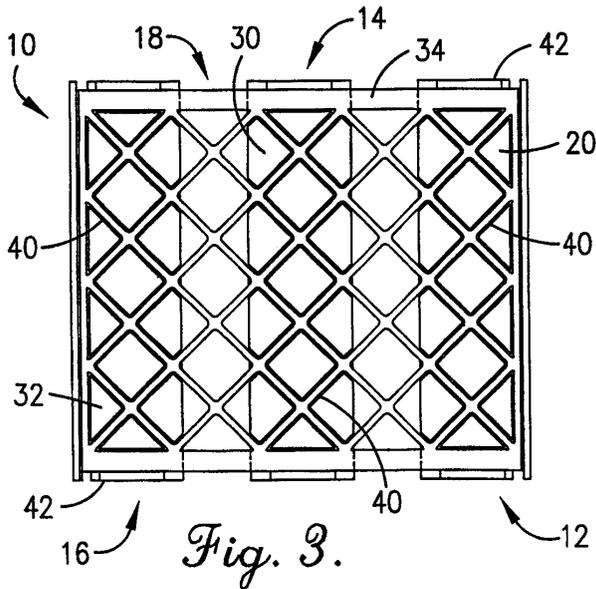


Fig. 3.

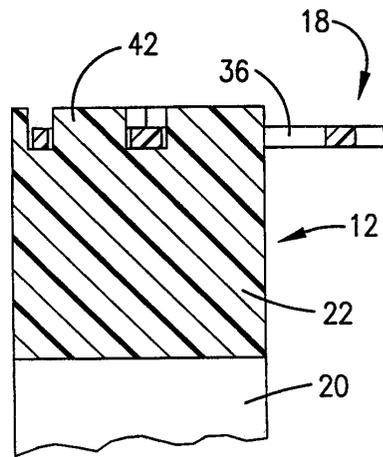


Fig. 4.