

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventors: David F. MACNEIL et al.

Title: VEHICLE FLOOR TRAY

Filed: Herewith

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

New nonprovisional application under 37 CFR 1.53(b), Electronic Filing

1. Specification, including claims and abstract [Total Pages]
2. Drawing(s) [Total Pages]
3. Declaration of Inventor(s) [Total Pages]
 - a. Newly executed
 - b. Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 15 completed)
[Note Box 4 below]
 - i. DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application
(see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b)).
4. Incorporation By Reference (*useable if Box 3b is checked*). The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 3b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.
5. Application Data Sheet
6. CD-ROM or CD-R in duplicate, large table or Computer Program (Appendix)

DOCUMENTS ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

8. Assignment Papers (cover sheet and documents, submitted for recordation via EPAS)
9. 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement and Power of Attorney Power of Attorney
(when there is an assignee)
10. English Translation Document (*if applicable*)

Attorney Docket No. 31700.000322

APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES PATENT

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ASSIGNEE: MACNEIL IP LLC

TITLE: VEHICLE FLOOR TRAY

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DESIGNING AND MANUFACTURING VEHICLE FLOOR TRAYS

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of copending United States Nonprovisional Application No. 12/879,899 filed on September 10, 2010, which is in turn a continuation of United States Nonprovisional Application No. 11/463,203 filed on August 8, 2006, now abandoned, which is in turn a division of United States Nonprovisional Application No. 10/976,441 filed on October 29, 2004, now United States Patent No. 7,316,847. The disclosures and drawings of those applications are fully incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Motor vehicles are almost always operated in the out of doors and are frequently parked there. It is therefore very common for their occupants to have wet or muddy feet – if the occupants have not just finished an outdoor activity, at least they have had to walk across a possibly wet, snowy or muddy surface to access their vehicles. For decades, therefore, vehicle owners have been attempting to protect the enclosed interiors of their vehicles (cars, trucks, SUVs) from what they themselves track into them. The conventional solution to this has been to provide a vehicle floor mat which may be periodically removed by the owner and cleaned.

[0003] Human beings have a tendency to move their feet around, and foot motion is an absolute requirement in operating most vehicles. This has caused a problem, in that the occupants of a vehicle have a tendency to push around the floor mats with their feet. The floor mats end up not being centered on the area protected, or pushed up so as to occlude the gas, brake or clutch pedals, or bunched up or folded over – all undesirable conditions. One objective of floor mat

manufacturers has therefore been to provide a floor mat that will stay put and which will not adversely affect vehicle operation.

[0004] The foot wells of cars, trucks and SUVs vary in size in shape from one model of vehicle to the next. Floor mat manufacturers have noticed that floor mats which at least approximately conform to the shape of the bottom surface of the foot well stay in place better and offer more protection. It is also common for such floor mats, where provided for front seat foot wells, to have portions which are meant to lie against the firewalls or front surfaces of the foot wells. Even as so extended it is not too hard to provide a floor mat of flexible material that will approximately conform to these two surfaces, as the designer only has to mark a two-dimensional periphery of the mat in providing one which will fit reasonably well.

[0005] More recently, vehicle floor trays have come onto the market. Most front-seat vehicle foot wells are actually three-dimensional concave shapes, typically with complex curved surfaces. Floor trays have sidewalls that offer enhanced protection to the surfaces surrounding the vehicle floor, as might be needed against wearers with very muddy or snowy shoes. Conventional vehicle floor trays try to fit into these three-dimensional cavities, but so far their fit to the surfaces that they are supposed to protect has been less than optimum. A conventional vehicle floor tray is typically molded of a single-ply rubber or plastic material, exhibits enough stiffness to retain a three-dimensional shape, but is also at least somewhat flexible. Fitting such a tray to the complex three-dimensional surface of a vehicle foot well has proven to be difficult, and the products currently in the marketplace have limited consumer acceptance because of their loose fit inside the foot well. There is often, and in many places, a considerable space between the exterior wall of these conventional trays and the interior surface of the foot well. This causes

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