

INVENTION

Patents of the Week

A safety control system locks all the doors of a car automatically in case of collision and prevents passengers from being thrown out—By William McCann

➤ A SYSTEM that automatically locks all doors on a car during a collision earned a patent granted by the U.S. Patent Office. It prevents occupants from being thrown out of a car, thus eliminating a principal cause of fatalities in auto accidents.

A mercury bead floating in a switch under the car judges whether the car is speeding up or slowing down too quickly. If the car accelerates or slows down beyond a predetermined speed the mercury bead will close the current and all doors will automatically lock. The doors unlock when the car remains stationary.

The system also includes a tilt-responsive switch in event the car flips on its side after a collision. The switch would automatically unlock the doors so passengers can escape. The opening of this switch also de-energizes the ignition system killing the engine, thus lowering the threat of a gasoline fire.

The safety control system was invented by Samuel C. Pollock, Rochester, Mich., and earned patent 3,151,698. Mr. Pollock assigned the patent rights to General Motors Corporation, Detroit, Mich.

Snow and Ice Melting Device

A new device that uses heat from a car's exhaust may help drivers melt away many of their snow and ice problems this winter.

The device is a long strip of hose with a funnel-shaped attachment at each end.

A driver needs only to start the car, "plug" either funnel into the car's tail pipe and let the hot exhaust gases do the melting.

The device can melt snow or ice from around the wheels of the automobile, clean the windshield and other windows and free frozen locks, reports Howard H. Howard, New Rochelle, N.Y., inventor.

The melter earned Mr. Howard patent 3,151,613.

Underwater Weed Killer

A portable machine that creates a constant underwater cloud has been developed to help halt the growth of troublesome aquatic weeds along shorelines.

The apparatus, which contains a pump and a series of hoses with holes, uses water or air pressure jets to agitate materials on the sea bed, thus creating a muddy cloud. The cloud shades the sea bottom from the sun, which is necessary for the germination and growth of aquatic weeds.

The cloud has to be maintained only during the early spring or summer in the germinating period of the weeds. Then the apparatus can be removed and the treated area will remain weed-free for the rest of the year.

The cloud-making machine, which earned David R. Talbott, Annapolis, Md., patent 3,151,463, can also spray liquid weed killers.

Other Interesting Patents

A new process that uses enzymes for producing a much broader range of penicillins than before possible earned patent 3,152,050. The new method was invented by Norman H. Grant, Wynnewood, Pa., and Harvey E. Alburn, West Chester, Pa., who assigned rights to the American Home Products Corporation, New York City.

A portable snow scooter was awarded patent 3,151,876. The scooter, which is collapsible, can be folded into a lightweight package for carrying or storage. It was invented by Charles Hahto, Los Angeles, Calif.

A device which lets the auto driver know when he is too close to the car in front earned patent 3,152,317 for Donald W. Mayer, New Market, N.J. The device uses infrared rays and may be used for military convoys that have to sneak around at night without any light, reports Mr. Mayer in his patent. Patent rights were assigned to Tung-Sol Electric Inc., Newark, N.J.

• Science News Letter, 86:269 October 24, 1964

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• Science News Letter, 86:269 October 24, 1964



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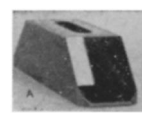
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