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(54) **END CAP FOR A TUBULAR LIGHT SOURCE**

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H01R 33/96 (2006.01)
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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***H01R 33/96*** (2013.01); ***F21K 9/27*** (2016.08); ***F21K 9/272*** (2016.08); ***F21V 21/002*** (2013.01);
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CPC F21V 25/04; F21V 23/04; F21V 23/06; H01R 33/96; H01R 13/701
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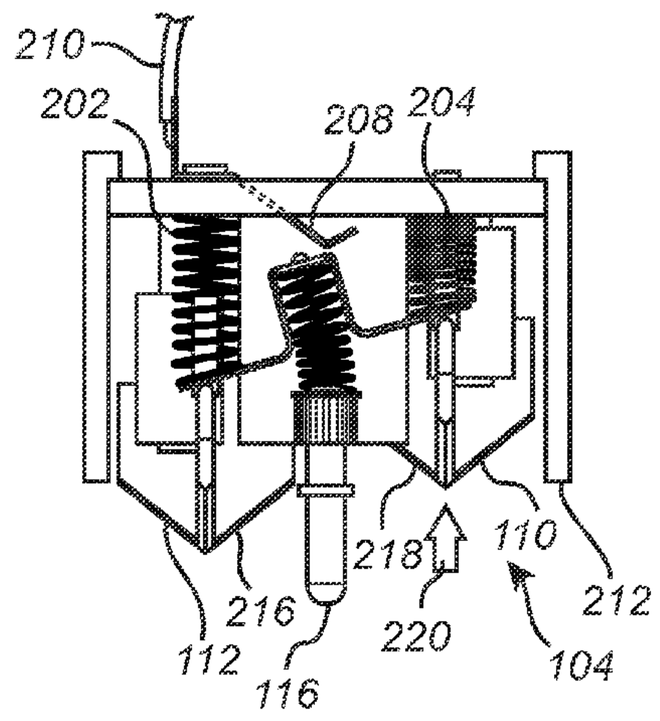
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to an end cap (**104**) for a tubular light source the tubular light source configured to be arranged in a lighting fixture comprising a socket, wherein the end cap (**104**) comprises a housing portion having a connection end, two connector pins (**116**) at least partly arranged on an outside of the housing portion at the connection end, wherein the connector pins (**116**) are configured to fit in the sockets of the lighting fixture, a first spring loaded switching element (**110**) configured to be alternately positioned in an actuated state and a non-actuated state,
(Continued)



wherein the first spring loaded switching element (**110**) protrudes at the connection end of the housing portion in the vicinity of the connector pins (**116**) when positioned in its non-actuated state, and a second spring loaded switching element (**112**) configured to be positioned in an actuated state and a non-actuated state, wherein the switching elements (**110**, **112**) are configured to be individually positioned in their respective actuated states to form an electrical connection between the socket and the tubular light source when the end cap (**104**) is mounted into the socket of the fixture.

15 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets

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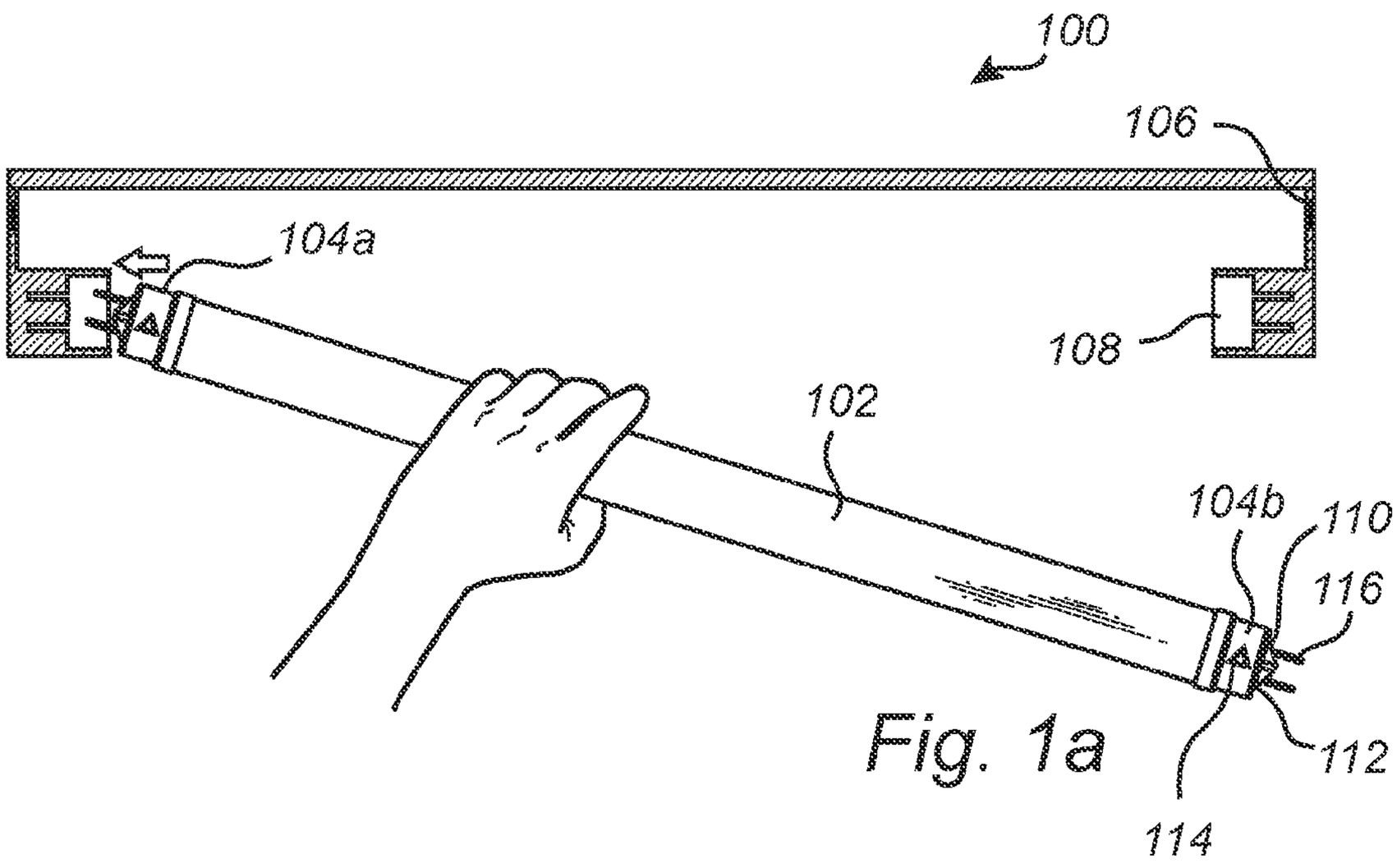


Fig. 1a

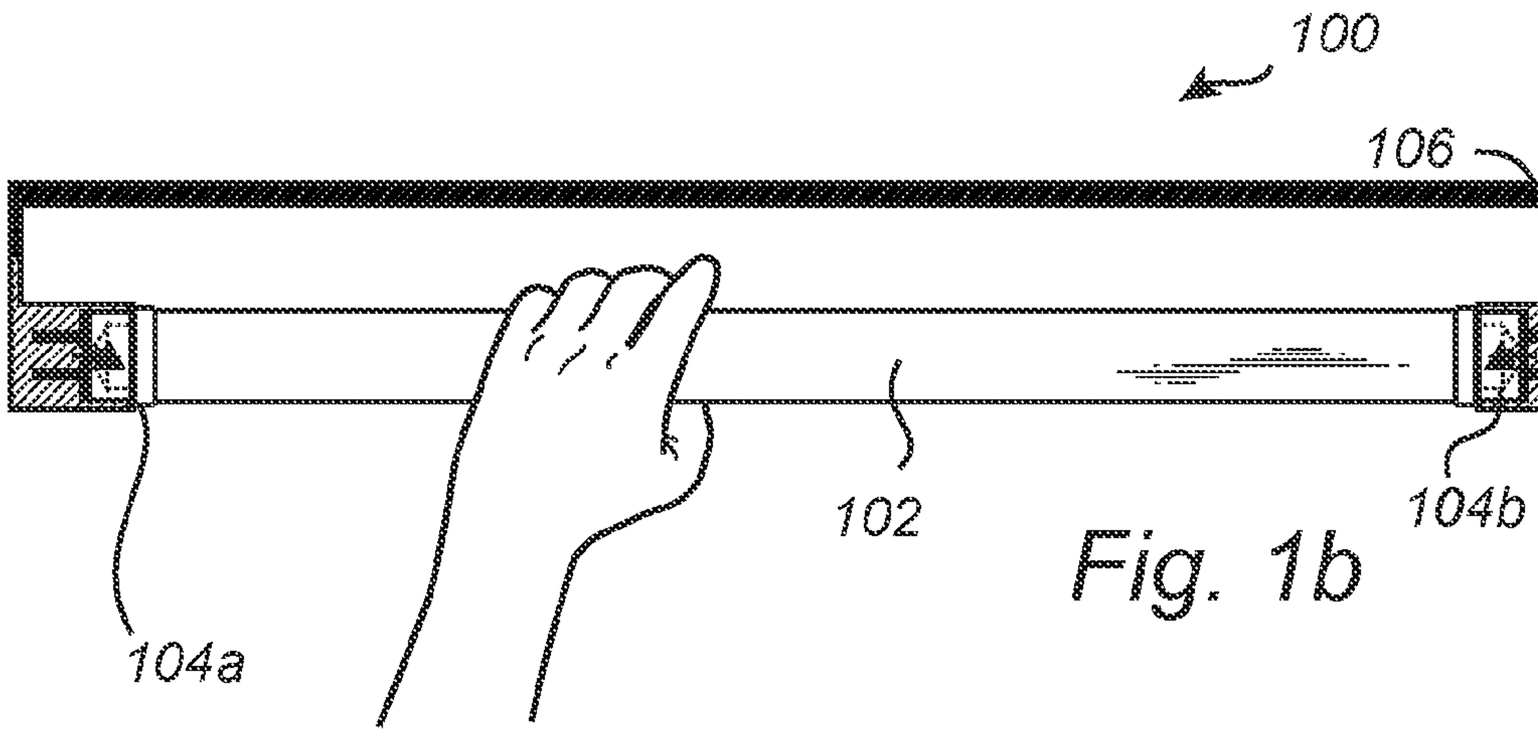


Fig. 1b

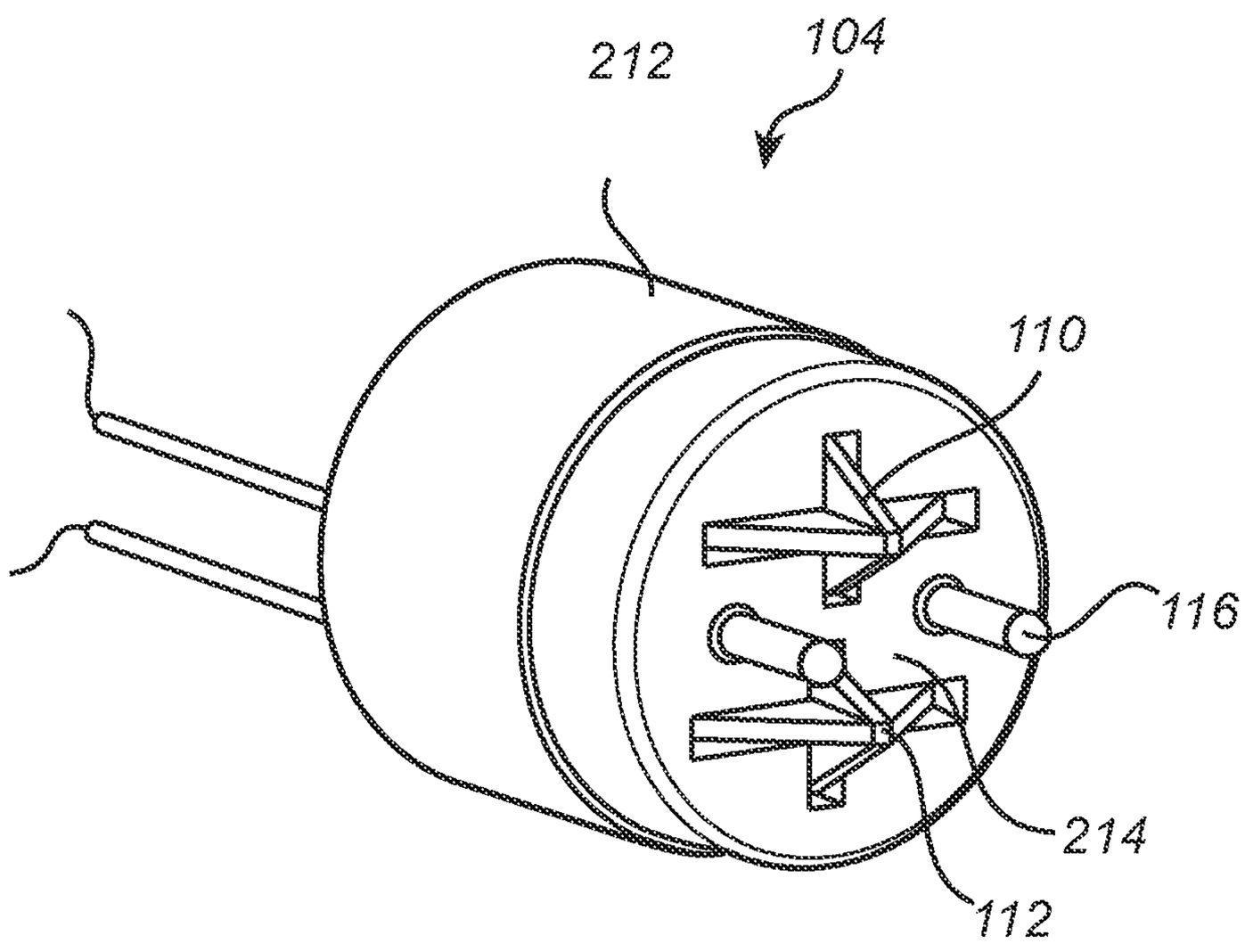


Fig. 2a

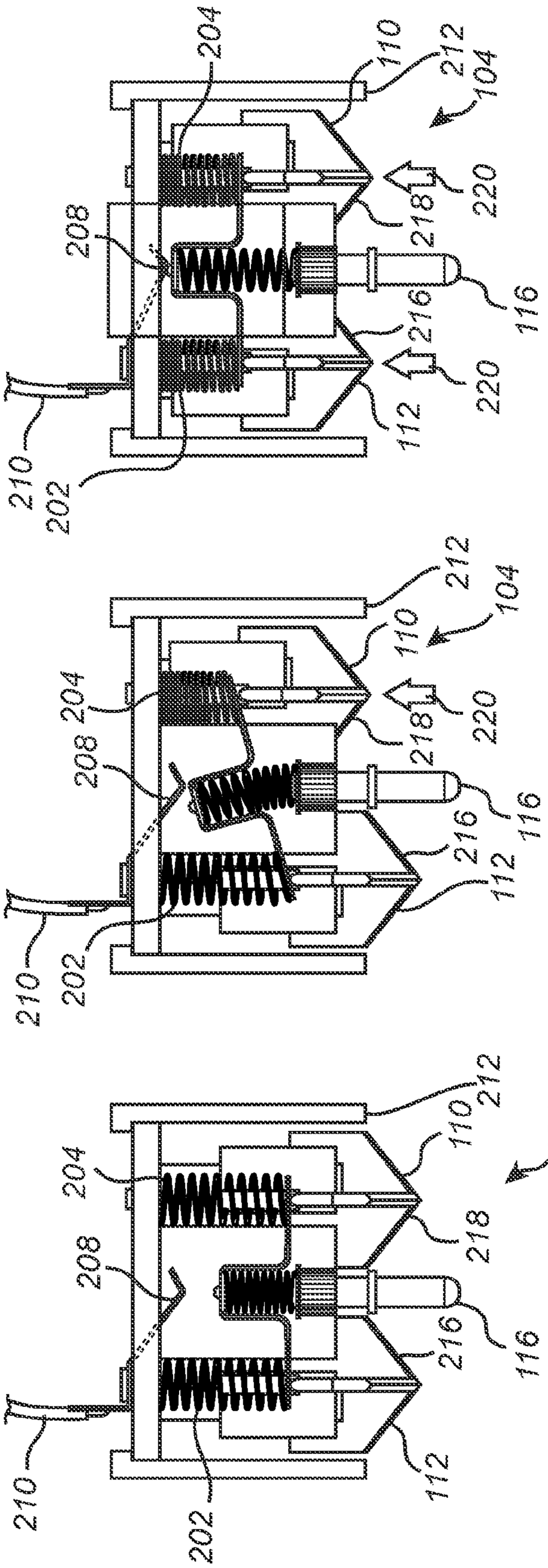


Fig. 2d

Fig. 2c

Fig. 2b

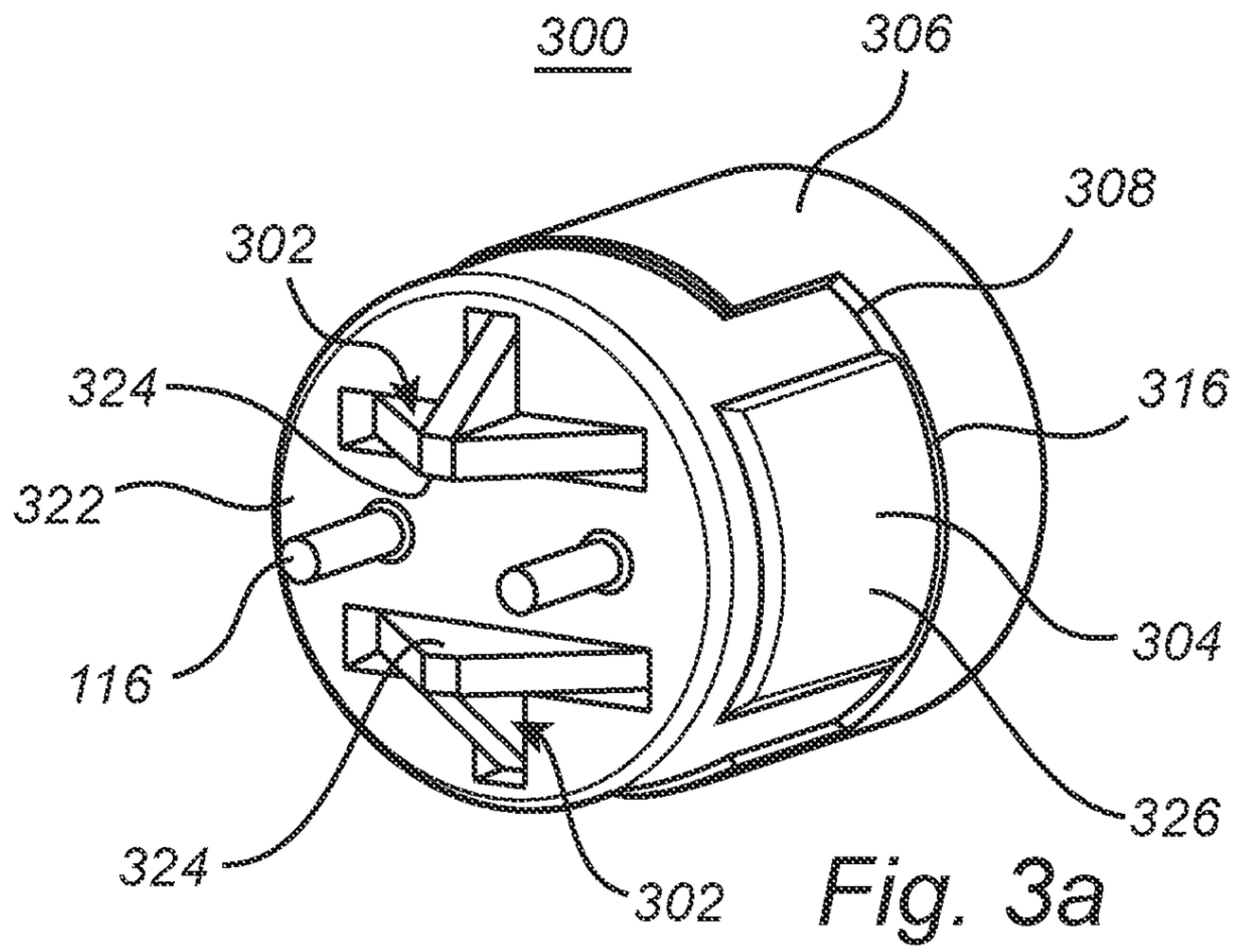

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Fig. 3a

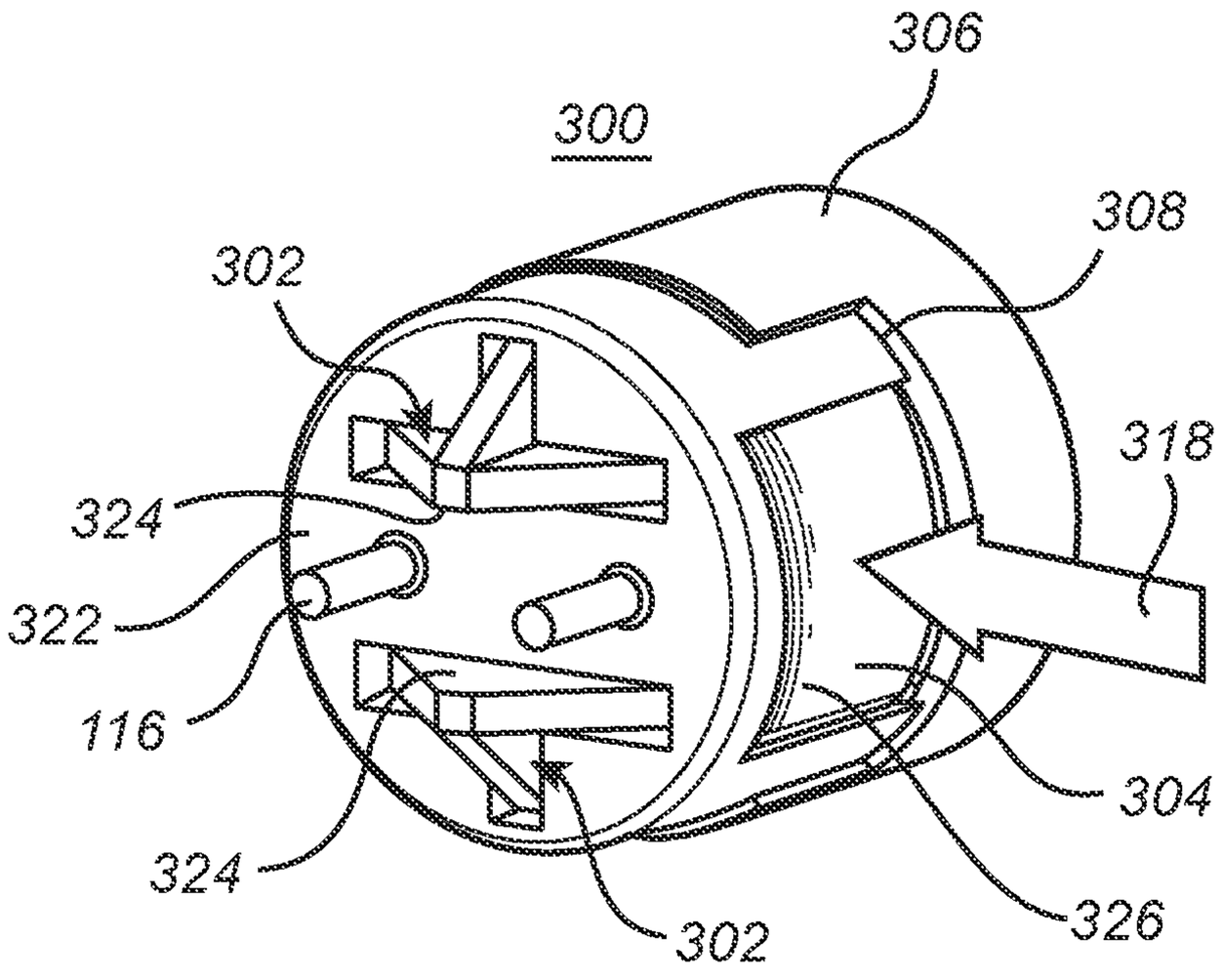

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Fig. 3b

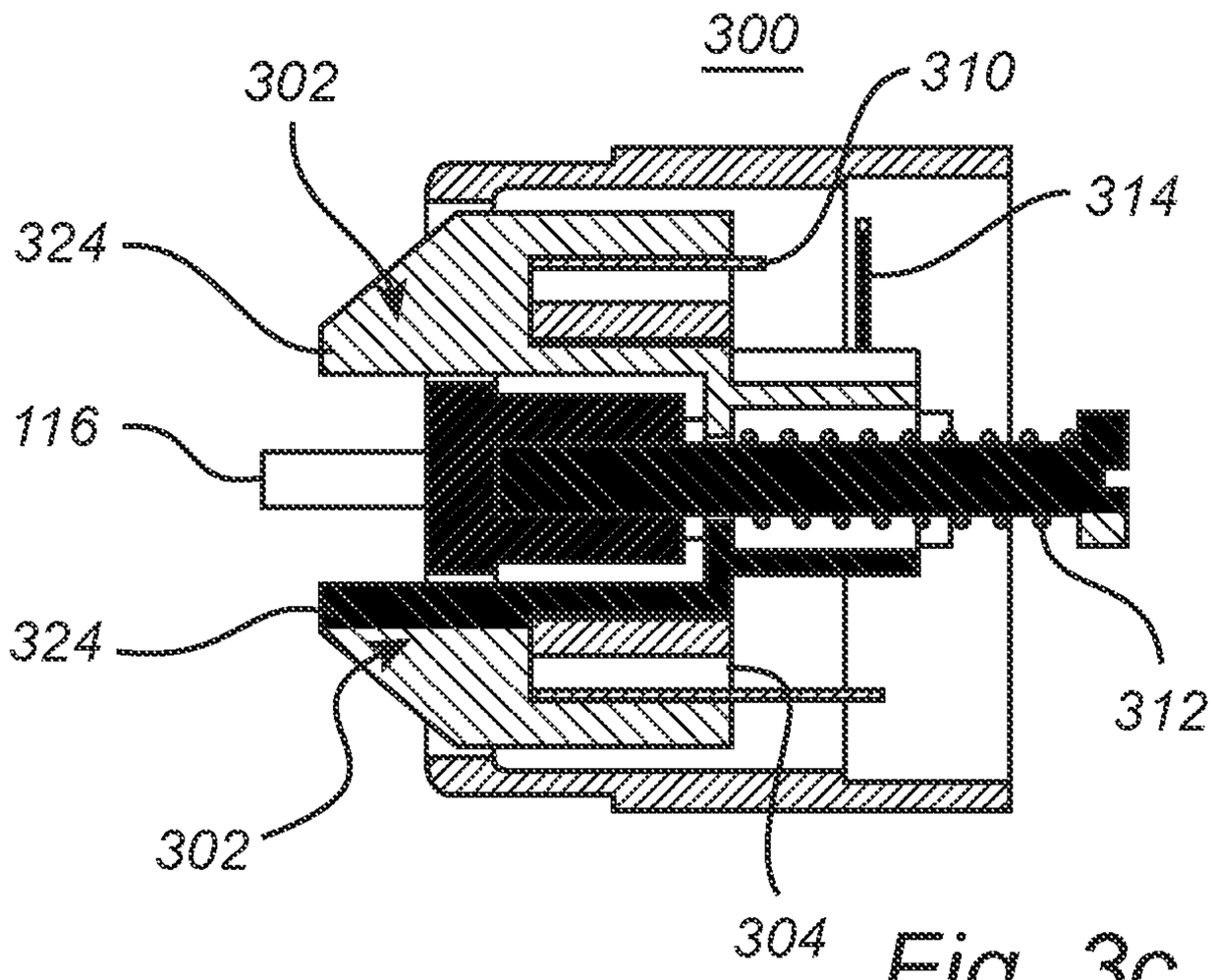

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Fig. 3c

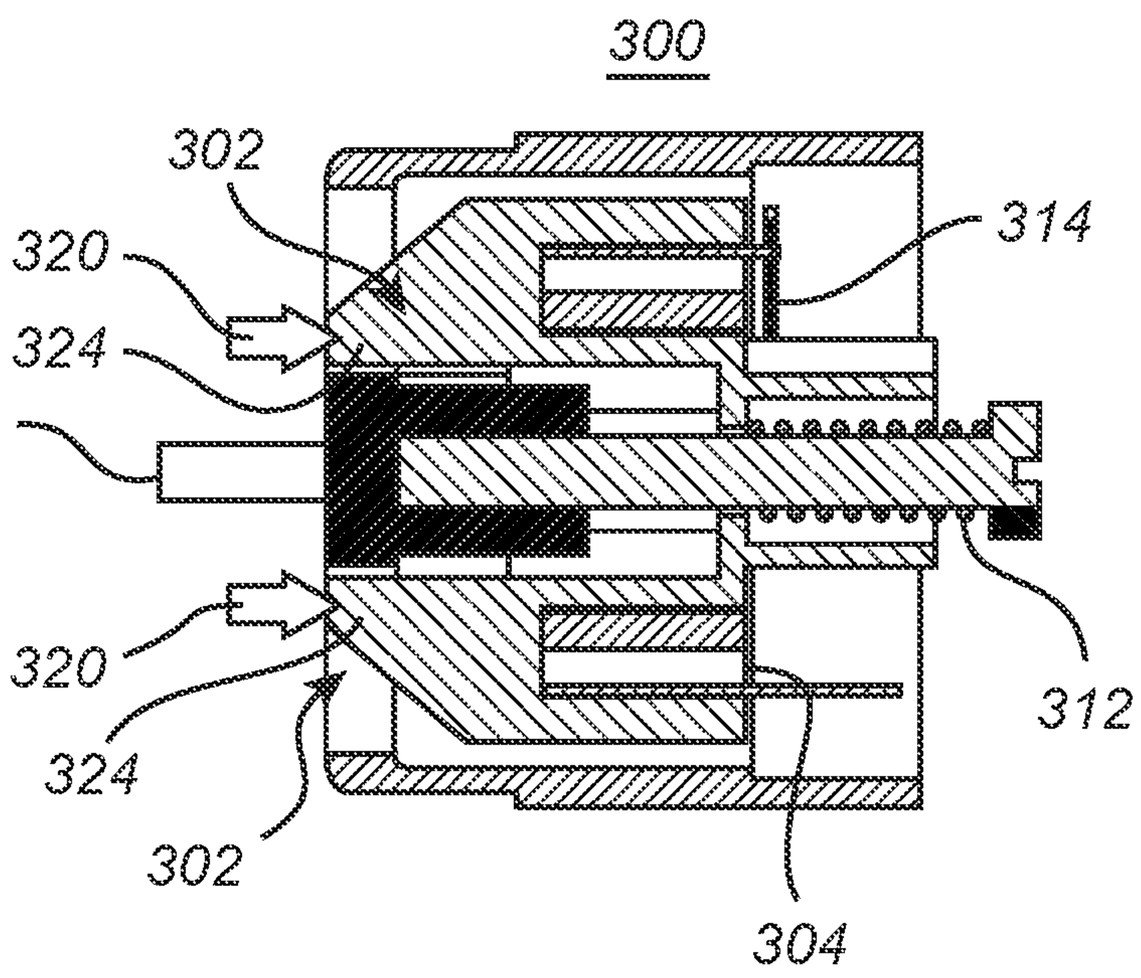

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Fig. 3d

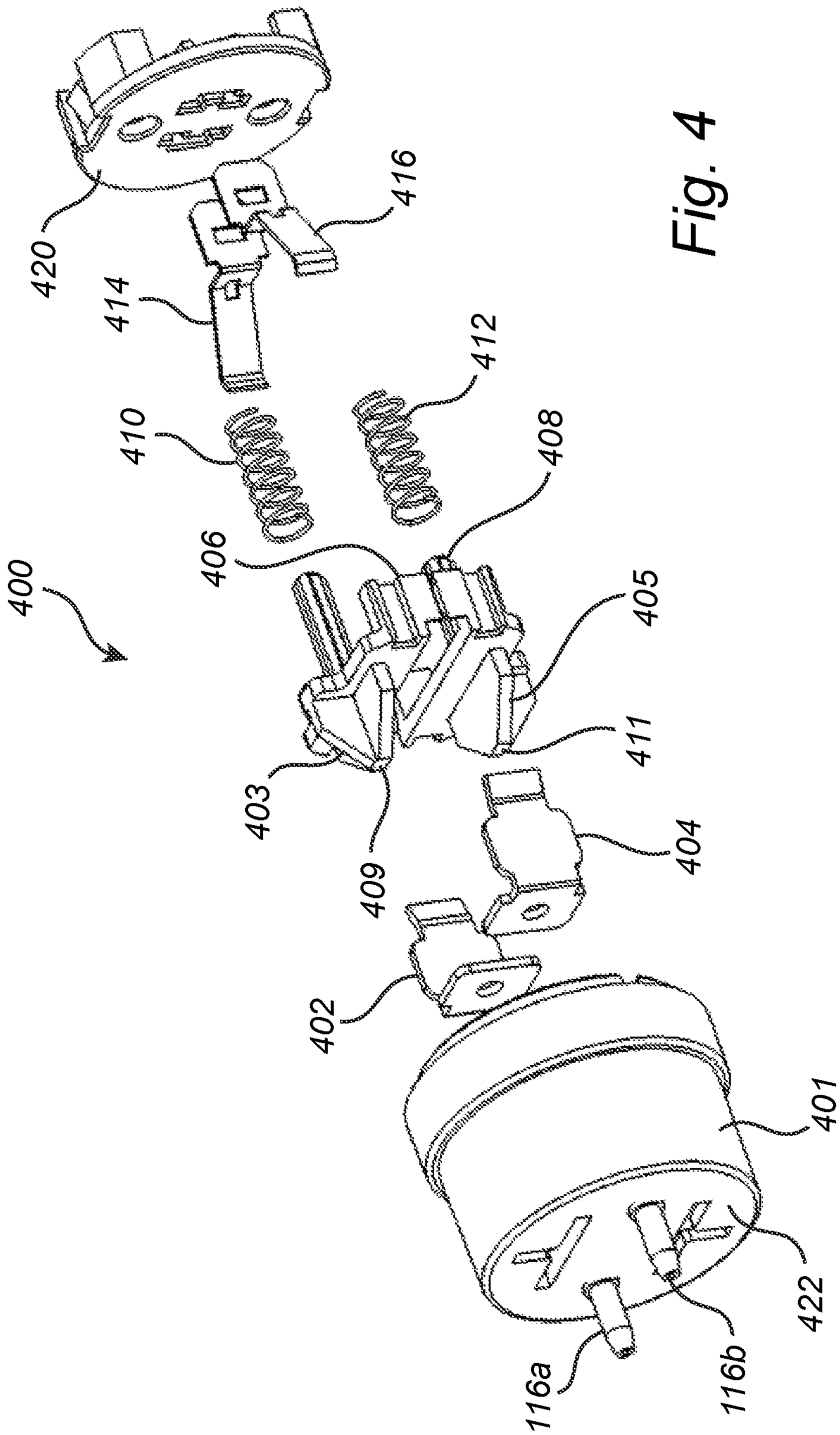

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116b

Fig. 4

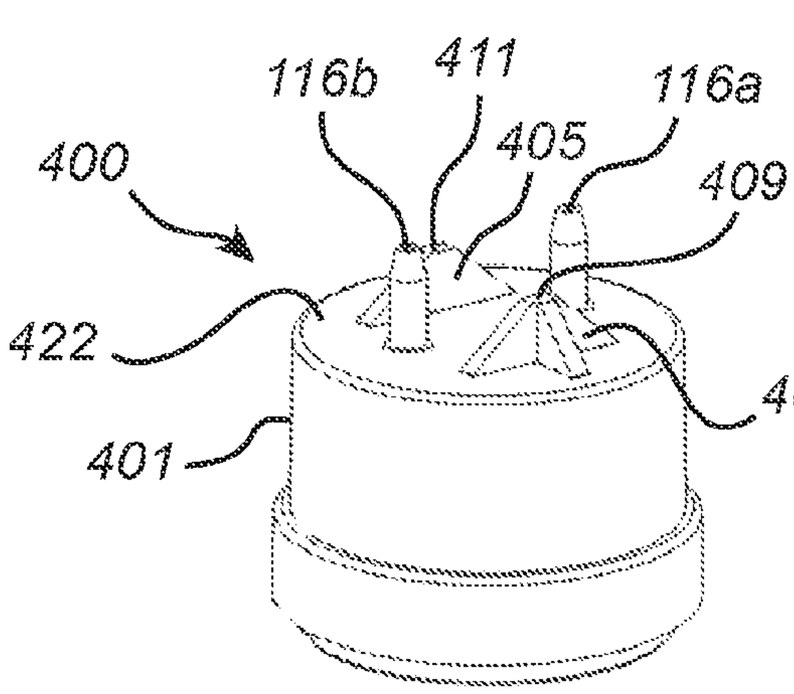


Fig. 5

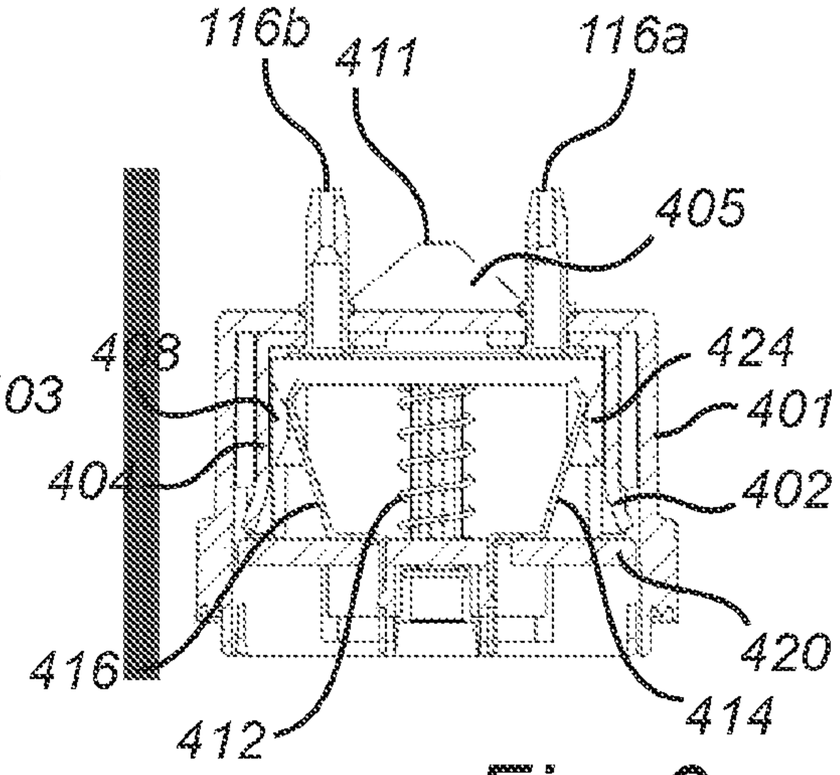


Fig. 6

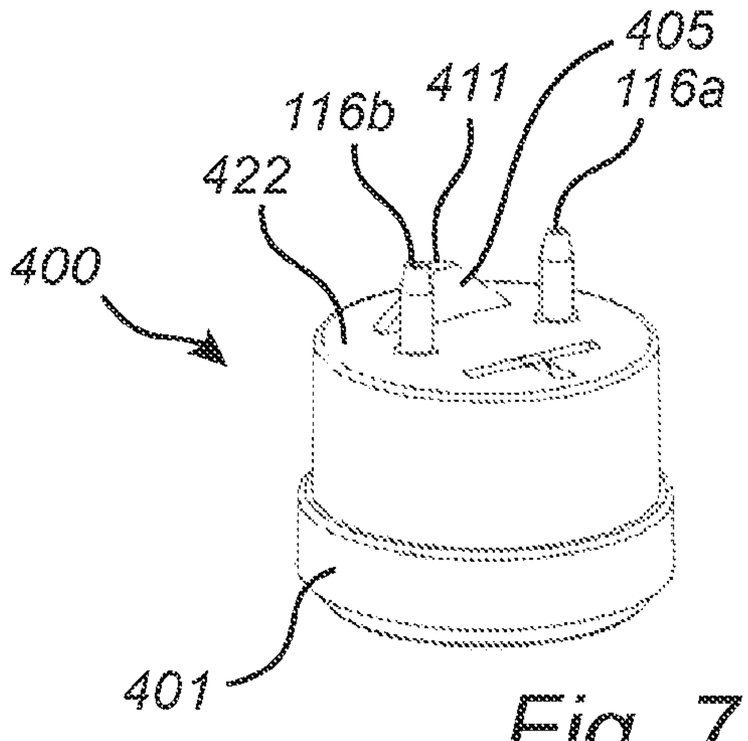


Fig. 7

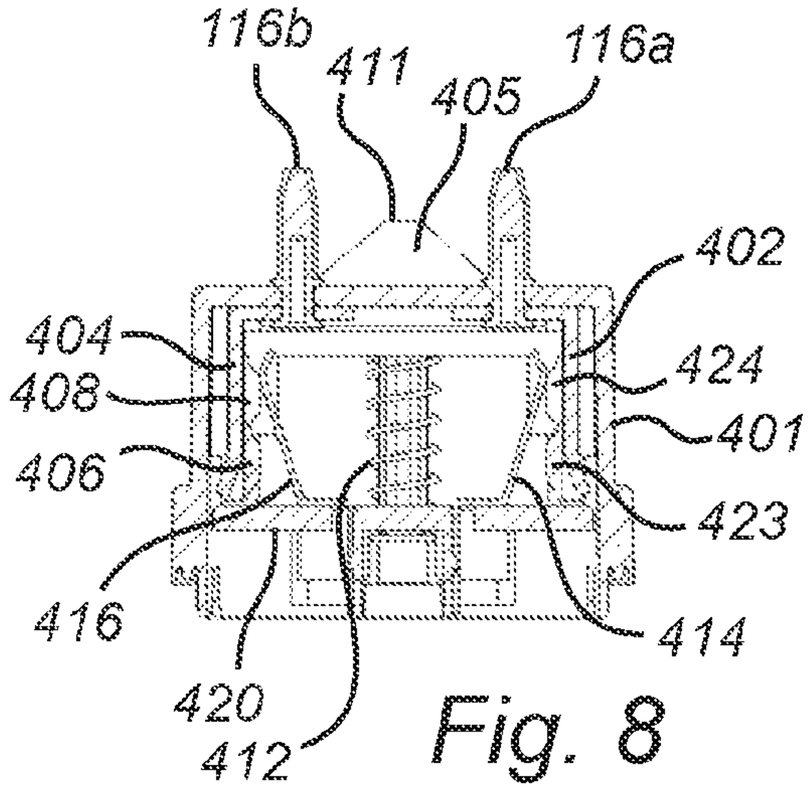


Fig. 8

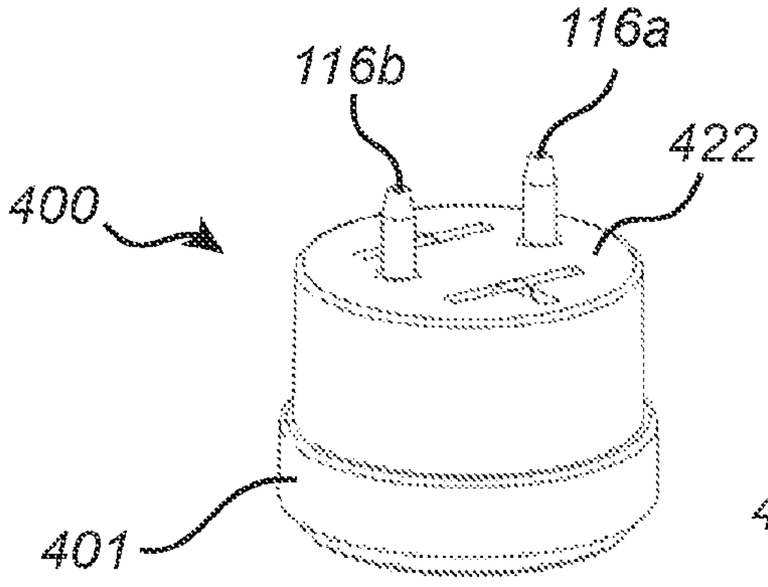


Fig. 9

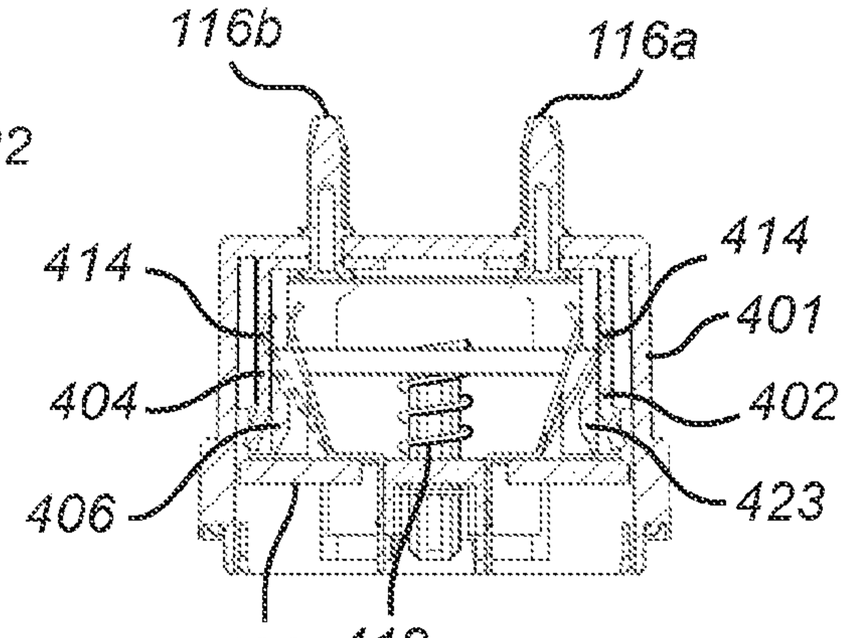


Fig. 10

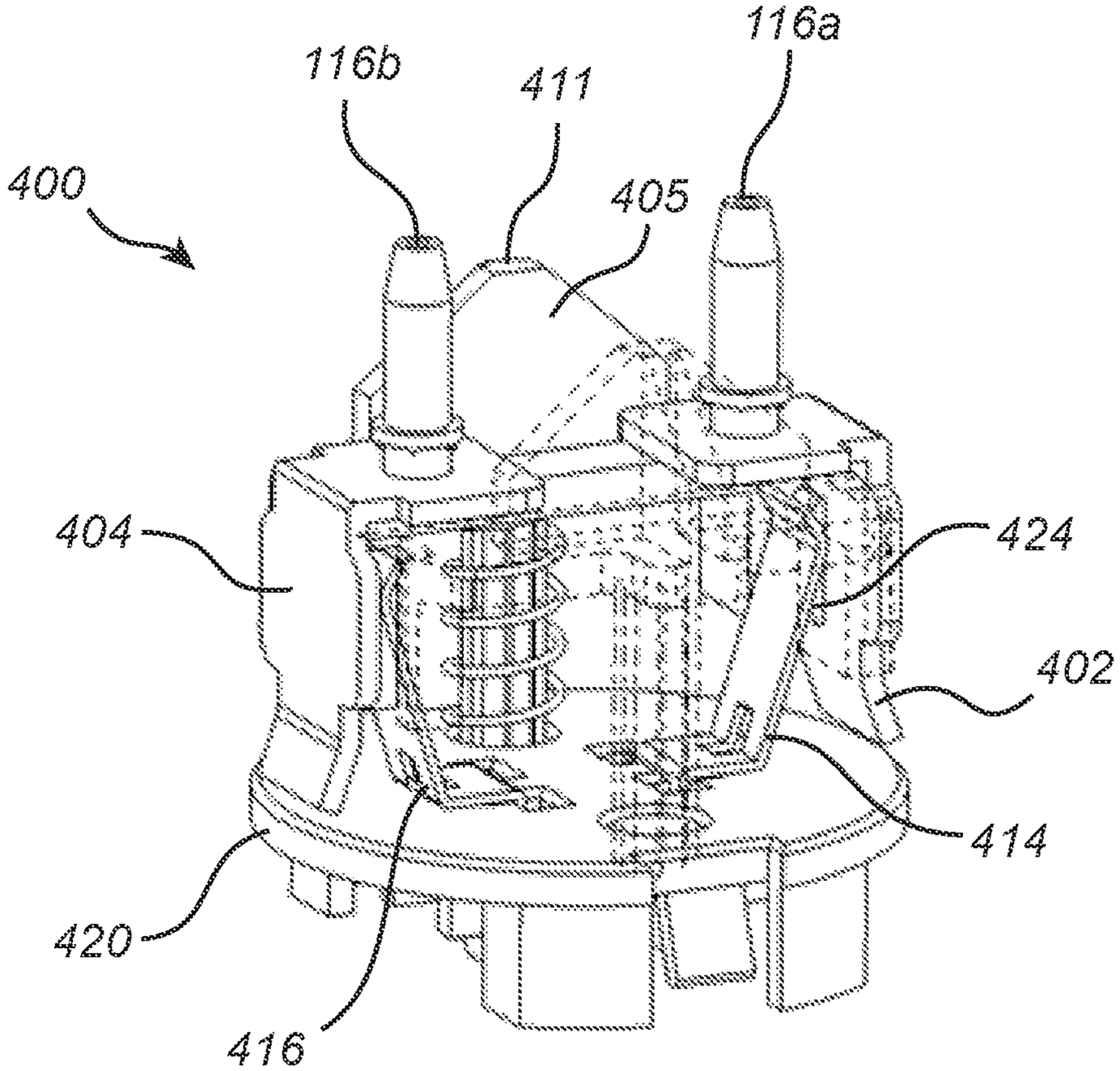


Fig. 11

END CAP FOR A TUBULAR LIGHT SOURCE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO PRIOR APPLICATIONS

This application is the U.S. National Phase application under 35 U.S.C. §371 of International Application No. PCT/IB2014/058082, filed on Jan. 7, 2014, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/756,240, filed on Jan. 24, 2013. These applications are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to an end cap for a tubular light source, and in particular to an end cap enabling safe installation of such a tubular light source.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Fluorescent lighting tubes are commonly used in a large range of lighting systems as a result of advantages such as longer life time and better luminous efficiency compared to incandescent lamps. However, in the continuous effort to reduce power consumption, it is desirable to replace conventional light tubes with still more energy efficient and environmental friendly alternatives. One such alternative is to use LED tubular light sources having a plurality of LED's arranged in a tube similar to the fluorescent tube. In order to facilitate a transition from fluorescent tube lights to LED based tubular light sources, the LED tubular light sources should be configured for allowing installation in already existing fixtures for fluorescent light tubes. However, the electrical circuitry is different in an LED based tubular light source compared to in a fluorescent light tube in that the LED based tubular light source may provide a current path between the two end caps. Hence, the internal circuitry of the tubular light source is arranged in such a way that the light source may provide an electrical connection between the connector pins at one end portion of an elongated tube and the connector pins at the opposite end portion of the elongated tube even if the light source is not active, contrary to what was possible in conventional fluorescent light tubes. In other words, it is possible that by mounting one end cap of the tubular light source in the socket of the lighting fixture, the internal circuitry will lead live voltage to the connector pins in the opposite end cap. As a result, installation of retrofitted LED tubular light sources may be a safety hazard as it is possible to first install one end cap in the mains connected fixture while having the other end cap still exposed and carrying a live potential on the connection pins of the exposed cap. Thus, there is a risk that the installer touches the exposed end cap and receives an electrical shock.

US2010/018178 discloses a suggestion on how the aforementioned safety issue may be alleviated by introducing a safety switch within the end cap of the LED tubular light source. However, a safety switch according to US2010/018178 may in some cases be unintentionally engaged when the installer is inserting the first end of the tubular light source while having already inserted the second end into the fixture, thereby still exposing the installer to potential hazard as the unconnected end cap may then have a live potential. Accordingly, there is a need for an improved safety mechanism to increase the safety for the installer when installing retrofitted LED tubular light sources.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In view of the above, an object of the invention is to solve, or at least reduce, the drawback discussed above. Generally, the above object is achieved by the attached independent patent claims.

According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided an end cap for a tubular light source, the tubular light source configured to be arranged in a lighting fixture comprising a socket, wherein the end cap comprises a housing portion having a connection end, two connector pins at least partly arranged on an outside of the housing portion at the connection end, wherein the connector pins are configured to fit in the socket of the lighting fixture, a first spring loaded switching element configured to be alternately positioned in an actuated state and a non-actuated state, wherein the first spring loaded switching element protrudes at the connection end of the housing portion in the vicinity of the connector pins when positioned in its non-actuated state, and a second spring loaded switching element configured to be positioned in an actuated state and a non-actuated state, wherein the switching elements are configured to be individually positioned in their respective actuated states to form an electrical connection between the socket and the tubular light source when the end cap is mounted into the socket of the fixture.

The present invention is based on the idea of providing an end cap for a tubular light source having double safety mechanisms, i.e. using a pair of spring loaded switching elements, which both must be individually actuated before electricity can be provided from the socket into the light source. According to the present invention, to prevent this problem, both safety mechanisms must be actuated in the unconnected end before the connector pins will carry a live voltage. An advantage of the present invention is that double safety mechanisms may reduce the risk of accidently form such an electrical connection and thus also reduce the risk of exposing the installer to the potential hazard of receiving an electrical shock through an unconnected end cap. A further advantage of the end cap according to the present invention is that spring loaded switching elements may increase safety during installation and un-installation in comparison to prior art solutions, since the springs may more or less automatically return the switching elements to their non-actuated states during un-installation. The spring loaded switching elements determine whether an electronic connection is made between the pins on one side of the tubular light source and the pins on the other side of the tubular light source. The protruding first spring loaded switching element is, in an exemplary embodiment, designed and configured to be depressed when mounted in the intended fixture. The function of a mechanical solution, such as is provided by means of the pair of spring loaded switching elements, is not dependent of a ballast type, in comparison to employing a circuitry based approach of a safety arrangement, and may comply with the different sockets that are used in current fixtures. As such, the shape of the mechanical solution should comply with all mechanical constraints provided by the lamp holders and the standard outline of the lamp. Moreover, since the switching elements are spring loaded, a certain pressure is required to actuate the switching elements. This may also reduce the risk of accidently actuating the switching elements.

According to another embodiment of the present invention, the first and second spring loaded switching elements are arranged in their actuated states by applying a transla-

tional force onto a front portion of the first and the second spring loaded switching element, respectively.

By the term "front portion" should, in the context of the present specification, be understood to relate to a portion of the switching element accessible for an installer of the tubular light source. The front portion may for example be a portion of the switching element protruding through the housing portion of the end cap or it may be a portion of the switching element accessible through a hole in the housing portion.

By the term "translational force" should, in the context of present specification, be understood to relate to a force that produces movement of the switching element in a non-rotational direction.

A further advantage is that a simple way of actuating a switching element is provided, which may not require any particular skill or knowledge when installing the tubular light source. A still further advantage is that the first switching element may be automatically actuated when installing the end cap in the socket since the socket will apply the needed force on the protruding part, i.e. front portion, of the first switching element when inserted therein. By having a switch which only closes an electrical circuit when the connector pins are out of reach for the installer significantly reduces the risk for the installer of receiving an electrical shock when installing the tubular light source.

Further, the first switching element may be configured to return to its non-actuated state when no translational force is applied onto its front portion. This may be advantageous when un-installing the tubular light source. In this case, the electrical connection between the connector pins at a side which is still connected to a socket and the connector pins at the unconnected end cap is interrupted as soon as the translational force of the first spring loaded switching element is removed, e.g. as soon as the end cap is removed from the socket.

According to yet another embodiment of the present invention, the front portion of at least one of the switching elements has an arrow shaped configuration. This is advantageous in the case of a switching element configured to be automatically actuated when mounting the end cap into the socket. The arrow shaped configuration may, for example, transform a non-translational component of the force from the socket onto the switching element into a translational force, which in turn will actuate the switching element. In a further embodiment, the edges of the front portion is made sharp, which may further reduces the risk of having an installer accidently actuating the switching element manually since the sharp edges may cause pain to the installer if she/he manually pushes the front portion.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the front portion of the second spring loaded switching element protrudes at the connection end of the housing portion in the vicinity of the connector pins when in its non-actuated state. The protruding second spring loaded switching element is preferably designed and configured to be depressed when mounted in the intended fixture. Accordingly, the switching elements are configured to be actuated by means of mounting the tubular light source into the socket of the fixture. An advantage is that the installer of the tubular light source does not have to push any of the switching elements manually; the socket will actuate both switching elements when the light source is mounted. Hereby, the risk of receiving an electrical shock is further reduced since the connector pins are out of reach for the installer.

Furthermore, the second switching element may be configured to return to its non-actuated state when no translational force is applied onto its front portion. This may be advantageous when un-installing the tubular light source. In this case, the electrical connection between the connector pins at one side still connected to a socket and the connector pins at the unconnected end cap is interrupted as soon as the translational force of the second spring loaded switching element is interrupted as soon as the translational force of the first spring loaded switching element is removed, e.g. as soon as the end cap is removed from the socket. The interruption may occur automatically when un-installing the tubular light source which may reduce the risk of exposing the installer to the potential hazard of receiving an electrical shock through an unconnected end cap

According to yet another embodiment of the present invention, the end cap further comprising: a first fixed tongue connected to a first of the two connector pins; a second fixed tongue connected to a second of the two connector pins; a base plate connected to a first and a second resilient tongue, the first resilient tongue being arranged to abut the first fixed tongue and the second resilient tongue being arranged to abut the second fixed tongue to complete a conductive path between the first resilient tongue and the first connector pin and between the second resilient tongue and the second connector pin, respectively, when both of the two spring loaded switching elements are in the actuated state; wherein each of the two spring loaded switching elements comprising a first and a second separating element, wherein the first and second separating elements of each of the two spring loaded switching elements, in the non-actuated state, is individually arranged to separate both the first fixed tongue from the first resilient tongue and the second fixed tongue from the second resilient tongue, respectively, thus opening the conductive path between the resilient tongues and the connector pins.

This embodiment may be a simple mechanical solution to the double safety mechanisms that may reduce the risk of accidently form an electrical connection and thus also reduce the risk of exposing the installer to the potential hazard of receiving an electrical shock through an unconnected end cap. An advantage of this embodiment is that the production cost may be lowered. Moreover, a reliable end cap is provided.

According to a further embodiment, the first spring loaded switching element further comprises a lock mechanism preventing the first spring loaded switching element from being actuated and wherein actuation of the second spring loaded switching element unlocks the lock mechanism allowing the first spring loaded switching element to be actuated. Hereby, the first spring loaded switching element cannot be actuated unless the second spring loaded switching element has been previously actuated. In other words, the switching elements in this embodiment must be actuated in a pre-defined order which may further reduce the risk of exposing the installer to the hazard of getting an electrical shock through an unconnected end cap.

According to another embodiment, the electrical connection between the socket and the tubular light source may be formed by actuating the second spring loaded switching element while inserting the connector pins of the tubular light source into the socket of the fixture.

According to yet another embodiment, de-actuating the first spring loaded switching element may de-actuate the second spring loaded switching element. An advantage of this is that the second spring loaded switching element may remain actuated as long as the first spring loaded switching element is actuated. On the other way around, when installing the tubular light source, manual actuation of the second

switching element is only necessary until the first switching element is actuated, i.e. the installer of the tubular light source can stop pushing the second switching element as soon as the light source is mounted in the socket.

Furthermore, the above described end cap may preferably be arranged in a tubular light source, wherein the tubular light source further comprises a lighting tube comprising a plurality of light emitting elements. Effects and features of the tubular light source are largely analogous to those described above.

The light source may further comprise warning means, the warning means comprises a blinking light positioned onto the at least one end cap. Additionally or alternatively, the warning means may be a text warning or a symbol warning. The warning means may be urging an installer to be careful when mounting the light source. The warning means, e.g. the text warning or the symbol warning, may be visible at all time. Moreover, the warning means, e.g. the blinking light, may be visible only when there is a risk of receiving an electrical shock. This is advantageous since the warning may be visible only when there is a real danger for receiving a shock, for example when one end cap of a tubular light source is connected to the socket and the other end cap is un-connected.

Moreover, the light source may comprise a relay which in combination with the switching elements enables operation of the tubular light source when mounted in the lighting fixture. The light source may also comprise a timer which in combination with the switching elements enables operation of the tubular light source when mounted in the lighting fixture. The relay or timer is thus a further safety mechanism for reducing the risk of exposing the installer of the light source to the potential hazard of receiving an electrical shock through an unconnected end cap in the case that the safety mechanism in the unconnected end cap is failing. The timer or relay may prevent electricity from being transmitted from one side of the tubular light source to the other for some predefined time interval.

It is noted that the invention relates to all possible combinations of features recited in the claims. Generally, all terms used in the claims are to be interpreted according to their ordinary meaning in the technical field unless explicitly defined otherwise herein.

Other objectives, features and advantages of the present invention will appear from the following detailed disclosure as well as from the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

This and other aspects of the present invention will now be described in more detail, with reference to the appended drawings showing embodiments of the invention, wherein:

FIGS. **1***a* to **1***b* schematically illustrating an exemplary mounting procedure of a tubular light source having an end cap according to the present invention;

FIGS. **2***a* to **2***d* schematically illustrate an end cap for a tubular light source according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention.

FIGS. **3***a* to **3***d* schematically illustrate an end cap for a tubular light source according to another exemplary embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **4** schematically illustrating an exploded view of an end cap for a tubular light source according to an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. **5** shows a perspective view of an end cap of FIG. **4**, wherein both spring loaded switching elements are in a non-actuated state.

FIG. **6** shows a cross section of the end cap of FIG. **5**.

FIG. **7** shows a perspective view of an end cap of FIG. **4**, wherein one spring loaded switching element is in an actuated state.

FIG. **8** shows a cross section of the end cap of FIG. **7**.

FIG. **9** shows a perspective view of an end cap of FIG. **4**, wherein both spring loaded switching elements are in an actuated state.

FIG. **10** shows a cross section of the end cap of FIG. **9**.

FIG. **11** shows a perspective view of and end cap of FIG. **4** with some portions merely indicated by dashed lines.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention will now be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which currently preferred embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided for thoroughness and completeness, and fully convey the scope of the invention to the skilled person.

FIG. **1***a* schematically illustrates a luminaire **100** wherein a tubular light source **102** comprising two end caps **104***a*, **104***b* of the same sort according to an embodiment of the present invention is being mounted into a mains connected fixture **106**. As illustrated in FIG. **1***a*, one end cap **104***a* is first inserted into a socket **108** arranged in the fixture **106**, thereby depressing and actuating a first and a second spring loaded switching element **110**, **112** arranged on the outside of the end cap **104***a*. In this state, when one end cap **104***a* of the tubular light source is inserted in the fixture while an opposite end cap **104***b* is still reachable by an installer of the tubular light source, the installer would be exposed to the potential hazard of receiving an electrical shock through the unconnected end cap **104***b* if the connector pins **116** carries live voltage. According to the present invention, both safety mechanisms must be actuated in the unconnected end cap **104***b* before the connector pins **116** will carry live voltage, thus reducing the risk for the installer to receive an electrical shock.

Next, as depicted in FIG. **1***b*, the opposing second end cap **104***b* of the tubular light source **102** is inserted into an opposing socket **108**, thereby depressing and actuating a first and a second spring loaded switching element **110**, **112** arranged on the outside of the second end cap **104***b*. Both the first and the second switching elements **110**, **112** of both end caps **104***a*, **104***b* must be depressed and thereby actuated to engage the electrical circuit of the luminaire and thereby allowing the luminaire to be lit.

The two switching elements **110**, **112** are individually operated, e.g. the installer cannot depress both elements **110**, **112** by one finger at the same time. This further reduces the risk of the installer accidentally depressing both switching elements.

The end caps **104***a*, **104***b* further comprise, in the illustrated embodiment, a symbol warning arrangement **114** warning the installer of the risk of receiving an electrical shock through an unconnected end cap. This may further reduce the risk that the installer accidentally depresses both switching elements **110**, **112**.

Additionally, the tubular light source may advantageously comprise light emitting elements and optics configured to mix light from the light emitting elements. Such optics may be any mixing and/or collimating means. Light mixing optics may advantageously be used if the light emitting

elements comprise LEDs. However, the light emitting elements may be any light source such as a fluorescent or incandescent light source.

FIGS. **2***a* to **2***d* schematically illustrate an exemplary end cap **104** according to the present invention. The end cap **104** corresponds to the above mentioned end caps **104***a*, **104***b*. An example embodiment will now be described with reference to FIG. **2***a* showing a perspective view of the end cap **104** in conjunction with FIGS. **2***b* to **2***d* showing cross section views of the end cap **104**.

The end cap comprises a first **110** and a second **112** spring loaded switching element which both must be depressed and thereby actuated before the connector pins **116** is in contact with a conductive receiving means **208** which in turn is connected to the tubular light source, thereby forming a conductive path between the connector pins **116** and the connected tubular light source via a wire **210**. The switching elements **110**, **112** protrudes at the connection end **214** of a housing portion **212** of the end cap **104** in the vicinity of the connector pins **116**, when being arranged in a non-actuated state. The switching elements **110**, **112** are depressed by applying a translational force **220** to a front portion **216**, **218** of the switching elements **110**, **112**. The arrow shaped configuration of the switching elements **110**, **112** transforms an applied non-translational force onto the switching element **110**, **112** into a translational force which in turn will actuate the switching element **110**, **112**. The housing portion **212** of the end cap **104** can be made of plastic or metal having an electrical insulation.

The mechanics of the end cap is based on the seesaw principle and has three different configurations depicted in FIGS. **2***b* to **2***d*. FIG. **2***b* shows the state where none of the two switching elements **110**, **112** are depressed. In FIG. **2***b* there is no contact between the connector pins **116** and the conductive receiving means **208**.

FIG. **2***c* shows the state where the first switching element **110** is depressed by a translational force, indicated by the arrow **220**, while the second switching element **112** is in its non-actuated rest position. Also, in FIG. **2***b* there is no contact between the connector pins **116** and the conducting receiving means **208**. This naturally also applies to the case when the second switching element **112** is depressed while the first switching element **110** is in its rest position, i.e. non-actuated state.

Finally, FIG. **2***d* shows the state where both the first **110** and the second **112** switching elements are depressed by a translational force, indicated by the arrows **220**. Hereby there is contact between the connector pins **116** and the conducting receiving means **208** and thus electricity can be transmitted from the connector pins **116** to the connected tubular light source via the wire **210**. The depression, i.e. actuation, of the first **110** and the second **112** switching elements may be executed simultaneously or sequentially.

By using spring loaded switching elements **110**, **112**, the switching elements are returned to their, non-actuated, rest position as soon as no pressure is applied to them. The springs **202**, **204** of the switching elements **110**, **112** may be coil springs, leaf springs, elastic elements or any similar structure.

Reference is now made to FIGS. **3***a* to **3***d*, which schematically illustrates another exemplary end cap **300** according to an embodiment of the present invention. FIG. **3***a* illustrating another example embodiment of an end cap **300** according to the present invention. The end cap **300** comprises a first spring loaded switching element **302** and a second spring loaded switching element **304**. The second spring loaded switching element **304** is accessible from the side of the end cap **300**. The first switching element **302** protrudes at two positions at a connection end **322** of a housing portion **306** of the end cap **300** in the vicinity of connector pins **116**. In further embodiments, the first switching element **302** may protrude at one position, or at more than two positions, at the connection end **322**. According to the depicted embodiment in FIG. **3***a*, the first switching element **302** cannot be depressed and thereby actuated unless the second switching element **304** is depressed and thereby actuated. In a non-actuated state of the second switching element **304**, a side portion **316** of the second switching element **304** is in abutment with a wall portion **308** of the housing portion **306**. Hereby, the first switching element **302**, which is in connection with the second switching element **304**, is prevented from being actuated.

In FIG. **3***b*, the second switching element **304** is depressed by applying a translational force, indicated by the arrow **318**, to a front portion **326** of the switching element **304** by for example an installer of a connected tubular light source. By depressing the second switching element **304**, the first switching element **302** is no longer prevented from being actuated.

FIG. **3***c* shows a cross section of the end cap of FIG. **3***b*. The connector pins **116** are configured to form an electrical contact with a conducting receiving means **314** via a conducting transmitting means **310**, the connector pins being in contact with the conducting transmitting means **310**. The conducting transmitting means **310** and the first switching element **302** are interrelated and thus moving at the same time and direction. As shown in FIG. **3***c*, no electrical contact is made when the first switching element **302** is not yet depressed. FIG. **3***d* shows a cross section of the end cap **300** in an actuated state. In FIG. **3***d*, the first spring loaded switching element **302** is depressed by applying a translational force, depicted by the arrows **320**, to a front portion **324** of the first switching element **302**, while the second spring loaded switching element **304** is depressed, i.e. in an actuated state. The actuation of the first **302** and second **304** switching elements is thus done sequentially. The arrow shaped configuration of the first switching elements **302**, best seen in FIGS. **3***a* and **3***b*, transforms an applied non-translational force onto the first switching element **302** into a translational force which in turn will actuate the first switching element **302**. When the first switching element **302** is being depressed, the interrelated conducting transmitting means **310** is moving towards the conducting receiving means **314** and finally, when the first switching element **302** is fully depressed and thereby actuated, forms an electrical connection between the connector pins **116** and the conducting receiving means **314**.

When the first switching element **302** is depressed, for example when mounting a tubular light source comprising the end cap **300** in an intended fixture, the housing portion **306** will keep the second switching element **304** depressed, thereby allowing the installer to stop applying manual pressure to the second switching element **304** when the first switching element **302** is in the actuated state. Furthermore, the two switching elements **302**, **304** are, in the depicted example embodiment, individually operated, e.g. the installer cannot depress both elements **302**, **304** by one finger at the same time. This reduces the risk of the installer accidentally depressing both switching elements.

The first switching element **302** is spring loaded by means of a spring **312**. The second switching element **304** is spring loaded by means of a spring or a suitable resilient material (not shown). The springs **312** may be coil springs, leaf springs, elastic elements or any similar structure. By using

a spring loaded switching element **302**, the switching element **302** is returned to its non-actuated position as soon as no pressure is applied to it. As described above, the second switching element **304** is kept in its actuated state as long as the first switching element **302** is in its actuated state. If the first switching element **302** is not actuated, the second switching element **304** is returned to its non-actuated position as soon as no pressure is applied to it.

FIGS. **4** to **11** illustrating, by way of example, an end cap **400** according to an embodiment of the present invention. The example embodiment will now be described with reference to FIG. **4** showing an exploded view of the end cap **400**.

The end cap **400** comprises a housing portion **401** wherein two electrically conductive connector pins **116***a-b*, which are adapted to fit into the socket **108**, are arranged so that a portion of the connector pins **116***a-b* are protruding from the outside of the housing portion **401** through openings in the housing portion **401**. Each connector pin **116***a-b* is connected to a fixed tongue **402**, **404** on an inside of the housing portion **401**; the tongues **402**, **404** are made of a conductive material such as a metal. The fixed tongues **402**, **404** have a hole for receiving an inner part of the respective connector pin **116***a-b*. Each fixed tongue **402**, **404** is essentially L-shaped, but the part furthest away from the connected pin **116***a-b* is bent slightly outwards, away from a center longitudinal axis of the end cap **400**.

The end cap further comprising a switching element unit arranged to fit within the fixed tongues **402**, **404**. The switching element unit comprises two separate spring loaded switching elements **403**, **405** having an actuated and a non-actuated state. The spring loaded switching elements **403**, **405** are arranged to protrude from the outside of the housing portion **401** through openings in the housing portion **401** in a non-actuated state. Each switching element **403**, **405** comprise a first and a second separating element **406**, **408**, **423**, **424**. Each separating element **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** is adapted to abut an upper part of the corresponding fixed tongue **402**, **404**, i.e. close to the corresponding connector pin, when the corresponding switching element **403**, **405** is in a non actuated state. The separating elements **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** are made of a non-conducting material such as a plastic material. Each switching element **403**, **405** is actuated by applying a translational force onto a front portion **409**, **411** of the switching element **403**, **405**. This will in turn move the corresponding first and second separating element **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** in a direction along the center longitudinal axis of the end cap **400**. This in turn will make the separating element **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** to abut outwardly bent part of the corresponding fixed tongue **402**, **404**, as will be described in conjunction with FIGS. **8** and **10** below. The end cap **400** further comprises a base plate **420** to which two resilient tongues **414**, **416** are fastened. The resilient tongues **414**, **416** are made of a conductive material such as copper or any other suitable conductive material. The base plate **420** may be made of any non conductive material such as a plastic material. The resilient tongues **414**, **416** are shaped to abut on a corresponding fixed tongue **402**, **404** unless at least one of the switching elements **403**, **405** is in its non actuated state. In this case the corresponding separating elements **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** will separate the fixed tongues **402**, **404** from the resilient tongues **414**, **416** and thus force the resilient tongues **414**, **416** towards the center longitudinal axis of the end cap **400**. The resilient tongues **414**, **416** will in this case be tensioned.

The switching elements **403**, **405** are spring loaded by means of a spring **410**, **412**. By using spring loaded switching elements the switching elements **403**, **405** are returned to their, non-actuated, rest position as soon as no pressure is applied to them. The springs **410**, **412** of the switching elements **403**, **405** may be coil springs, leaf springs, elastic elements or any similar structure. The shape of the separating elements **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** and the resilient tongues **414**, **416** are adapted such that the separating element **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** will force the resilient tongues **414**, **416** away from the corresponding fixed tongue **402**, **404** when the switching element **403**, **405** comprising the separating elements **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** is changing state from actuated to non-actuated as described above.

The arrow shaped configuration of the switching elements **403**, **405** transforms an applied non-translational force onto the switching element **403**, **405** into a translational force which in turn will actuate the switching element **403**, **405**. The housing portion **401** of the end cap **400** can be made of plastic or metal having an electrical insulation.

FIG. **5** shows by way of example a perspective view of the end cap **400**. In FIG. **5**, both spring loaded switching elements **403**, **405** are in a non-actuated state and thus protruding from the housing portion **401** of the end cap at the connection end **422**. The arrow shaped configuration of the switching elements **403**, **405** described above is clearly visible. In a further embodiment, the edges of the front portions **409**, **411** of the switching elements **403**, **405** are made sharp, which may further reduces the risk of having an installer accidently actuating the switching element **403**, **405** manually since the sharp edges may cause pain to the installer if she/he manually pushes the front portion **409**, **411**. FIG. **6** shows a cross section of the end cap of FIG. **5**. The left resilient tongue **416** are abutting, or resting on, the first separating element **408** of the switching element **405** and the first separating element **406** (not shown) of the switching elements **403**. Consequently, the left resilient tongue **416** is separated from the left fixed tongue **404**. The right resilient tongue **414** are abutting, or resting on, the second separating element **424** of the switching element **405** and the second separating element **423** (not shown) of the switching elements **403**. Consequently, the right resilient tongue **414** is separated from the right fixed tongue **402**.

In FIG. **7**, one switching element **403** is being depressed and thus actuated. The effect of this is shown in FIG. **8** which is a cross section of the end cap of FIG. **7**. The first and the second separating element **406**, **423** belonging to the actuated switching element **403** are thus moved in a direction along the center longitudinal axis of the end cap **400** and abutting the outwardly bent part of the fixed tongues **402**, **404**. The left resilient tongue **416** are still abutting, or resting on, the first separating element **408** of the non-actuated switching element **405**. Consequently, the left resilient tongue **416** is still separated from the left fixed tongue **404**. The right resilient tongue **414** are still abutting, or resting on, the second separating element **424** of the non-actuated switching element **405**. Consequently, the right resilient tongue **414** is still separated from the right fixed tongue **402**. The double safety mechanism of this embodiment of the invention is thus clearly visualized in FIG. **8**.

In FIG. **9**, both switching elements **403**, **405** are being depressed and thus actuated. The effect of this is shown in FIG. **10** which is a cross section of the end cap of FIG. **9**. Since both switching elements **403**, **405** are actuated; all separating elements **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** are in a direction along the center longitudinal axis of the end cap **400** and abutting the outwardly bent part of the fixed tongues **402**, **404**. Consequently, none of the separating elements **406**, **408**, **423**, **424** is no longer abutting the fixed tongues **402**,

404 at a position where the upper part of the resilient tongues 414, 416 are adapted to contact the corresponding fixed tongue 402, 404. As can be seen in FIG. 10, the tension in the resilient tongues 414, 416 makes them move towards the corresponding fixed tongue 402, 404 and end up resting against it. Consequently, a conductive path between the resilient tongues 414, 416 and the connector pins 116*a-b* are closed.

FIG. 11 shows by way of example a perspective view of and end cap 400 of FIG. 4 with some portions merely indicated by dashed lines and wherein the housing portion have been removed. In FIG. 11, the functionality of separating elements are clearly visible. The resilient tongue 414 is resting towards the separating element 424 and the separating element 423 (not shown). The resilient tongue 416 is resting towards the separating element 408 (not shown) and the separating element 406 (not shown). Consequently, the resilient tongue 416 is separated from the fixed tongue 404 and the resilient tongue 414 is separated from the fixed tongue 402. Consequently, a conductive path between the resilient tongues 414, 416 and the connector pins 116*a-b* are open.

Thus, the end cap 400 is arranged as a duplicated protection. If just one of the switching elements 403, 405 is pushed down, the two conductive paths between the resilient tongues 414, 416 and the connector pins 116*a-b* are open. Only when both switching elements 403, 405 are pushed down at the same time, the two conductive paths between the resilient tongues 414, 416 and the connector pins 116*a-b* are closed.

The person skilled in the art realizes that the present invention by no means is limited to the preferred embodiments described above. On the contrary, many modifications and variations are possible within the scope of the appended claims. For example, the end cap 104, 300, 400 may comprise further spring loaded switching elements that needs to be actuated before an electrical connection between the socket and the tubular light source is formed when the end cap is mounted into the socket of the fixture. Such a possible further switching element may be actuated by relative rotational motion of the housing portion in relation to the tubular light source.

Additionally, variations to the disclosed embodiments can be understood and effected by the skilled person in practicing the claimed invention, from a study of the drawings, the disclosure, and the appended claims. In the claims, the word "comprising" does not exclude other elements or steps, and the indefinite article "a" or "an" does not exclude a plurality. The mere fact that certain measures are recited in mutually different dependent claims does not indicate that a combination of these measured cannot be used to advantage.

The invention claimed is:

1. An end cap for a tubular light source, the tubular light source configured to be arranged in a lighting fixture comprising a socket, wherein the end cap comprises:

a housing portion having a connection end;

two connector pins at least partly arranged on an outside of the housing portion at the connection end, wherein the connector pins are configured to fit in the socket of the lighting fixture;

a first spring loaded switching element configured to be alternately positioned in an actuated state and a non-actuated state, wherein the first spring loaded switching element protrudes at the connection end of the housing portion when positioned in its non-actuated state; and

a second spring loaded switching element configured to be positioned in an actuated state and a non-actuated state,

a bridging element coupled between the first spring loaded switching element and the second spring loaded switching element, wherein an electrical connection is formed between the bridging element and a conductive receiving element when the first spring loaded switching element and the second spring loaded switching element are depressed into an actuated position configured to be individually positioned in their respective actuated states by means of mounting the tubular light source into the socket of the fixture, wherein the first spring loaded switching element is coupled to the second spring loaded switching element via the bridging element both when the first spring loaded switching element is in the actuated position and when the first spring loaded switching element is in a non-actuated, non-depressed position.

2. The end cap according to claim 1, wherein the first and second spring loaded switching elements are arranged in their actuated states by applying a translational force onto a front portion of the first and the second spring loaded switching element, respectively.

3. The end cap according to claim 2, wherein the first switching element is configured to return to its non-actuated state when no translational force is applied onto its front portion.

4. The end cap according to claim 1, wherein the front portion of at least one of the switching elements has an arrow shaped configuration.

5. The end cap according to claim 1, wherein the second spring loaded switching element protrudes at the connection end of the housing portion when positioned in its non-actuated state.

6. The end cap according to claim 5, wherein the second switching element is configured to return to its non-actuated state when no translational force is applied to its front portion.

7. The end cap according to claim 1, wherein the end cap further comprising:

a first fixed tongue connected to a first of the two connector pins;

a second fixed tongue connected to a second of the two connector pins;

a base plate connected to a first and a second resilient tongue, the first resilient tongue being arranged to abut the first fixed tongue and the second resilient tongue being arranged to abut the second fixed tongue to complete a conductive path between the first resilient tongue and the first connector pin and between the second resilient tongue and the second connector pin, respectively, when both of the two spring loaded switching elements are in the actuated state;

wherein each of the two spring loaded switching elements comprising a first and a second separating element;

wherein the first and second separating elements of each of the two spring loaded switching elements, in the non-actuated state, is individually arranged to separate both the first fixed tongue from the first resilient tongue and the second fixed tongue from the second resilient tongue, respectively, thus opening the conductive path between the resilient tongues and the connector pins.

8. The end cap according to claim 1, wherein the first spring loaded switching element further comprises a lock mechanism, wherein actuation of the second spring loaded

switching element unlocks the lock mechanism allowing the first spring loaded switching element to be actuated.

9. The end cap according to claim **2**, wherein the electrical connection between the socket and the tubular light source is formed by actuating the second spring loaded switching element while inserting the connector pins of the tubular light source into the socket of the fixture.

10. The end cap according to claim **8**, wherein de-actuating of the first spring loaded switching element de-actuates the second spring loaded switching element.

11. A tubular light source comprising:

a lighting tube comprising a plurality of light emitting elements; and

the end cap according to claim **1** arranged on each ends of the lighting tube.

12. The tubular light source according to claim **11**, further comprising warning means, the warning means comprising a blinking light positioned onto the at least one end cap.

13. The tubular light source according to claim **11**, further comprising a relay which in combination with the switching elements enables operation of the tubular light source when mounted in the lighting fixture.

14. The tubular light source according to claim **11**, further comprising a timer which in combination with the switching elements enables operation of the tubular light source when mounted in the lighting fixture.

15. A luminaire comprising:

a tubular light source according to claim **11**; and

a fixture comprising sockets for receiving the respective end caps and for connecting the tubular light source to an electrical power supply.

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